

Intro.

- A. At the cemetery, you will always see the name of the deceased, and the dates they lived.
1. Birthdays = very imp. --- If don't believe it, forget hers (or his)-- once. → See card # 1
  2. Birth dates are important. The date of one's death is also important.
    - a. Most tombstones have both of these dates on them with a dash in between.
    - b. That little dash is what we want to talk about this hour, because it's more important than the dates.
- B. Mayfield, KY is famous for at least 2 things: Cardinal football & the Wooldridge Monuments in Maplewood Cemetery.
1. Henry G. Wooldridge born 1822, Jan. 29 in Wmson. Cty., TN. He died May 30, 1899 in Mayfield.
  2. If you visit Maplewood, you will be intrigued by the 18 statues of Colonel Wooldridge, his mother, 4 brothers, 3 sisters, 2 great-nieces, his hoarse, 2 dogs, a deer & a fox.
- C. After seeing *The Strange Procession that never moves*, you want to know more about just who was this H. G. Wooldridge.
1. You soon learn of his love for his family, horses & hunting. He was an eccentric bachelor, who made his money in raising & racing horses.
  2. The account of his monument project tells much more than the statues themselves.
  3. See **Card # 2**

Discuss.**I. Psa. 39:5 – YOU MADE MY DAYS AS A HANDBREADTH... (vs. 4-6)** (NIV = *a mere handbreadth*)

- A. Mine age is as nothing! [compared to eternity, my years = little more than a single dot on a 100-million mile long line.]
1. Let's make specific applica.: *How many of you have any realistic hope of seeing this country's tri-centennial celebration in the year 2076?* (I'd have to live to be 121 !)
  2. Most of us will have gone the way of all the earth. We will have filled in **ALL** of the *dash between date*
  3. Remember: the dash represents the entirety of our life—the successes, failures, smiles, tears, defeats, the victories, the best days & the worst days of your life!
  4. Some of us have sat in audiences like this so many times, hearing - preacher beg you & others to obey the gospel, & some of those are now gone. They died unprepared. They wasted away days of their life!
- B. Just how long do you really think your “dash” will be?
1. Dad's father died when Dad was just 5 yr. old. I had to surrender Dad to God June 12, 1999 at age 70.
  2. The 1<sup>st</sup> 17 yrs. of my preaching career, I only did 55 funerals (= less than 4 @ yr.)
    - a. The oldest person I have done a funeral for was Mrs. Lou Ethal Wadley, 102 yrs. old.
    - b. The ygest = a little 13-day old baby girl name Erin Rachels. [**I plan to see both of these in heaven!**]
  3. In the past 9 years, I have helped 112 others as their dash was ended with the date of their death.
    - a. It still amazes me that there are some Christians who **Quit!**
    - b. And some who know truth **Never Obey!** (e.g., Paul, who attended for a while, studied, but died lost!)
- C. It doesn't matter how many acres you own, what the interest rate on your CD is, etc.
- a. I've never had a person tell me they wished they had worked more hrs., & spent less time w/ family.
  - b. I do remember bro. Kermit Hall telling with tears in his eyes, *Tell them not to wait like I did, until so little time is left. There are so many things I wish I had done.*
  - c. I remember “Sam's” bedside, & hearing his weakened plea for baptism just before he died of cancer. Many verses tell us that our days are brief at best: **Job 7:6; Job 14:1; Heb. 9:27; Psa. 90:10**
- D. Are you going to sit in this audience today & let the devil talk you out of obeying the Lord this hour?
- a. Jesus always says *Come, now.*
  - b. Satan always says *Wait -- for a convenient time. Not right now.* **Prov. 27:1 Jas. 4:14**

