

What Can We Take Into Eternity?

by Peter Masters

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preparing for eternity and the difference between taking guilt and great gain into the afterlife.

Duration: 33:06

Scripture: Psalm 49:17, Proverbs 11:4, Matthew 6:19-20, Matthew 16:26, 1 Timothy 6:6-7, 1 Timothy 6:12, 1 Timothy 6:19, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Salvation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the reality that we enter and leave this world with nothing material, highlighting the importance of spiritual preparation for eternity. It contrasts the fate of those who die without Christ, taking only guilt, with those who know the Lord, taking great riches and gain into eternity. The message urges listeners to lay hold on eternal life and store up a good foundation for the time to come, emphasizing the significance of knowing and belonging to Christ.

Transcript

What will we take into eternity? Well, these words of Paul are a paraphrase of words of Job, there in the first chapter of his book. Life begins and ends with no material possessions at all, that is, nothing brought in by us, nothing taken out. No power or influence brought in and nothing taken away.

Tremendous testis of our values and our aims and our goals in life. It's one of these eternity verses, as they used to say, which puts life into context. In the moment, approaching death, if we are conscious, if we can think at the time, well, all earthly idols just crumble.

They're nothing. And all human aims dissolve. And all human ideas, well, human beings seem like, as it's been said, children playing with torches, with a sunlight, as it were, of eternity, an eternal knowledge approaching.

We have a short lifespan, just as well we have in some ways, the human race being what it is. Short lifespan flips the wings of ambition, limits the heights of sin. Yes, but it curbs pride and self-sufficiency in all of us.

There are certain things we can't do and, of course, foremost among them, we can't defeat death. The moment of death, probation is over. This life, this time of probation, which we live before going to stand before God to give an account of the life that we've lived, what we've done with this soul and with this body

which he's given us.

And once we die, obviously, obviously, there's no return. We can't come back and try again. King David called death the valley of the shadow of death.

Very mysterious, because nobody at the point of death has ever passed this way before. You don't know what it's going to be like. It's an experience which brings fear, and nobody who's been can come back and tell you.

And it's a valley we have to go through one by one, no companions, just you, and yet everybody will take it, but in a long line, one behind the other, no communication with each other. And yet death, while it's a journey, in another way, it's just a step. One moment you're alive, one moment you're gone, and you don't know how or when.

A lingering illness and suddenly your life is snuffed out, or you may be young and vigorous and something happens which sweeps you from the scene in a moment, in an instant. Life is uncertain. Death has been called the last trial of earthly life.

Well of course it is, but it's the last of a lot of things. You think of it, death. Well, your death is the last day of unbelief and atheism for you.

If you're an unbeliever and you're an atheist, you'll never be such again, because when you die everything you rejected is proved to you as fact. You'll find your soul disembodied, your soul takes flight and is summoned into the presence of God. Divine and eternal things become so real to you in an instant.

You can never deny them again. You're experiencing them face to face, but you're not ready. You've never been forbidden.

You're standing before God for judgement. It's all too late, and even though you may be cast into hell to be punished eternally, you'll always be a believer. You may be filled with hatred of God and remorse and bitterness even, but you'll never be an atheist again.

The greatest, the most eloquent atheist in the world, the last day of his life is the last day of his unbelief and his atheism, whatever he expects. And the last day of life is the last day of grace, the last opportunity to have mercy and forgiveness from the Lord. The last opportunity to trust in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, his amazing love, his suffering and death, to pay the price of sin for sinners.

Last opportunity to ask him for his forgiveness, to ask for new life, to yield your life to him. The last day of life is the last day of grace. It's the last day of sin in the body.

You may sin in eternity, when in judgement, when punished from the presence of God and in everlasting banishment, but you'll never do sinful things in your body. That's the end. Sins of attitude, sins of resentment, sins of hatred, may for all I know smoulder on, but you won't be at liberty to do anything offensive ever again.

So, the last day of life is the last day of sin in your present body. The last day of life is obviously the end of all your hopes, the last day you'll ever have a hope. That is if you die without God, if you die unforgiven, the last day of any opportunity.

The last day, if you die unforgiven, the last day you'll ever laugh. If you laugh then, but you're never to laugh again. No happiness, no amusement, not of any kind.

It's gone, it's finished. The last day of life is the last day of triviality. I've been a trivial person, light as a feather, laughed my way through life, scorned everything, just the kind of person who goes to work every day for little chitter-chat and gossip and little things and worry about how I look and how I'm going to enjoy myself and what I'm going to watch on telly.

