

It Felt Like Sadness, Loss, Panic!

"It is a curious feeling to discover that you spent so many years climbing the ladder of success, only to find it leaning against the wrong wall."(Author unknown).

Tim O'Neill, (not his real name), describes a defining moment in his life when he was overwhelmed by a storm of swirling emotions. "It felt like sadness, like loss, like panic! It felt like some hitherto silent internal clock had suddenly kick – started to life, tick-ticking out the warning: time...is running...out. When it hit me I thought, what's going on? I started going through this whole grieving process and asking, Who am I? What have I achieved in life? I became aware of the sound of deaths footsteps behind me, still off in the distance, but drawing inevitably closer."

Tim was entering "mid-life transition or crisis," a time when many between 40 and .60 sense their own mortality and the knowledge that they have only so many years left to realize their dreams. It may be triggered by a landmark birthday, (such as when I turned 40), the death of a parent or peer, being passed over for promotion, the threat of cancer or heart attack or simply the relentless signs of diminishing youth.

Psychologist tell us that such emotional turbulence is common during mid – life. People of all backgrounds and vocations ponder the spiritual implications, not only of mid- life crisis, but of other experiences as well. New questions arise: "What have I done with my life so far? What about my influence as a parent? What is my responsibility toward God and others?"

We all want to be remembered beyond this narrow span of life. We may seek to do so through monuments, memorials, wills, endowments, writings etc. The best way is by building meaningful personal relationships with people and by investing in their lives. Every opportunity to love and learn should be welcomed because these moments are limited.

But as Rick Warren points out "You were not put on earth to be remembered. You were put here to prepare for eternity." My entire outlook on life changed when I acknowledged the stark truth that "It is appointed unto every man wants to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). I realized that I have needs this world cannot meet and longings it cannot satisfy. If all my values are material ones, then in the end I will lose everything. Rather I must seek to live for those eternal values that money cannot buy, and time and death cannot remove.

In the best sense we are not ready to live until we are ready to die. We discover our identity and purpose in life through of personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In exchange for our fears, he offers peace. In place of a hopeless end, he offers an endless hope through his gift of eternal life.

“The great use of life is to spend it on something that will outlast it.” William James