## II. **Lk. 16:19** - - **A RICH MAN LIVED & DIED.**

- A. This man had only the finest things life had to offer.
  - 1. His food was of the richest kind, like that perpetually prepared by a world class chef.
  - 2. His closet was overflowed with the clothes of the rich & royal (only the best brands!)
  - 3. If he was like many of 1<sup>st</sup> Cent. Palestine, he had his own large private pool for bathing & swimming.
  - 4. With all that, it is hard to realize that he would become one who begged for a single drop of water!!!
- B. The rich man had chosen this luxurious style of life (.....to his own distraction => destruction)!!! **Vs. 25**
  - 1. After his death, his perspective changed --- drastically!
  - 2. No longer among the “haves” but with the “have nots”, separated f/ everything good & worthwhile, **26.**
  - 4. Began to think re: other people’s souls; he became evangelistically conscious, prob. for 1<sup>st</sup> time ever, **27**
- C. Purpose of my being here in Princeton for this meeting is to help you to see what God has to say **to you!**
  - 1. Want to tell you about one particular Thurs. p.m. in late Dec. 4 yrs. ago.
  - 2. At 4:30 I sat at his dinning room table & studied the Bible with Robert. About 8:30 we bapt. him.
  - 3. On the way home, fire trucks blocked the street, & at 9:10 I watched an ambulance leave w/ a former member’s daughter who was sick at home in bed when the fire broke out. By 11:15 she was dismissed.
  - 4. At 12:15 a.m. another member called me to the hospital, his father was in cardiac arrest **LIFE=BRIEF!**

## III. **1 Tim. 4:8** - - **YOU CAN BE SAVED TODAY, OR YOU CAN BE LOST!**

- A. You are making that choice right now as to what you will do when this sermon is over & the song sung.
  - 1. David realized that his life was uncertain, & that judgment was sure. => c. **Psa. 39:4**
  - 2. Maybe its better that we don’t know how or when it will end, but we can be sure that the time we have now in this life will be the only time we can make a decision to obey the Lord & save our soul.
- B. **Psa. 90:2** *we spend (past tense) our years as a tale that is told.*
  - 1. **vs. 12** – *so teach us to # our days that we might apply our hearts to wisdom.*
  - 2. The Palestinian’s tent could be taken down folded & moved from place.
  - 3. **2 Cor. 5:1 (& 4:16-18)**

### Concl.

- A. How will you be remembered when you are no longer able to be here for “homecoming”?
  - 1. Hard worker, tough player, fine house & nice cars? Craftsman?
  - 2. In **Lk. 15** the man for whom so much could be said in life, died w/ hope – separated f/ God!
- B. Regardless of what you have or don’t have, if you are not a faithful Christian, nothing else matters.
  - 1. The invitation song = a little part of **the dash** between your dates!
  - 2. Do you know that you need to answer the Lord’s invitation?
  - 3. If you knew that your very next appointment would be w/ Jesus Christ in judgment, could you confidently stay in your place in the pew because you know that you’re saved, or will white knuckles gripping the pew hold you back from answering the Sweet Invitation? Will a lump in your throat prevent you from singing the invitation song as you know you should?
  - 4. Some here this hour need to come back to Christ right now, & some need to be bapt.
  - 5. Don’t you waste this part of the *Dash* between the dates of your birth, and the time of your death.
  - 6. If you will come to Jesus on His terms, He will save you & take you home to heaven!

## Dash Between the Dates, (Illustra. #1)

I'm reminded of lady saying "good bye" to husb. on what appeared to be normal day.

As she very affectionately kissed him & said – *You do know what today is!?!?!?* His reply: *How could I forget?* => Out of sight of the house, began to go thru date book. Not their anniversary, her birthday, or any other special date. At office, checked personal records & still nothing. ### To avoid suspicion of a lapse of memory, he bought the dress she had been admiring at the department store, & had it delivered home along with 12 roses & note : *Did you think I would forget?!?!?* Returning home, she greeted him warmly, admitting that she didn't think he had remembered what day it was. Then she said, *You've made this a much more special day than I ever dreamed of. As long as I live, I don't think I will ever have a happier **Ground Hog Day** than this one.*

## Dash Between the Dates, (Illustra. #2)

(Wooldridge Monuments) Wooldridge commissioned a statue of made in Italy of fine Italian marbel. This depicted "Colonel" standing dignified & erect, with its right hand resting on a book atop a pillar. The statue suited him, but his neices & nephews said it was uot of character. The book looked like a Bible to them, & their *Uncle Henry* looked like *a preacher who is just about to end a long-winded sermon.*

Wooldridge was, in reality, a well-known skeptic who spurned religion. He had told his neice, *"I don't know where my soul is going – I don't care -- & I don't worry about it. But my body is going to Maplewood Cemetery."*