Nothing more profound, trivial, trivial, light, light as a feather. The last day of triviality is the last day of life. If you're unforgiven it could be the most somber time ahead for you.

The last day of bravado, don't talk to me about Christ, don't talk to me about religion and conversion. I can make my way. The last day of bravado is the last day of life.

Just think about some of these things. What a spoiler death is. You can't beat it.

That's the sense of this verse. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The great conquerors of history, the great emperors of bygone ages, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, Alexander the Great.

These great figures of the day comes and they conquered themselves as easily as anything by death. And some of them like Alexander were still quite young. And rescuers, well that's a noble thing to do.

To rescue somebody falling from a mountain. To go out and rescue life in a lifeboat and in the crashing seas rescue drowning people. That's great.

But even rescuers at the end of life's journey is no rescue for them. All of us must go into eternity. One way or the other.

To be blessed or to be punished depending on our attitude to Christ and to God. Athletes, we're not criticizing them. There they are doing every possible kind of training to improve their performance just a little bit.

Doing the right things, eating the right things, toning every muscle and sinew. But all has got to decompose and be defeated by death. There's no avoiding it.

Rulers, however mighty, the starlings of this world even, all must obey the command. Come out of this life into eternity and obey thy plans. Death will come to everyone.

As a poet put it, we go when we hear the breaking of the everlasting waves, the roar of the ocean of eternity. That's the end of life. How will you die friend? I don't mean what will you die of.

I mean how will you die? Some people die in denial. Oh relatives go to the hospital and say to auntie and she's dying and everybody says she's dying. Poor soul who's got a terminal illness and now is the end.

Oh you're going to recover and come home. Yes she says or he says. I'd rather get better.

No need to make my peace with God. No need to repent. I die in denial.

Hope you won't do that. Hope you'll come to the Lord long before the moment comes. Some people die in anger and resentment.

They're being cut off from all their opportunities and hopes. Some people die in fear and hopelessness. The Puritans used to say that every death is a sermon.

That is every death tells a story. How did we relate to the Lord? What did he think of God? What did she think of eternity? What did he think of Christ? Was she a believer? Where is she now? Was he repentant? Did he walk with the Lord? Well what is it with us friends? The last arrow visits. Someone is felled.

Somebody dies and then the people around them just for a moment, sometimes not for long enough, they think what about me? What will happen to me when death comes? Spurgeon wrote in a letter that the orphanage, the boys orphanage had become a place of great thoughtfulness recently because they'd lost a lad, a younger teenager and he wrote that there's nothing that makes the boys more serious and for so long than to see one like themselves lowered into the cold earth. That was a striking phrase. One like themselves and they think about eternity.

Well we should all think much more than we do. Job's words, naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return. Naked in the sense that I'm a disembodied soul especially.

So we enter and we leave in destitution and in weakness. All that counts at death is what you are as a spiritual being before God. Whether spiritually you're alive and related to him or you die in antagonism and separated from him.

Is there a next world? Atheism denies it of course. Atheism says the universe is just a mass of interacting particles and there's no meaning and there's no purpose and everything is moving to ultimate self destruction and all striving in life and all passion all will vanish into oblivion. That's the creed of atheism.

It's all hopelessness and futility. No God. No afterlife.

But no says the book of God. This universe is a designed place and there is a wonderful a magnificent God. He is the great I am.

The self existing eternal God from whom all life and matter comes. He is transcendent over everything. The Lord and the giver of life.

He owns you. He's immense. In fact he's infinite.

Infinite with regard to time. He's eternal. Infinite with regard to space.

He's all seeing. He knows your every step. Your every thought.

He's unchanging. Of course he's unchanging. He's perfect beyond perfection and that which is perfect cannot remain perfect and change.

He is the unchanging God. Everywhere present. Perfectly perfectly holy.

Absolutely just and yet he's kind and he has such love and he's ready to forgive his enemies and he's provided a way of salvation. And you know there's three persons in the one Godhead. One essence.

One God and yet three. And the second person of the Trinity has entered into a human body to come and be my representative and yours if we love him and we know him and to suffer and to die to take the punishment due to us for our sin. God has a glorious plan.

A heavenly eternity. These things are magnificent. Now the human race is very complex and we have the power of reason and we have moral awareness and consciousness and we're relational and we love each other and sadly because of our sin hate each other also.

