

Introduction:

- “*“Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is. You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath.”* (Psalm 39:4–5, NLT)
- The Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year, 2014, was the word “vape”. It is the abbreviation for the word vapor or vaporize. Mostly associated with electronic-cigarettes. It's a bit ironic that the Word of the Year, "vape," is an abbreviation of the word vapor--a word used in Scripture to illustrate, of all things, the brevity (or, abbreviated nature) of life. According to the biblical usage, you, and all that you will accomplish during the course of your life, are but a "vape" (as though being a vapor wasn't short enough!).
- Hebrews Chapter 11 is the Hall of Fame of “Faith Vapes”. They are people whose lives are but a vapor but yet, in faith did great things—they were remembered.
 - In Ps 39 David is lamenting that his life is so short. But he is asking that God remind him that his days are numbered and that his life is short...really short. *“My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best each of us is but a ‘vape’.*
- Why does David pray this prayer in Ps 39? And why is it important to see those heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 as ‘vapes’? Lets begin by making some observations of the vapes found in Hebrew 11:
 1. They all had short lives.
 2. They all heard from God some specific thing to say or do.
 3. They all believed and acted on what they heard.
 4. They all did not know they were great while they were doing it. By making these observation we can live bigger than life!

I. Faith Vapes All Lived Short Lives

- A. Hebrews 11 is the hall of fame of those found in the Word of God having great faith. The writer specifically calls them out pointing to their faith and what they accomplished. These Vapes all had short lives!
 1. Able had a short life-killed by his brother Cain.
 2. Enoch and Noah lived hundreds of years-short life in light of eternity. Eternity has no beginning and it has no end. So no matter how long a segment of life you put into eternity that segment is just a vape, whether it is 6 years, 60 years or 600 years.
- B. That is the essence of Davids prayer in Ps 39:4-5. Why do you think David, a vape, is asking this question? Let look at some answers.
 1. David is pondering how much of his life is already gone. Therefore, time is our most precious commodity. Your life is a segment of time. What are you going to do with it that will have lasting/eternal results. David is not asking for the sake of knowing how many days but of deciding what am I going to do with them.
 - a) ***It takes a mature person to ponder how much of life is gone. Immature people do not ask that kind of a question. The older one gets the more likely they are to be asking that question. The wiser one gets the more likely they are to be asking that question. Ie. Diaper to Rocker. Azariah, is not thinking about how much of his life is left or ‘was I effective this past year.’ Yet my dad and I pondered this question many times while I was home visiting my parents. We are older and more mature now.
 - b) David, I am sure of this was thinking, “I should have done this/ or done it better, I should not have done that, God let me live before you making my days count.
 - c) Because life is short you evaluate your schedule. Where is my time/life being spent.
 - d) Because life is short you look to invest it wisely. You do that Mt 6:19-21 thing and store up treasure in heaven. That treasure does not get there by living for yourself.
 2. Vapes, who number their days, are desiring to live life with a purpose. I want my life to count.
 - a) This is the prayer of a man who realizes his life is short and in light of eternity I need to make it count. Purpose goes beyond ourselves if it is to count for eternity.
 - b) If we do not ask this question up front in our lives then we ask it at the end having lived life with huge regrets. But answering it up front give us reason to live, why we live and for whom we are living.
 3. Vapes who number their days are seeking to lengthen their day by living big. “Life is short, live long...be and encourager.” Live life in such a way that long after you are gone people are still talking

about you. To do that you have to impact people in a heart felt way. “You can impress at a distance but impact happens up close.”

- C. Vapes realize the value of an eternally invested life. In other words, they know what is left after your life is tossed in the fire. This person is living with eternity in mind. They know what counts for eternity and they make choices. *“Because of God’s grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.”* (1 Corinthians 3:10–15, NLT) Living with eternity in mind will produce eternal rewards!

