

Life's Greatest Deadline  
Hebrews 9: 27  
October 18, 2009

We all live under the pressure of having to meet deadlines. We have the pressure of paying our bills by the due date to avoid an additional penalty. We have the pressure of renewing our car tags by a certain due date, or we risk getting a ticket and losing our driving privileges. And of course there is the annual tax deadline we all must meet.

I could go on all day listing the deadlines we have in our lives, but you see my point: deadlines are a routine part of life. Today I want to talk about the greatest deadline we all face. It is the deadline of death, and after that the imperative of the final judgement. Let's read it with our eyes (read)...

**1. Everyone knows of this deadline, but few are ready when it arrives (Ecclesiastes 9: 5; Matthew 7: 14).**

A. The passage in Ecclesiastes tells me there is not a man, woman or child here today who, having their right mind, doesn't know that one day they will face death.

1. The death rate worldwide is 100%!

B. I confess I am a little confused about the second Scripture.

1. Jesus Himself says that only a few people are prepared when that deadline arrives.

C. So here is the picture: there is a deadline; it is the greatest of all deadlines; we all know how to prepare for deadlines, daily, monthly, yearly, and even less frequently.

1. But for some reason we fail to prepare for the greatest deadline in life. Why is that so?

**2. Could it be most people are not prepared because we don't know the appointed time (Hebrews 27a)?**

A. My electric bill is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and my water bill is due on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

1. I know those dates; but death, the greatest deadline, doesn't have a hard and fixed date – only God knows when it is to come. I don't have that information.

2. So, I reason, if God wants more people to prepare for this greatest of all deadlines, He is going to have to start telling us the date and time of our individual appointment with death. If we knew the date and time, it seems logical more people would be prepared, EXCEPT... I remind you of a story Jesus told in **(Luke 16: 27 – 31)**.

B. If someone were to rise from the dead, and warn me to prepare myself for my own appointed time, yet I still neglect to ready myself – how would knowing the appointed time get me ready?

1. Well, it wouldn't. That is human nature, pure and simple.

**3. Could it be that most people have seen and heard of the loving side of God, and thus cannot accept the judging side of God (Hebrews 9: 27b) “But after this the judgement”?**

A. There was a common occurrence 20 years ago at NFL games; you routinely see a person holding a sign that said “John 3: 16.” We all know what that means:

**\*John 3: 16.**

B. And that is very much a side of God we need to know. I am grateful for that side of God's character.

1. But there is another side of God.

2. Maybe we forget Genesis chapter 7, where God rescued Noah and his family, but then proceeded to flood all other living creatures with a flood.

3. Or how God rescued righteous Lot and his family, and then proceeded to rain down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah.

4. Or how He saved the Hebrews in Egypt, yet destroyed the pursuing Egyptian army.

C. I can understand how, if you don't have the whole picture about God, you might not be very concerned about the deadline to come – God is so much a God of love, He can't help but overlook and sins in your life and just love you into heaven.

1. The only problem with this way of thinking is you're wrong, seriously wrong.

**4. Could it be most people overlook this deadline because it occurs once in their life (v. 27c) "...for men once to die..."?**

A. My tax return is due only once a year; but I have been meeting that deadline since I was 17 years old. Therefore, I have met that particular deadline 45 times in my life.

1. I have owned a car since I was 21 years old, and have paid my insurance every 6 months since – that is over 80 times. My electric bill comes every month, and so to date I have prepared for that deadline over 430 times.

B. Now death on the other hand, only occurs once. I have no frame of reference to relate to this unique deadline.

1. Even though it is my life's greatest deadline, it only occurs once; I am so busy meeting the other deadlines in my life, it is so-o-o easy to forget about the greatest deadline!

C. Two Scriptures make this exact point:

1. **Luke 12: 16 – 20**

2. **James 4: 13 – 14**

Life's greatest deadline requires me to ask myself life's biggest question, "Self, are you prepared to meet your God?"

How about you? Are you living you life as if life's greatest deadline really is important to you?

Let's pray!