

This Too, Shall Pass Away

by J.R. Miller

The sermon teaches us to remember that all things are fleeting and will soon pass away, and to find hope and peace in the eternal love of God.

Scripture: Job 11:16-17, Psalm 30:5, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 6:19-20, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Corinthians 5:1, James 4:14, 1 Peter 1:24-25

Topics: "Hope in God", "Transience of Life"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the transient nature of life's experiences, urging us to maintain perspective during both trials and triumphs, as they will eventually pass away. He shares anecdotes illustrating how a calm acceptance of life's fleeting moments can lead to a more peaceful existence. The sermon highlights the importance of remembering that both sorrow and joy are temporary, encouraging believers to find solace in God's eternal presence amidst life's changes. Miller concludes by reminding us that while earthly joys and pains are fleeting, our relationship with God offers lasting hope and security.

Transcript

We meet life's experiences wisely--only when we keep in mind their transientness. Whatever they may be, painful or pleasant--they will soon pass away. We need not be too greatly troubled by that which is hard--for relief will soon come. We should not be too much elated by prosperity--for it will not last always.

A Christian woman who is constantly engaged in some form of activity, was telling of the way she learned a valuable lesson. She was to meet a friend at a railway station, and the two were to go together to an important meeting. They were a few seconds late--they saw the train on which they intended to go to their engagement moving away. The first woman was greatly annoyed and spoke to the other of her deep regret that they had missed the train. The other was quiet and undisturbed, and answered, "Oh, this will soon pass away!" The first woman tried to show her friend how very unfortunate it was, that they were late--but to all the reasons given why they should be vexed and worried--her only answer was, "This, too, will pass away." She persisted in refusing to be disturbed, finding her refuge always in the thought, that whatever was vexing or annoying, would soon be gone.

The woman then told her friend the story of a minister who had over his study door the sentence, "This, too, shall pass away." When he had a caller whose conversation was tiresome, or whose errand was too trifling for the time it was occupying, he consoled himself and restrained his impatience by the reflection, "This, too, shall pass away." The caller would not stay always. When the minister came in weary after an

exhausting service, or from some piece of hard work, and was disposed to give way to the feeling, he rallied himself to cheerfulness by remembering that he needed only a night's rest to renew his energies, that by tomorrow the weariness would be gone. When something unpleasant had happened in the congregation, and he was disposed to be discouraged or to act disagreeably, he overcame the tendency by looking at his motto which reminded him that this, too, would pass away--and thus preserved his sweetness of spirit.

There is in the little lesson taught by this good woman--a secret of quiet and tranquil life, which it would be well for all of us to learn. It is not a mere fancy, either, a pleasant fiction, that the things which fret us--are of only transient stay. The most unpleasant experiences, have but brief duration. Today they disturb us and make us miserable--but when we awake tomorrow, they will have gone and we shall almost have forgotten them.

There is a story of an eastern king who sought long in vain for some philosophy of life, which would give him quietness and peace amid all changes of condition and circumstances. His little child proved wiser than all his famous counselors. She gave him a ring in which these words were engraved, "This, too, shall pass away." The king never forgot the lesson, and his life was wondrously helped by it. This story has been widely told and has given to many a secret of endurance, which has enabled them to keep hopeful and strong through great trials and severe struggles.

The more we think of the saying the more widely does it seem to apply to the things that are apt to give us anxiety or to dismay or disturb us. All of these things will soon pass away. We have it in the Scripture teaching: "Weeping may remain for a night--but rejoicing comes in the morning!" Psalm 30:5

Sorrow passes quickly; joy lasts forever. The cloud quickly flies from the heavens; the sun shines on undimmed. There are only a few dark days in a year--and they are soon forgotten in the long seasons of sunshine and blue sky. Sickness is painful--but it, too, soon passes. Most of our trials are short-lived. They make us wretched for a day--but after we have slept--we wake up to find them gone. The first bitterness of sorrow passes away--as the comforts of divine love come with their heavenly light. Paul speaks of our light affliction which is but for a moment, in contrast with the eternal weight of glory which will follow.

Zophar puts among the promises of blessing this: "You will forget your misery. It will all be gone like water under the bridge. Your life will be brighter than the noonday. Any darkness will be as bright as morning." Job 11:16-17

There are but a few days of sadness in most lives, with many more joy-days. Then most of our griefs and pains are short-lived. If we would remember this, telling ourselves in every time of suffering, "This, too, shall pass away," it would be easier to bear the pain--or endure the hardness. One purpose of 'nights' is to end days; that we may begin altogether in the new every morning.

Much of the discomfort of our lives--is caused by people! Ofttimes they are annoying. They are not thoughtful or considerate. They do not regard our wishes. They have no patience with our idiosyncrasies. They do not show us proper respect. They are not always gentle with us. They irritate us by ways that are distasteful to us. Some of us find it a most difficult matter to get along with people. It would help us, however, in our task of keeping sweet and loving, if we would always recall the fact, in any experience which puts our patience and good nature to sore test--that this, too, shall pass away!

Duty is oftentimes hard. It seems to us--that it is altogether beyond our strength. In every earnest and useful life, there are times when the ordinary stint of work is greatly increased. The burden becomes so heavy, that it seems to us we cannot bear it. Here again there is wondrous inspiration in the recollection, that we shall soon find relief from the great pressure, "This, too, shall pass away." We need to keep up the tension only a little while longer. Anybody can carry a heavy load for a mile. Anybody can go on, however hard the way, for an hour. When we know that soon our tasks shall be lightened, and our duty not be too great for our strength--we can get along the little way we still have to go!

The truth of the transientness of all earthly things--should also temper our human joys, and save us from being too deeply absorbed in them. This is true of pure human affections. God wants us to cherish them. But we are never to forget that there is a sense in which these, too, shall pass away away. We cannot keep our loved ones ever by our side. There is a way, however, in which we may lift these human relations out of the transient, the evanescent, so that they shall be resumed in that world where there is no change, where no flowers fade, where nothing beautiful and good ever shall pass away. But in a human and earthly sense--we should remember, even of the tenderest affection and the sweetest joy, "This, too, shall pass away!"

But the lesson may not end here. The message that 'all things are fleeting' is not the gospel. It would leave no place to stand upon, when the visible universe shall crumble to nothing. It leaves us nothing to keep forever, when earth's treasures all shall perish. Is there then nothing that abides, that will not pass away? Yes, there is!

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;

Earth's joys grow dim--its glories pass away;

Change and decay in all around I see;

O you, who changest not--abide with me."

If we have God--our hands never can be empty. God is eternal, and those who have their home in the castle of his love, have an imperishable hope. When all earthly things pass away, as they will do--they will be safe in the house not made with hands, which shall abide forever! If we are wise, we will not be content with the things that are seen, which are transient--but will live for the things which are unseen, which are eternal.

"What country is that which I see beyond the high mountains?" asked a dying Christian child of its mother. "There are no mountains, my child. You are alone with me in this room," the mother replied. Again, after a moment, the child whispered, "O mother, I see a beautiful country, and others are beckoning me to come to them. But there are high mountains between us, too high for me to climb. Who will carry me over?"

There could be only silence on the mother's lips. In a little while, the child, stretching out his pale, wasted hands, whispered, "Mother, the Strong Man has come to carry me over!" And the boy was gone--carried over in the arms of the Good Shepherd!

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