II. Faith Vapes All Heard From God

- A. Hebrews chapter 11 reveals to us that it is a natural thing to hear from God. In this chapter, famous Bible people all the way to ‘no name’ all heard God and lived their lives in pursuit of what had been revealed to them. God intends for His people to always be hearing from Him. It was He who gave us ears to hear and eyes to see.
1. It is not good to not be hearing from God. In fact the Bible calls those times ‘rare’ when God’s voice is not being heard.
 2. ... *Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.*” (1 Samuel 3:1, NLT)
- B. They all heard from God some specific thing to say or to do. The Word of the Lord was precious to them. What they had heard from God they held as treasure. Mary ‘pondered’/treasured the Shepherds words in her heart.
- C. The Word of the Lord gives us the opportunity to live life BIG!
1. Jn 6:63 His words are Spirit and they are life. Zoe! They are life giving! They do something to the inner man of a person. Ie. New Creation, new creation realities such as righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit.
 2. The Holy Spirit brings to the church the prophetic attributes of the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - a) God communicating His thoughts, His intentions, to His people.
 - b) God giving us dreams, visions, impression, words of encouragement.
 - c) The prophetic as seen in the OT is the Hebrew word Nabi - to bubble up, spring forth. It is the picture of a flowing well. It releases refreshing, satisfying, continual supply.
 3. The Word of the Lord empowers us to live long inspire of a short life! Ie. Israel. Israel exists because the Word of the Lord came to Abraham. Gen 15:1, 4 *“The word of the Lord came to Abraham...”* God called Abram out from his own people and promised Him a family...sons like the stars in the sky. Abrahams short life produced lasting impact through today! The heros/vapes of Hebrews 11 are still giving us life today. The nabi/prophetic words given then are still bubbling with life.
 - a) Every time God speaks to you, you are being empowered to live beyond your allotted segment of time in this life.
 - b) “Life is short live long...be an encourager!”
 4. The Word of the Lord is eternal. Jn 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word.” This tells me that God is a communicator. He desires so much to communicate he sent His one and only Son. All through the prophets we hear. *“And the Word of the Lord came to”*... Those words are eternal and they have eternal impact. When you are having eternal impact on peoples lives you are living long! You are living Big!

III. Faith Vapes All Acted On What They Heard

- A. Faith in action or a living faith is what we read about.

1. If I say Noah, you think big boat. If I say Abraham you think Isaac on the altar. If I say Moses you think Red Sea, Plagues, Deliverer. It is the high lights, the glamor of event and the glory of doing something great for God.
 2. Faith in action is what we see in scripture. What you do not see is how dull, boring, challenging, burdensome, and fulfilling doing the Word of the Lord can be. That is why it is called faith, great faith; because men and women kept the faith, kept acting on word given to them in spite of the resistance, time, challenges etc. They kept walking so the story kept being written.
 3. The story we read of the Vapes is the doing of God's word. Never forget: **GOD IS NOT DONE WITH YOUR STORY!!**
- B.** Your life is short make it count! Number your days. Obey, the Word of God! Get the prophetic word of God and live it out. Write you story!
1. Regret is not having tried and failed. Regret is not having tried or inaction. That is what we do not want to find at the end of our lives. "I wish I would have spent more time at work, more time having fun, etc. At the end of our lives we will know what is important because we will be seeing from an eternal perspective with no time to make changes.
 2. Because they acted on what they heard, they had a story to tell.
 3. What are you acting on? Will it last for eternity?

IV. Vapes Had No Idea They Were Great

- A.** These vapors of lives we see in Hebrews 11 had no clue they were great men and women of God. They were just doing/living life. They were doing what they heard in their hearts from God to the best of their ability. Ie. In the DVD's Band of Brothers they interview soldier of WWII. They call one man a hero and he get upset. "Heroes! We weren't heroes! We were just doing out job."
- B.** The New Testament calls them examples. 1 Cor 10:11 Examples for our understanding. So that we too could do what they did. Because they lived big/eternally they are still impacting us today.
- C.** We become big in life because we live for others. The people who impact us the most are the one who have given us the most of themselves in this life. Those who pour themselves out for others win a name for themselves. Ie. My father in law was huge giver to others in time, money, laughter, helping etc.

Conclusion:

- Your life is just a vapor. We are here for a short time and we are gone. What will you leave behind.
- Do you know that God spoke to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:14 and said, "If you will obey, and walk in my ways I will lengthen your days like your Father David."
- Your book is still open and the pages that are empty, what will you have written upon them?
- In the secret in the quiet place, In the stillness you are there.

Only One Life

Two little lines I heard one day,
 Traveling along life's busy way;
 Bringing conviction to my heart,
 And from my mind would not depart;
 Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
 Only what's done for Christ will last.
 Only one life, yes only one,
 Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
 Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
 And stand before His Judgment seat;
 Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
 Only what's done for Christ will last.
 Only one life, the still small voice,
 Gently pleads for a better choice

Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill,
Living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say 'twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

poem written by C.T. Studd – missionary