

If The Lord Wills

By Jim Golden

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." James 4: 13-15 NIV

Recently three events have surrounded me that have really got me to thinking about these words of our Lord's brother. Not long ago we had the deck on the back of our house replaced. The man was a friend of a neighbor. He was fairly young, only in his mid forties, I believe. He had done an excellent job and we were going to get an estimate from him for some additional work. It was then that I heard that he had come home from work, said hi to his mother and children, went into the bathroom and without warning dropped dead from a heart attack.

More recently my step=father checked into the hospital on a Friday morning for some tests because he was having difficulty going to the bathroom. The following Wednesday he died. Within those six days he experienced kidney failure and had to be put on dialysis, next his lungs began to fill with fluid and he had to be put on a respirator. After receiving the maximum amount of oxygen he could no longer breathe and went into cardiac arrest. They revived him once only for him to go into arrest again and die.

Then, most recently the neighbor who referred our deck builder to us had a sudden tragedy take place when her nephew died in a head on collision at only 28 years old. On his way to work, on a rain-soaked road, his car slid into on-coming traffic.

When we are young we think that we are going to live forever, but as we age our mortality too often confronts us with events like these. We all know that death is part of life, but we seldom think things through. With my step-father we might say, "Oh well, he was after all 72 and he lived a full life!" But, what about the deck builder or the nephew they were still young? It is appointed for all men once to die and then the judgment. We need the grace to recognize divine appointments with us for those around us before their *final appointments*.

When Tim, the deck builder died suddenly, I felt deeply saddened, so much so that when the ORKIN man came by to do a routine check for insect invaders in my home I shared the tale with him and told him that he was loved by Jesus. I am not an evangelist, but should be ready to do the work of one.

I thank God that I had the privilege of introducing my mother and step-father to Jesus. I don't know if my neighbor's nephew ever met or knew the Lord. I do know that the time for passively standing by, afraid of offending someone and not sharing the Gospel with them because we have plenty of time I pray is passed for me and I pray for you too. Death is so final and the regrets we

might have over not sharing the hope we have within us to those around us should over power any timidity or fear we may experience. I pray that we would allow the love of Christ within us to cast out all fear and compel us to seize the moment and tell those around us that salvation is found in no other name than the name of Jesus. Death comes to us all. It is not a subject we like to talk about, but with Jesus as our Savior it becomes a doorway into a new and everlasting life!

Fear and even threats can stop our love from allowing us to share the Good News, but we can do the same thing the early church did,

"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." Acts 4:29-30 NIV.

Heavenly Father I pray that Your Kingdom would come and that Your will would be done in all our lives. We know that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and to seek and save the lost, please inspire us and empower us to allow Jesus to be Jesus in us! AMEN!