



For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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Deadlines

Taxes are something we have to deal with early. There is a yearly deadline for our income taxes. I have a yearly deadline as a senior to complete property tax forms in order to receive certain benefits. This year was no different for me than usual. I am a procrastinator when it comes to completing tax forms. I bought my software in January. I got my W-2 form and other income forms by early February. I reminded myself often that I needed to start on my taxes. I finally did so sometime the first week of April. I received the forms I needed to complete regarding my property taxes, hmmm, it must have been in February or March. I partially completed them in June. I finally turned them in last Thursday. Early! They weren't due until July 31.

My actions are paralleled by many people in their spiritual lives. They put off doing what needs to be done, thinking there are other matters of greater importance. There will always be another day to take care of spiritual needs. They may not consciously approach their lives with that attitude, but that is the way they live their lives.

There is the group of individuals who have been taught and have studied God's instructions on becoming a Christian, His child. They have read the conversion examples in Acts and have seen that one who believes that Jesus is the Christ (John 8:24 and Romans 10:10) must turn away with a penitent heart from sin and indifference and turn to God and obedience (Acts 3:19 and Luke 13:3). They understand that they must act upon that faith by confessing Jesus as Lord and Christ (Romans 10:9-10) and then be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16). They would then be in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), in His body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Yet, for whatever reason, they continue to wait. Maybe they do so because they are young and think

they have plenty of time. They might think they must know more before they commit themselves to God. Then, maybe they just want to sow some wild oats before they commit to God (Galatians 6:7-8).

Another group includes those who are Christians, but they have fallen into sin. They know what they are doing is not right, and they intend to do something about it soon. They may even continue to attend worship services, but the sin continues to eat at them. They may have forsaken the assembly, thereby adding to their sin. Then, they slip back in with the intention of confessing their sin (1 John 1:9 and James 5:16). They know they must change their lives and ask for forgiveness (Acts 8:22).

Yet, for whatever reason, they continue to do nothing about their sin. They always think there will be another day. In fact, they may become so comfortable that they even forget they need to do anything.

Still others, who have yielded to Christ by submitting to baptism for remission of sins, though they have not fallen into habitual sin, live lives of spiritual indifference. There are things they need to do. They know they need to establish time for studying God's word and time for prayer (2 Peter 3:18 and Colossians 4:2). They know they need to be more faithful in their worship to God (Hebrews 10:24-25). They know they need to be faithful in service to God (Romans 12:1 and Hebrews 12:28). They know such indifference is sin (James 4:17).

Yet, they continue to live the indifferent Christian life. One of these days, they might think, they will start doing some of those things.

Friend, we do not know the date or time of the deadline, but it does exist (2 Peter 3:10). Will you make it?

Terry Mabery