

Things We Cannot Escape

Romans 2:3-11

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** The Bible tells us there are certain things from which we are to flee:

1 Tim. 6:11-12: *“But you, O man of God, flee these things [i.e., greed, pursuit of money & material things, vv. 6-10] and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”*

1 Cor. 6:18: *“Flee sexual immorality.”*

1 Cor. 10:14: *“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”*

2 Tim. 2:22: *“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

2. It's essential for our spiritual health/salvation to heed the apostle by fleeing these things.

3. However, the Bible (as well as common sense) also tells us there are some things we cannot flee.

4. **3** Tonight I want to consider six **Things We Cannot Escape**.

II. DISCUSSION:

One thing we cannot escape is...

1. **4** Personal responsibility:

A. We live in an age where few people are willing to take real responsibility for their own actions and their own lives.

(1) Perhaps you've heard the latest sad story in the life of Tiger Woods.

(2) At one time he was the most famous athlete/celebrity in the world.

(3) From 2001 to 2012 he was listed by Forbes as the highest paid athlete in the world.

(4) In 2012, he made \$78.1 million in prize money, product endorsements, commercials, etc.

(5) In 2009, he had a huge “fall from grace” when it was found he was a serial adulterer (121 women including his neighbor's 21-year old daughter who he had known since she was 14-years old.).

(a) Mr. Woods blamed his infidelities on a “sexual addiction.” (I'm not really responsible because I'm sick.).

(b) He even checked himself into a clinic where he was treated for his “disease.”

(6) Since his fall from grace, Tiger has been plagued by back problems that have ruined his career as a professional golfer (The greatest professional golfer of all-time?).

(7) A few days ago, Mr. Woods was found asleep at the wheel of his Mercedes SUV.

(a) The driver's side tires were blown out and there was a dent in the front fender.

(b) Wood's refused to take a breathalyzer test and he failed the field sobriety test administered by the state police.

(c) Dash-cam video (available on the internet) showed him unable to stand up straight and obviously unable to function properly.

(d) Again, he excused his behavior and blamed it on a “prescription drug reaction.”

- (8) I don't mean to make light of Mr. Wood's transgressions.
- (a) I'm no better! Rom. 3:23
 - (b) I too have made many excuses for my sins and I'm not proud of it. I too have, at times in the past, been lame insofar as taking true responsibility for my sins.
- B. But the point I want to make is this:
- (1) Like Tiger, most of us "take responsibility" for our sins.
 - (2) But we really don't, because just as quickly we make excuses for them.
 - (3) People like to play the "Blame Game."
- C. Adam and Eve tried this when God confronted them regarding their sin:
- Gen. 3:12-13:** *"Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.' And the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate'" (Gen. 3:12-13).*
- (1) **The "devil made me do it" excuse.**
 - (2) People like to blame others for their mistakes and problems, but God holds us responsible for our own choices.
 - (3) Some even blame God! "God just made me this way."
- Ezek. 18:20:** *"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."*
- E. So, we need to stop making excuses and start taking responsibility for our actions and attitudes. **Full and complete responsibility!**
- Rom. 14:11-12:** *"For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."*
- 2 Cor. 5:10-11:** *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

Another thing we cannot escape is...

2. 5 Our influence upon others:

- A. We live in a society where most people have, what I call, the "Frank Sinatra" attitude.
- (1) You might remember his song, "I did it my way."
 - (2) Most people get their feathers ruffled when it's pointed out their behavior affects others.
 - (3) You get something like: "I don't care, that's their problem." especially when they do things that can have a negative influence on others.
- B. That is NOT the way a Christian behaves and views his/her relationships with others! Regardless of who it is, whether you know them or not!
- (1) Every one of us have an influence upon others.
 - (2) John Donne: *"No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent..."*
- Rom. 14:7:** *"For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself."*

C. The Bible warns that “evil company corrupts good habits” but also encourages us to be a good influence upon others: “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:33, 10:32).

(1) We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16).

(2) We are to look out for the “other guy” before ourselves!

Phil. 2:3-4: “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

(3) We'll have to answer on Judgment Day for our influence: good or bad.

Another thing we cannot escape is...

3. 6 The presence of God:

A. We can keep secrets from others (Most of the time, but not all of the time.).

B. But, we cannot hide anything from God. Nothing! Never!

C. David acknowledged there's no place where he could go to escape the presence of God:

Psa. 139:7-12: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.”).

Prov. 15:3: “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”

Job 34:21-22: “For His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps. 22 There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.”

Jer. 16:17: “For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes.”

D. The Hebrew writer warned, “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:13).

E. It's awesome to know God sees everything we do, He knows every thought we think!

F. It is even more awesome to know the one Person we cannot hide ourselves from is the same Person we must stand before in judgment.

2 Cor. 5:10-11a: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”

G. We can mentally suppress the reality of judgment; but God sees all!

Another thing we cannot escape is...

