

# A Time for Everything

Lesson 2

A Time for Perspective

# Prayer

# **Introductory Activity**

### What will they say?

A popular productivity guru tells people to imagine what people will say about you at your funeral. He says this gives you perspective as you make decisions on how to spend your life. Read the following words about two dead "kings," and compare especially the words in bold. Which one of these "eulogies" do you think people would generally prefer at their funeral?

#### King One:

Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand, Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, Tell that its sculptor well those passions read Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed: And on the pedestal these words appear: **'My name is** \_\_[name]\_\_, **king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'** Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away.<sup>1</sup>

#### King Two:

"Now when [name] had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ozymandias by Percy Shelley (1792-1822) <sup>2</sup> Acts 13:36

**King Two** is King David, one of the most important figures in the Bible. In small groups, do the following:

- List as many impressive "eulogy-worthy" accomplishments that David had in life as you can.
- Read 2 Samuel 7:12 and reread the words above from Acts 13:36. Then finish this sentence:

"One of the most important things you can say about the life of David (or any believer who has died) is..."

• Describe how the way someone finishes that sentence can affect their perspective on life.

# Take Up Your Cross

- 1. Read Mark 8:31-33. Describe the "concerns of God" that Jesus has in mind as he looks ahead in his earthly life.
- 2. What are the human concerns of Peter that led him to want to avoid God's plan?

- 3. Read Mark 8:34-38. Apply these verses to a person's perspective on...
  - Career -
  - Singlehood/Marriage/Choice of Spouse -
  - Children -
  - Sports -
  - Money -
  - Crippling/Terminal Illness -
  - Technology -
  - News/Shows -
  - Anything else?

## I'm but a Stranger Here...

- 4. A well-loved hymn reads, "I'm but a stranger here, heav'n is my home..." Hebrews 13:14 says, "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come."1 Peter 1:17 says, "Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, *live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.*"
  - a) Describe the difference in how you treat a friend's guest room where you are staying for two nights and how you treat your own room at home.
  - b) Describe the difference between treating this world as a guest room or as your permanent home.
- Ruth is a great example of someone living as a foreigner. She was not from Israel; she was from the foreign nation of Moab. Yet she chose to live as a foreigner. Read Ruth 1:8-9, 11-13, and 16-18. Then answer the following questions.
  - a) Identify earthly reasons Naomi had to urge Ruth to go back to her homeland?
  - b) Identify some earthly reasons people may have to live only for this life and not for God.
  - c) In your own words, what was Ruth's motivation for choosing to live as a foreigner in Israel despite the earthly difficulty?
  - d) Reread Ruth 1:17 and think back to Mark 8:34-37 above. In your own words, what is the Christian's motivation for living as a foreigner in this life despite the difficulty?

- e) Ruth's faith-filled perspective led her to treat Naomi with faithfulness and love. Read
  1 Peter 1:18-23, especially verses 21 and 22. For what reasons does an eternal perspective help us "love one another deeply from the heart"?
- f) Read Ruth 4:13-22. Identify the most important details of Ruth's "eulogy." Imagine how this portion of Scripture might look different if she had been focusing on human concerns in Ruth 1:17?

## **Group Discussion**

In 2 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul is talking about how he and his coworkers are suffering all sorts of difficulties in this life because of their weak (jars of clay) bodies and because of persecution. And yet because they know the risen Jesus, they are happy to suffer these things for their sake, "that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God."

#### Read 2 Corinthians 4:15-18.

- List at least five possible troubles in this life. Put a check by the ones that *feel* light and momentary when you're going through them.
- Circle the troubles that *are* light and momentary compared to the eternal glory waiting for us?
- We can't see the unseen. We can see troubles and toys and everything else that might distract us from heaven. Brainstorm ways Christians can keep their eyes fixed on the eternal things that are unseen.

# **Closing Activity**

#### What will they say?

In the introductory activity, we thought about what people might say about our lives after we die. Much of our life as Christians is lived among the body of Christ, in a local congregation. Share some nice things you've heard or remember about sainted Christians who served in ways big and small in our church.