

Why Are You Waiting?

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That's what the preacher asked Saul of Tarsus just moments before he arose and was baptized. He had already seen the resurrected Christ, learning that he was persecuting the Son of God and His church. He spent three days and nights praying and fasting, thinking about what he had done. He heard what plans God had in store for him, to be His special instrument and vessel. That was all Saul needed to see. "And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "And he arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18).

The real question is: why are you waiting? We use excuses all the time to try and explain our way out of various kinds of predicaments—why we're late, why we don't have our homework done, and why we can't pay our bills on time. Excuses are awfully convenient, because they allow us to take the blame off ourselves and place it on circumstances that are seemingly beyond our control. People buy them everyday. The Lord doesn't.

Just because you've come up with some excuse doesn't mean you are excused. What are you planning to tell the Lord at the judgment in hopes that He will ignore your disobedience to the gospel? Perhaps, something like this...

"I planned to do it later." Tomorrow has got to be the busiest day of the year. So many plans, so many diets to start, so many habits to quit. But never enough resolution or commitment to no longer put off until tomorrow what can be done today.

After Paul spoke to Felix about "righteousness, self control, and the judgment to come", the ruler became frightened and responded, "go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you" (Acts 24:24-25). Guess what? He never found the time.

I often wonder how many people have died outside of Christ with good intentions of obeying the gospel at a more opportune time. They kept saying, "I'll get around to that" and they never did. They thought, "I'll have plenty of opportunities," and they ran out. Remember, death doesn't always come at a convenient or opportune time. Judgment will come "like a thief in the night." There is no better time than now.

"I was afraid of what my family would think." The Lord expects us to have strong family ties. Parents who bend over backwards for their children; brothers and sisters who defend and stick up for one another. But He also expects to have a greater loyalty to Him than we do for even our own flesh and blood.

Jesus said, "he that loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). There

comes a time when it no longer matters what your grandfather believes or what conviction your parents hold to. You will stand in judgment based on what you believed and what you did (2 Cor. 5:10). Working out your own salvation is between you and the Lord and has nothing to do with your family.

And how do you know how your decision to become a Christian will influence your spouse or parents or children? They may be influenced by your determination to do right and want to become your spiritual family as well.

“I couldn’t be as good a Christian as everyone else.” The fear of failure has caused many to drop out of the race before they even began. But everyone has to start somewhere. You can’t expect to be some mature Christian until you first become a babe in Christ.

Besides that, the Lord doesn’t measure people the way we do. He looks at the heart. He knows when a person is trying the best they can to serve Him with all their ability. He doesn’t expect you to do what everyone else can do. He expects you to do what you can do.

Christianity is an ongoing, life-growing experience. You can’t run until you learn how to walk. But you have to get started. Or you won’t get anywhere.

So, why are you waiting? “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” You’re out of excuses.