

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## “Son, Remember . . .”

Whatever the horrors of hell may be, the greatest torment will be that which we inflict upon ourselves, as we reflect on the missed opportunities we had in this life to do better.

“Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented’” (Lk. 16:24-25).

“Son, remember . . .” The rich man would have all eternity to do nothing but remember. To remember the squandered opportunities, the careless attitudes, the terribly misplaced priorities. Whatever external pain the rich man might feel, it could not be worse than the inner agony of realizing that his life had been wasted. He could not plead ignorance; he knew what the Law required. But he never bothered to take it seriously (v. 29-31). Now that his life was done, he could do nothing . . . except remember what might have been.

The rich man in this parable represents all those whose earthly lives are consumed by the pursuit of material advantages: money, possessions, social

status, and so on. However successful they may be in attaining these worldly goals, the day will come when they will have to leave it all behind and enter an afterlife for which they are ill-prepared. Their pleas for mercy will be met by a firm indifference from God. They had their chance to lay up treasures in heaven, but chose to channel their energies elsewhere. They have no one to blame but themselves—and all eternity to remember their mistake.

One of the hardest lessons for young people to learn is how brief this life really is. In our youth, the math seems so much in our favor; we have so many years yet to live, so much time to chase our dreams and have our fun. So we develop bad habits heavily influenced by selfishness interests, and those bad habits become a way of life that never changes through the years. We’re not evil people; we just neglect so much that is of far greater importance. We convince ourselves that “someday” we will get around to those loftier goals, but the day of death arrives first, and our life’s story closes with so much left undone.

And then we will have an eternity to reflect on the choices we made in this life; to remember all the people in need whose lives we could have touched, but were too busy to do so; to remember the words of encouragement never spoken, the deeds of charity never performed, the noble sacrifices never offered. Not for lack of opportunity, but for lack of desire. When we had the opportunity to make those choices, we chose to spend our life for ourselves. Now that those opportunities are gone, there is nothing left to do . . . except *remember*.

As Moses watched a whole generation of Israelites die off during their wilderness wandering, he reflected on the transitory nature of life (Psalms 90). One lesson screamed out to him in that experience: “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (v. 12). Knowing that this life is so short, we should count our days carefully, and use them wisely. The day will come when we will look back and remember how we used our time. Will we remember our life with satisfaction, or with bitter regret?

– David King