

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, August 13, 2016

Every once in a while, I'll hear a Country Western song that hits me right between the eyes. *BLUEBONNETS (Julia's Song)* written and sung by Aaron Watson really got me thinking about how precious life is. Being born and raised in Texas in my formative years, I always loved seeing all those bluebonnets pop up every spring. They were only there for a short while, but they brought joy to this young fellow. Aaron and his wife Kimberly's fourth child, Julia Grace Watson, passed away just hours after she was born due to complications from Trisomy 18, a chromosomal abnormality. In his acoustical ballad, Aaron sings about the brevity of life and how we all need to embrace it and hold on to those special relationships while they last.

One thing that's certain about life is time flies and our loved ones are here today and gone tomorrow. We don't know which tomorrow, but it always seems to come way too soon! Our daughter recently faced the loss of a friend. Ben was only twenty-eight, but in an instant his life was taken from him along with others in a terrible car accident. There's no reasoning how or why such tragedies happen, but we've all faced them in our lives to some extent. In his ballad Watson proclaims, *"Life can be filled with sorrow – Time is something you can't borrow – So love like there's no tomorrow – Because today could be the day."* Yes, we've all experienced how quickly life passes by.

Personally, I find solace in God's word as I deal with such unknowns in life. In 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Paul advises believers "that the time is short." We are also told that the things of this world are not really ours and they will all pass away. So what are those things that we all cherish in life? Certainly our loved ones fit that broad spectrum, but also included are our personal health and wealth, our careers, our possessions and our overall well-being. What helps me to deal with loss is knowing that the most important thing in my life cannot be taken away from me. That's my relationship with my Father in Heaven. Frankly, that's what we all need to cling to as we prepare for our physical demise as time passes us by.

Yes, this is a sobering topic, but one we'd all be wise to confront. In the oldest account found in the Bible, Job responds to his friends in Job 19:25 by proclaiming, *"And as for me, I know my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth."* You see Job had a very special relationship with God and knew that he could trust Him through all the trials he would face. And, in the end of the story, God blesses Job in the latter part of his life more than the first. In Job 42:16-17, the writer of the account ends, *"After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so he died old and full of years."* And, Job from those early days of the earth still is certain that Jesus will return in victory!

In ending, listen to the words of Aaron Watson. *"We're only here for a little while ... So make the most of every mile."* Yes, there will be heartbreaks along the way, but our Lord watches over our journey through life and we would all be wise to trust Him every day of our lives whether those days appear beautiful or bittersweet. So let the peace of God take you through it all!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Job 19:23-27; Job 42:10-17; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; James 4:13-17; 1 Peter 5:14

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Job 19:23-27 New International Version (NIV)

²³“Oh, that my words were recorded,
that they were written on a scroll,
²⁴that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead,
or engraved in rock forever!
²⁵I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
²⁶And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
²⁷I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

Job 42:10-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. ¹¹All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.
¹²The LORD blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. ¹³And he also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.
¹⁶After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. ¹⁷And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 New International Version (NIV)

²⁹What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

James 4:13-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹³Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

1 Peter 5:14 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love.
Peace to all of you who are in Christ.