We're creative. We have the power of language and above all we have a soul which will live forever. As we've fallen creatures.

Fallen. Cut off from God. Hostile to him until we're converted.

And sinful. So sinful. We are mean and selfish and carnal.

We are deceitful. We are ill tempered. We are unkind.

We gossip. There is everything the matter with us. And our hearts are corrupted and we can never go to heaven and have the blessing of God unless we have first in this life his forgiveness and a new life given to us and we come to Jesus Christ the only Saviour.

Look at verse 7. I'm supposed to be talking about this. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. We brought nothing into.

What a startling picture. Into. If you've had babies in your family you know what happens especially for number one.

The baby arrives and the whole household changes and has to adapt. Baby becomes Lord in many ways. That's inevitable and natural.

The whole rhythm and timetable of the household must change. And you scurry around and you get in a cot and you get in all sorts of other things. So long ago I'd forgotten what.

But you get in all sorts of other things too to provide for the new life. And the baby enters in. Not through the front door of course unless born in the hospital.

But the baby enters in. Did the baby come with a removal van? Did the baby come with possessions? Did it bring anything of its own? No nothing. Everything has to be provided.

He entered in with nothing. Probably the only time of life that will ever happen to you until you come to Jesus Christ. Then you enter in for his mercy and his forgiving love and his kingdom with nothing.

You have no goodness to bring him. No good track record. No deserving.

But anyway the baby enters in. Helpless. So the journey begins.

And let's hope that the majority of parents look at that little bundle of life and say we've got a lot to do. We've got to look after this little mate. We've got to give this little one a happy childhood.

We've got to see to it that he or she is prepared for life's journey and an education and to prosper and do as well as he or she can. I have said it is that so many people don't think in terms of the whole journey. This little one I must prepare for the journey of life and the journey of eternity.

This little one must be trained to understand about the Lord and about Christ and about forgiving love and about walking with him. That's a tremendous shame. Well we go as we come.

It's as though this body is a furnished letting. If you have a furnished letting you can't bring in the removal van and take all the furniture. It's not yours.

You can't take it with you. You go as you stand up. And this is a kind of furnished letting.

This body. When I die I take nothing away. In fact it wasn't even let to me.

It was on loan. And the apostle says here it is certain we can carry nothing out. It's inescapable.

There's no variation here. No one will take anything out of a material type. It's the most certain thing in life.

You look at that baby. Well will he be tall? Will he be short? Will he do well? What will he succeed in? What will be his particular gifts or her particular gifts? You don't know. But there's one thing that's absolutely certain.

That he's going to die and stand before God and enter in to the great phase of eternity. The greatest journey imaginable. What will we take into eternity? What will you take? Well you'll take your soul.

You've got to take that that doesn't belong to you. You'll be summoned in your soul and you'll leave your body behind. What else will you take? I'll tell you what else you'll take.

If you're unconverted and you've never repented of your sin and you've never trusted in Jesus Christ that glorious Saviour who suffered and died for sinners and come to know Him. All you'll take is your guilt. You'll take that with you.

Staying in your soul into eternity to stand before God in judgment. You won't take your athleticism. You won't take your health.

You won't take loved ones. You won't take influence. Just your soul and if you're unsaved your guilt.

What a terrible tragedy. Sometimes young men and young women when you're standing in front of a mirror to comb your hair or whatever you do, putting a tie on, adjusting this or that, just think. Look at this earthly frame and say I can't take you with me.

We're in partnership. God has created me with a soul and with a body. But you, body, you can't come with me.

My soul has got to go alone. As one poet, one writer put it thinking of his death, speaking of his body, and you, my fleshly clay, long partner of my cares, in that rough veil are torn away with pain, regret and tears. You can't come with me.

I've got to say goodbye to you one day and we go our separate ways. Naked came I, naked shall I return. But you could take so much more.

You could take so much more away with you into eternity. If only you knew the Lord. If only you'd given your life to him.

Chapter 4, verse 8, bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. If you had godliness. Godliness is a wonderful technical term in Greek.

It means awe and reverence towards God. We use it as a word, as a loose synonym for righteousness today. But the meaning of the word, if you have godliness, awe for God, love and respect for him.

If you've got that, you can take it with you. And because you've got that, you take a whole lot of other things. God worked in my heart, you may say.

I understood about Christ, the Saviour and his love. I saw my need of him. I repented of my sin.

