

59-04-03-In the Mist of Life

memorial, funeral, sudden death, surprise, sin, uncertainty

James 4:13-17

With God in charge of our lives, we can handle the surprises.

INTRODUCTION:

–Life is full of surprises, and a sudden death is a big one. If we were more realistic, it wouldn't be a surprise, because we know that “the two sure things in life are death and taxes.” Some even get away cheating on taxes. But no one cheats death.

– 3 weeks ago, you didn't know you'd be sitting here. 3 weeks from now, there could be another memorial service for someone we know, and we hope to God that someone isn't us! That's the point of my message. We have to “hope to God.” Somehow, God must fit into the big picture and plans of our lives. (Read **text**.)

–My title is drawn from a play-on-words from this passage. If we meet death “in the *MIDST* of life,” it is a devastating surprise. But if we visualize ourselves on a journey “in the *MIST* of life,” death may still surprise us, but **HOM.idea**.

I. A Look at Our Attitude: How We Plan...

- A. If life is misty and uncertain, should we plan at all? Yes but God must be a central ingredient in the planning.
- B. “*Attitude is everything!*”-- Our biggest attitude problem: *pride*. (“*Pride comes before a fall,*” and *falls* are a divine curriculum in the *School of Hard Knocks*.)
- C. God wants us to have a realistic attitude about our *mortality*: this is where “living in the *MIST* of life” comes in.

TRANS: The steps we take “in a *mist*” are a gamble, whether it's a business venture or getting married. [What's the “R” in RENO stand for? “RISK,” not because of the gambling casinos, but in-&-out marriage chapels. Newlyweds see no risk in marriage; but ask a new divorcee about it.] Can we avoid all risks in the journey of life? **NO!** Crossing the street risks being run down. Eating out risks food-poisoning. **BUT** in the risk of walking “in the *mist* of life,” we can journey with...

II. The Right Perspective: Having God in the Picture...

- A. The big lie: “*You're on your own!*” (A lie only has power in your life if you believe it. **AND** a lie only destroys your life if you follow it.)
- B. The BIG truth: “*You're not on your own, but the God who is with you wants you to trust Him.*”
 1. [La Rue's business card: “*I may not know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future.*”]
 2. **With God in charge of our lives, we can handle the surprises.** (God sees through the darkest mist. Nothing takes Him by surprise. **AND** He also extends His hand to us and says, “*Trust Me. I can take you safely through this misty life.*”)

TRANS: Is death safe then? Well, it's part of the mist, and we can't see whether it's safe or not. **BUT** Jesus, who went there and came back from death, says to us: “Follow Me.” [Rob d'Spain's picture of Jesus inviting us to take His hand.]

III. What Do We Do in the Mist in the Meantime?

- A. Part of trusting God in the mist is believing what He tells us about what's *right* to do and what's *wrong* to do:
 1. through a God-given conscience (everybody has one, but they don't always follow it)
 2. through a God-given Rule Book (the Bible)
 3. through a God-given example (How would God know what it's like to be human and journey through “the *mist* of life”? By becoming *one of us*, a legitimate, genuine human: JESUS).
- B. The mentioning of “*sin*” in the passage [*“missing the target”* – easy to do when your target is off in a distant mist]. (Where we usually miss is shooting at “*the good life*” and finding we were shooting at a mirage rather than the real target.)
- C. Traveling with God is the real “*good life*,” and to the good life, death is not a threat, but a passage to *a better life*.

CONCLUSION:

–This message is send you back out into the mist of life with hope. **With God in charge of our lives, we can handle the surprises.**

James 4:13-17 (NIV)

¹³Now 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.”

¹⁴Why, 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.

¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

¹⁶As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.