

A GOOD BYE

Good-bye is a hyphenated word for a reason, and it doesn't mean "good riddance." "Good" bye is based on the desire that the exchange will be more than just a closure or pronouncement of separation. We have other casual words for a routine departure, such as "See you tomorrow", "cheerio", "later" and so forth....

Good-bye means more than those "light" parting words.
Good-bye is more than bye.

And, to be sure, there are "bad" byes, too. Usually, divorce includes a "bad" way to say bye to a personal relationship.

A common "bad" bye is saying nothing at all, and another is refusing to acknowledge the gravity of the situation by saying something meaningless or impersonal, such as "don't do anything I wouldn't do" or "see you later alligator."

Sometimes people will go to great lengths to avoid saying "bye".... or to devalue the occasion.

A couple people I know chose to disengage / distant themselves from the friendship before it came time to say "bye", so that it would be less emotionally taxing for them. Their actions were a "bad" "bye" instead of a good-bye.

Unfortunately, there are times when Good-bye can't be said in words... or... the ordeal takes so long that "Good" becomes "glad".... glad it's over.

Such was the case with my mother who had Alzheimer's disease.

I've also experienced those who refused to face the reality of pending death, therefore losing the precious moments to say "Good" words,... until it was too late.

Their denial was a "bad" bye.

Saying good-bye is powerful. Countless stories and love songs are about the process of saying/ living "bye".

We say bye for many reasons, and not just to other people.

It's time to say "bye" when the change of circumstances means a departure from what was. It could be people moving away, dying....or simply changing.

Moreover, we say bye to objects, to pets, to places, to habits, to jobs, and so on...

It seems like the employment world has a tough time saying a "Good" bye. Employers can be too crude and insensitive, and employees can be rude or even go "postal."

A "Good" bye has a lasting impact,..... and so does a "Bad" bye.

Saying or living "bye" –good or bad is not a designation for an ending.

Nothing really ends,.... Things / situations / connections change..... but the relationship / **the affects of the relationship** and the memory carry on. That is why “bye” is so powerful. The process of the transition influences what’s next. Bye is a link.

In addition, the process of bye / of dealing with a transition is deeply affected by how we leave. For example, when a person puts too much emphasis on physical attributes, such as personal appearance or doing sports, then he or she will not be able to have a “good” bye when the aging process brings change.

Another example is parenting teenagers.

During those “fun filled teen years”, parents have to say/ live “bye” to their little child, and adjust to their evolving, hormone exploding, slowly maturing, maybe maturing..... young adult. The “bye” can be bad,.... even really ugly..... or it can be..... well,.... I can’t think of ever seeing an example of a “Good” transition, so let’s say... .. the bye to the cute, loyal, devoted, adorable and mostly obedient child.... can be.... okay,... or at least conducive to greeting the “teen” that is possessing the child. (I’m exaggerating)

Truly, the transition can be good. It is good when a parent accepts the change / accepts what was is no longer, and that happens by loving the person / the child and NOT the conditions of the relationship.

Teens and parents of teenagers have a much better relationship when the child always felt accepted, Trusted and listened to, and when the parents respected the child and never tried to hold on too tight. Moreover, it is also critically important for parents to share and model their values / what they hold dear—lessons teens need for survival.

Children need that nourishment –parental wisdom to get them through the teen years.

Living with a child in a healthy manner is planning ahead for his/her maturity and departure. In other words, good parenting is living and preparing for a “Good” bye.

Teens that have been over-protected, sheltered and stymied tend to rebel and/or will struggle when exposed to the “real” world.

Teens that were not intimate with their parents, who did not receive good, loving nurturing and instructions often drift off... or become angry and bitter when parents attempt to restrain them. Of course, I’m generalizing, and personality and other factors... play a significant role, too. Growing up/changing into an adult is difficult for all.

Yet, to be sure,.... how we live affects how we deal with change and transitions. To put it a different way: life is change at any moment, so it’s best that we live for “good-bye”,... so that all can adjust and carry on into the tomorrow.

A “Good” bye.... is also a good way to live,..... and a “Good” bye is a gift, too.