I said I am a lost sinner. I've done terrible things. I am deeply corrupt.

Oh Lord, forgive me. May it be that that suffering and death on Calvary's cross, when you bore the eternal punishment of sin for those who believe, may my sins be included there. Forgive me freely and bring me to thyself and make me a child of God and change my life and I will love thee and serve thee.

If you've done that, oh, then you've had a sight of him and he will have touched your heart and he will have given you a new nature and a new life and you'll have such love and gratitude to him and you will have proved him time and again that he's answered your prayers and helped you massively in life and blessed you and been with you. And you pray to him every day. I am a forgiven person.

I love the Lord. I'm reconciled with him. Then you take great riches into eternity.

You take great gain. Verse 6 of chapter 6, but God will enough with contentment is great gain. The Greek is literally mega, mega gain.

A mega ton, a million tons, a megaphone, a great amplifier. Mega gain, the greatest gain imaginable. If you know the Lord, for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing material out, but we can take great riches if we know the Lord and if we love him.

Oh, friends, you're soulless at peace. You have assurance of salvation. You're able to pray.

You have so many proofs of his love towards you and his mighty power and his goodness. Great gain. I once viewed spiritually was a vagrant, but then because Jesus Christ died for me and I came for him and he forgave me.

So him spiritually I am a billionaire. I was an offender heading for prison and for eternal punishment. But he made me an heir, an heir of all things to live in heaven eternally.

Friends, you may take your guilt into eternity, but you don't have to take your guilt. It can be forgiven. You can take great gain instead.

Oh, the moment will come and you'll be able to take your pardon. You've known you were pardoned since you came to Jesus Christ. Just use your imagination.

It's almost as though you've got the document with you as you cross the threshold into eternity. Here is my pardon signed in the blood of Christ that I'm a forgiven person. Your past, your right, you've got it there.

It's a document almost. This man, this woman has a right to enter the eternal glories, the eternal heavens. You've got your adoption certificate.

I'm adopted a child of God through Jesus Christ. That very word is used in the scripture. Adopted as children of God.

I was a worldling, but now I'm adopted by the Lord. You have a diary with you. Why it's so big you can scarcely carry it.

It's a diary of all your experience of the Lord, all the answers to your prayers, all the things he's ever done for you, and you literally but joyfully stagger into eternity with this great memory bank of his power and his goodness towards you. He takes your memories. What are your memories here in this world? I found the Lord at such and such a place, such and such a day, I came to him and found him.

And you take life in your soul and you take tremendous expectations. What a difference between all this and taking past your guilt. You take expectations.

You've read about them in the word of God. You've had the promises of God. Just something of what heaven will be like and glory will be like.

And you've got all this anticipation and expectation as you go. And it's all going to be realized. Millions of times greater than you could ever imagine and more wonderful.

There are two little verses here as we move to conclusion. Verse 12, lay hold on eternal life. That's what we've got to do.

Verse 19, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come. Listen, that they may lay hold on eternal life. You'll go naked, but you'll go with invisible wretched, wonderful things.

Because you know Christ and you belong to him. And you'll find him, you'll see him, you'll meet him with billions of others who have gone before you. Well friend, if you're unsaved, you're described in the Bible, in the book of Revelation, in these words.

You're pitiable. You've got nothing. Pitiable.

You're poor. You're going with nothing, just guilt and condemnation. You're miserable in that last day.

The end of life has come. You know it's all wrong. You are totally unprepared.

The one you've almost spat upon is now to be your judge. You're blind. You haven't seen wonderful things.

The way of salvation, the kindness of the Saviour. And you're naked. No righteousness.

No entitlement. Nothing. And if only you'd repent.

And if only you'd seek Christ. And rest your soul on him. And use your life for him.

And find him and know him. It's a real thing to do this. Then the opposite would be true.

And you'd go one day into eternal glory. Virtually the happiest day of your life. Think about these things friends.

Think about them when I read this verse. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out of material accumulation. Only your soul and your guilt are different if you're Christ.

Let's pray together. Oh God our gracious heavenly Father, look upon us all this night we pray and bless us. Touch every heart.

Stir us within. Help us to see our folly and foolishness. The futility of life without Christ.

Lord come down and draw our hearts and bless us now that we may trust in him whom to know and to find his life eternal. We ask it in his name for his sake. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/8PCvypsMWZY.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/peter-masters/what-can-we-take-into-eternity/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net