4. 7 The consequences of sin:

A. We may be able to hide our sins from others, but we cannot hide from the temporal and eternal consequences of our sin.

(1) Eternal consequences: **Rom. 6:23:** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- (a) If unforgiven, we will hear these words from Jesus: *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...”* (Matt. 25:41).
- (b) Our fate is to be *“cast into the lake of fire”* (Rev. 20:15).
- (2) Temporal consequences: The spiritual consequences of our sins can be forgiven, but the Bible never promises the removal of the temporal consequences of our sins.
 - (a) We will reap what we sow (**Gal. 6:7-8**: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*).
Prov. 5:21-22: *“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths. 22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.”*
Num. 32:23: *“...be sure your sin will find you out.”*
 - (b) Sin always leads to misery and regret (if we don’t sear our conscience; 1 Tim. 4:2).
 - (i) I know the Lord forgave me of all of my sins when I was baptized (Acts 22:16); but I still regret the sins of my past (remember Peter? Matt. 26:34, 75).
 - (ii) Imagine the thoughts that go through the minds of many women on Mother’s Day (or what would have been the child’s birthday) who have gotten an abortion.
 - (iii) Consider those who abuse their bodies with tobacco, drugs or alcohol. They can be forgiven of that sin, but their bodies will still bear the marks of their past actions (e.g., lung cancer, liver failure, permanent brain damage).
 - (iv) Consider those who commit fornication can be forgiven of that sin, but they will still face the physical consequences of that lifestyle (e.g., STDs, unwanted pregnancy, loss of reputation).
 - (v) Consider those who gossip and slander others can be forgiven of that sin, but they can have a difficult time overcoming their reputation.
- B. Sin always brings regret, bitterness, guilt, and resentment sooner or later; both in this life and in the life to come.

Another thing we cannot escape is...

5. 8 Death:

- A. We all tend to live our lives as if we will never die. Don’t we; I mean we really do!
 - (1) But we all know from practical experience everybody dies.
 - (2) Nothing is more certain than “death and taxes.” (**Heb. 9:27**: *“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”*).
- B. Man has sought the fountain of youth” for centuries (The ancients did so, e.g., Ponce de Leon; us moderns do it through science.).
 - (1) But the daily obituaries and the dotting of the landscape with cemeteries remind us our appointment with death is inevitable.
 - (2) We can try to postpone death by making healthy choices, but death will eventually come to all of us. Remember Jim Fixx?
 - (a) In 1977 he wrote the best-selling book: *The Complete Book of Running*.

- (b) He is credited with helping start America's fitness revolution by popularizing the sport of running and demonstrating the health benefits of regular jogging.
- (c) Do you remember what happened to him? He died of a heart attack while jogging!
- C. How foolish it is for us to ignore or try to deny this reality ("*Death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home.*" Sir Francis Bacon).
- D. It may sound like a cliché; but we need to live each day as if it were our last.
 - (1) Because, it is guaranteed someday will be our last day (mention people you've known that died suddenly).
 - (2) If we live like every day may be our last, we will appreciate the brevity of life (Jas. 4:14); and aspire to live like Paul:

2 Tim. 4:6-8: "...the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."
 - (3) Are you ready to meet your Maker?

6. **9 Judgment:**

- A. Just as we cannot escape death; we also cannot escape God's judgment: **Heb. 9:27:** "*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*"
- B. The word "must" means we are "bound...by an imperative requirement" (Dictionary.com).
 - (1) A "must" is something that is mandatory, it is not optional.
 - (2) A "must" cannot be avoided no-way, no-how!
- C. Judgment is a "must":

2 Cor. 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
- D. On that final day, everyone who has ever lived will stand before the Lord in judgment.

Matt. 25:31-32: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."

Rom. 14:10-12: "For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Rev. 20:11-15: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."
- E. Everything we've ever done will be made known for all the world to see! Isn't that sobering?! Divine judgment will take place before an "assembled universe" (Matt. 25:31-32) and all the secrets of men will be exposed for all to see!

Rom. 2:16: "...the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Lk. 12:2-3: "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."

I Cor 4:5: "...the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."
(NASU)

F. We often purchase insurance for things that might happen.

(1) We know judgment is coming; it is certain (Heb. 9:27).

(2) There is no excuse not to make preparation for that great day.

Eccl. 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

III. CONCLUSION: 10

I. Let us carefully consider these six things we cannot escape:

- ❶ Personal responsibility,
- ❷ Our influence on others,
- ❸ The presence of God,
- ❹ The spiritual and physical consequences of sin,
- ❺ Death,
- ❻ Judgment.

2. Let us seriously consider the things we cannot escape, and serve the Lord with all diligence and all faithfulness.

3. If we're not careful, we can "escape" the "great salvation" the Lord offers! Heb. 2:3

Adapted from an article (*Things We Cannot Escape*) by Heath Rogers.