In the Gospel of John text, Jesus referred to *giving* or *gave* 9 times.

This passage is sometimes called the “farewell discourse.”

The passage contains the words of a “good-bye” in the form of a prayer.

It is very unlikely that the author is quoting Jesus verbatim..... because the text was written at least 60 years after the ascension. The words could have been passed on over the years, but it really doesn't matter.....because the message reveals the lasting impact of Jesus' farewell good-bye. And, it was obviously a very "Good" good-bye.

His followers received his words—the gift, and a "Good"-bye is a gift.

A good-bye is the gift of a blessing.

In fact, Jesus' whole life was a blessing. He gave through out his life.

Jesus knew his time was limited and subject to radical change, and lived that awareness. He empowered others / he let go / gave what he could while he could.

Jesus lived the blessing – the good bye.

Our lives are limited and subject to radical change, yet we often deny that truth, and so vainly try to hold onto what can't be held, and therefore refrain from living as blessing.... and giving a Good-bye.

Today's text presents a "good" bye.

Verses 6-8 confirm Jesus' stewardship of what God entrusted to him.

Jesus taught his followers / he nurtured and empowered them to carry on. It states, "They know." He was faithful and successful.

And, keep in mind, quantity / big numerical results do not confirm faithfulness. Jesus did not have many followers at the time of his departure from the Earth. It is recorded in Acts, that there were only 120 believers at Pentecost.

Jesus did not form a mega-church. That was not his calling.

Continuing with Jesus' good-bye:

Repeatedly, Jesus demonstrates a keen awareness of the change happening. He did not deny the transition. He said that he **was** in the world, but is no longer. He's moving on,... and keep in mind, this was NOT an end to the relationship; it is simply a change.

Jesus also shared that he protected those that were entrusted to him; he gave himself to them, and now he asks God to watch over them.

This is a blessing and a statement of trust, and... it shows the depth of his love. Plus, it is an honest reflection... because he acknowledged that there was one failure—Judas.

Nevertheless, Jesus concentrated on the living / those being saved,... and continues to bless them by beseeching God's providence and protection for them.

Jesus is letting go, equipping and entrusting his "children"... and moving on.

He reminds them to hold onto God's redeeming message of love and grace – the word. And, that too is a gift.

This prayer is a "Good" good-bye.

It shows that Jesus lived the blessing of a good-bye.

He was faithful and accepting of the precious brevity of life.

And, during the transition / the letting go.... Jesus blessed and empowered others to carry on.

A GOOD good-bye is life giving.... from a life of giving/ of letting go.

There is an ancient legend that says that when Jesus arrived in heaven the angel Gabriel asked what plans he had made for his work to continue.

He replied that he had left it all in the hands of the disciples.

"And if they fail?" asked Gabriel.

And Jesus said, "There are no other plans."

Do we trust our children that much, and do they know that?

Or do our life choices declare a "bad" bye? Are we holding on and not releasing what is ours,..... because we are afraid of tomorrow or don't trust those we say we love.

The executor of an estate does not pass on a blessing or hand out gifts.

The executor merely disperses stuff without love.

Do we passionately and lovingly nurture, empower and equip our children and all those we love?

Do we give life..... or drain it from others?

The Psalm one passage relates to this theme even though it is an introduction to the collection of Psalms. The passage encourages the reader to embrace the message, and in effect,.... releases the Psalms to all those who read them.

In others words, it is saying, "This is for you.... cherish the wisdom and grow from it.

A Good bye lets go, gives empowerment, blesses and invites the new, changing relationship to carry on in a life giving manner.

Good bye..... says I give you my life with love so that you can live on with my blessings.

A good bye is grace.

And, that is why living a "Good" bye is so important.

It is living grace for the moment and for the ever after.

Releasing..... letting go..... being honest..... being in love even if it hurts..... Empowering life in others..... Trusting..... ALL are aspects of the process of salvation..... and of living good-bye.

Living in the "Good" bye is being saved and nurturing salvation for all.

[Let us pray.....

Gracious and loving God..... you have given us life..... and you believe in us.....Help us..... to do the same for others. AMEN]