

“Four Things You Can Take to the Bank!”

Hebrews 8-9 (9:27-28)

Intro. – A man was applying for a job asked the interviewer whether the company would pay for his health insurance. The interviewer said the worker would have to pay for it but it was deducted from his check. “The last place I worked the company paid for it,” he said. “Did they pay for your life insurance too?” asked the interviewer. “Sure did,” the man responded. “Not only that, but we got unlimited sick leave, 2 dozen personal days a year, severance pay, four weeks of vacation, lifetime pension and more. “Then why did you leave such a job?” asked the interviewer. “O, the company folded,” the man replied.

The Smiths went away for their summer vacation and gave their maid, Jane, a month’s wages before leaving. On their return four weeks later, Jane demanded a raise or she would quit. Mrs. Smith was dumbfounded. “Gracious,” she said, “you’ve just had a month off with full pay. You should consider yourself blessed.” “That’s just it,” Jane replied, “You paid me all that money for doing nothing, so how can you expect me to do all this work now for the same wages?”

In light of current happenings, these two stories hold meaning, don’t they? Companies are lining up for bailouts from the government, while banks scramble to simply keep afloat. There use to be a saying – *You can take it to the bank*. It simply meant you can count on that matter being sure, steadfast and absolute. Is there anything *we can take to the bank*? Are we living in such uncertain times that nothing is sure? Can you and I be sure about anything?

Purpose: to examine four matters that you and I can be absolutely certain about

The writer of Hebrews then gives four matters, four absolutes you and I *can take to the bank*:

I MAN’S APPOINTMENT TO DEATH

- death is a certainty – “...*it is appointed for man to die...*”
- Illus. – Martin Luther (Reformation leader) “Life is a constant and daily journey to death. One after another dies, and the living must merely engage in the miserable business of carrying one another to the grave. All of us are traveling the same road...”

A. Death Comes by Appointment

1. Some ask why death is permitted at all... Why is there physical death?
 - a. is it for the punishment of personal sins? – No, that has to do with the second death...
 - b. is it the whim of God playing around with you and me? – No, God doesn’t play games...
2. It is the direct result of Adam’s sin
 - a. Romans 5:12 “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*”
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 “*For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*”
 - c. death is no respecter of persons... all have sinned and the result is a physical death...
 - d. 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 “*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.*”

B. Death Comes Swiftly

1. Psalm 103:15-16 “*As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer.*”
2. James 4:14 “*Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.*”
3. Psalm 49:10-12 “*For he sees that even wise men die; the stupid and the senseless alike perish & leave their wealth to others. Their inner thought is that their houses are forever and their dwelling places to all generations; they have called their lands after their own names. But man in his pomp will not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*”
4. How true – life as we know it here is so fleeting... We must work for the night is coming!

II MAN'S APPOINTMENT TO JUDGMENT

A. God's Holiness Demands Judgment

1. God pledged that He would honor those who do good and punish those who do evil – Romans 2:4-8 *“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness... But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to each person according to His deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.”*
2. Where in this life did God reward Uriah or any other person of honor and integrity?
3. Did men like Nero, Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussain receive their full, just rewards?
4. Don't you see? The Righteousness of God demands a final day of reckoning/judgment...

B. God's Holiness Demands a Judgment for All

1. Romans 14:10 *“...For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”*
2. Ecclesiastes 3:17 *“...’God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man, for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.”,*
3. Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
4. Hebrews 10:30-31 *“For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

C. God's Holiness Demands a Thorough Judgment

5. According to our words – Matthew 12:36 *“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak; they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.”*
2. According to our thoughts – Romans 2:15-16 *“...they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”*
5. According to our motives and actions – 1 Corinthians 4:5 *“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.”*

D. God's Holiness Demands Sinners be Punished

1. Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
2. Revelation 21:8 speaks clearly of a *second death* – separation from God for all eternity...
3. Romans 6:23 basically says: we WILL relate to God, it is our choice to relate to Him as Creator alone whereby we pay for the punishment of our sins by ourselves...

III MAN'S APPOINTMENT TO SALVATION

A. Salvation Has Been Freely Provided

1. Christ died for all – i.e. He paid for the punishment of your sin, my sin, the sin of mankind!
2. 2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*

B. Salvation Must be Freely Received

1. Salvation is a “gift” and like any true gift it must be *received* – received on the instructions of the giver. – Illus. – coupon as a gift... coupon for free meal at Ruth's Chris...
2. Saved BY grace, THROUGH faith, AT/IN baptism, FOR good works!!

IV MAN'S APPOINTMENT TO THE COMING KING

A. His Return is Foretold

1. Prophets, Apostles, Angels and especially Christ Himself all said that He will return!

2. Our Lord made clear that He is coming again!

B. His Return is Unknown

1. The timing at least... for now we know He is preparing a place for you and me!
2. Constantly told to watch and be ready for His return – we are to be servants not knowing when the master returns – ever vigilant and ever ready for the Masters appearance! You can take it to bank!!

Conclusion: Clarence Thomas, Justice of the Supreme Court, remember him... Recently wrote a book entitled *My Grandfather's Son: A Memoir*. Amongst many matters addressed in this book Thomas said the following concerning his grandfather: “Modern nihilists and relativists think that we can decide or make up right and wrong. People like my grandfather understood that there was right and wrong, as certain as that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. And they made their choices between the two... When my brother and I went to live with him as kids, he told us: ‘Boys, I’m never going to tell you to do as I say. I’m going to tell you to do as I do.’ How many people can say that? And I asked my brother once, ‘Did he ever fail to live up to his promise?’ No.”

Thomas was recently asked where he found the courage to make the unpopular stands that he did. He responded, “I take my clerks to Gettysburg every year. They go over to stand where Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address. “Do you know that speech? He left it for us, the living to finish the business.” I take that very seriously. And my clerks get the point. We are here to further the business that Lincoln was talking about... I think of my grandparents. One of the things I am trying to do is to make sure that everything they did was worth it – that if they were to appear right now they would say, ‘You’ve made our sacrifices worth it.’ That’s all I want.”

Are we doing the same for our Lord? With these four absolutes we can take to the bank, are we urgently about finishing the business our Lord gave us? When the Lord comes back, will He say to you and me, “You have made my sacrifice worth it all!”? Are we telling our young people “do as I do?”