

1 Our Future Self

- Keeping a focus on what is really important!

2 Scripture

- At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him,
 - “Leave this place and go somewhere else.
 - Herod wants to kill you.”
- He replied, “Go tell that fox,
 - ‘I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and
 - on the third day, I will reach my goal.’
- In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day — for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!”

3 Scripture

- “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,
 - how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,
 - but you were not willing!
- Look, your house is left to you desolate.
- I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

4 Introduction

- Katherine Milkman is a behavioral economist at the Wharton School.
- She is very interested in how daily decisions are affected by whether the current self or the future self is making the choices.
- Now, this is not to say that any of us can hop into a time machine and jump into the future.

- But we can decide to make choices focusing on the current day ... or a future day.

5 Introduction

- Milkman has explored how people buy groceries online.
- Specifically, she has looked at what people order when they buy for next-day delivery, compared with what they order three days in advance.
- The current self buys for next-day delivery.
- The future self buys for three days in the future.

6 Introduction

- And what has she found?
- People spend much more money when they buy
 - for immediate consumption, and
 - they tend to purchase less nutritious food.
- “If you buy for a rush,” says Milkman to Psychology Today, “you buy junk.”

7 Introduction

- Yes, it’s true. Your current self buys Twinkies and potato chips.
- After all, they taste great — right now!
- On the other hand, your future self buys whole grains and raw vegetables.
- When you plan to eat better in the future, you tend to buy food that will support a nutritious diet.

8 Introduction

- Your future self is much more rational and restrained than your current self.

- Your future self wants to benefit from a balanced diet, while your current self will eat anything that tastes delicious.
- Your future self wants to have zero credit card debt, but your current self craves a new television.
- Your future self wants to learn a foreign language, while your current self gets bored after 15 minutes of an instruction program.

9 Introduction

- So, what can you do?
 - Put your future self in charge!
 - Make a grocery list and stick to it.
 - Pay down your debt each and every month.
 - Cut calories and hit the gym!
 - Spend 30 minutes a day on New Testament Greek language study — no exceptions!

10 Introduction

- “The more certain the future is,” says Psychology Today, “the more power it has.”
 - So, make the future certain.
 - Give it power in your life.
 - Put your future self in charge of your current, daily decisions!
 - If you make the right decisions, your future self will love you for it!

11 Jesus’ Future Self

- Jesus had an amazing ability to make choices from the perspective of his future self.
- When he was traveling toward Jerusalem, some Pharisees said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you!” (Luke 13:31).

- These Pharisees may have wanted to help Jesus, or they may have wanted to hurt him. It's hard to tell.
- But regardless of their motivation, they are speaking to his current self. "Get away from here" — now! "Herod wants to kill you" — today!

12 Jesus' Future Self

- Most of us would panic if we heard such a message.
- Many of us would drop everything and run for our lives.
- But Jesus put his future self in charge. "Go and tell that fox for me," he says, "'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day, I finish my work'" (v. 32).
- Jesus has an agenda for what he is doing.
- Jesus has put his future self in control, not Herod.

13 Jesus' Future Self

- Jesus moves forward because he knows that his future has to align with God's future.
- "I must be on my way," he says to the Pharisees, "because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem" (v. 33).
- Jerusalem is a holy city, the site of Israel's temple, but it is also a city with a history of violence toward prophets: Uriah and Zechariah were killed there, and maybe even Isaiah.
- Jesus knew that he would die in Jerusalem, just as his follower Stephen would be stoned there.

14 Jesus' Future Self

- Soon after Peter made the bold statement that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus told him and the other disciples that he must
 - "undergo great suffering, and
 - be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and
-

- on the third day be raised" (Luke 9:22).
- For Jesus, the future self was always in control.
- Remember, the more certain the future is, the more power it has.
- Jesus knew that he must suffer and be killed, and on the third day be raised. This made his future powerful.

— Jesus' Future Self

- After stating his intention to travel to Jerusalem, Jesus offered a lament over the city, a passionate expression of sorrow.
- "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!" he cried out. "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34).
- Jesus knew that he would be killed in Jerusalem, but this horrible fate did not mean he hated its people.
- The irony was that even though God had a heart of compassion and cared for the people of Israel, they hated Him without cause.

— Jesus' Future Self

- Jesus showed them the compassion that a mother has for her child (Isaiah 49:15), but the people turned away from him.
- As a result, they would have to face the consequences of their choices.
- Then he predicted that they would not see him until Palm Sunday, when a multitude of disciples would say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:35).
- Every step of the way, Jesus was focused on God's work in the future.
- On good days and bad, this orientation gave him great power.

15 Our Future Self

- So then, what would it mean for us to put our future selves in charge, as individuals, and as a congregation?
- More than anything else, we would need to live each day with a focus on crucifixion and resurrection, just as Jesus did.
- In fact, didn't Jesus say, "And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27 NIV)

16 Our Future Self

- We keep crucifixion in our future by remembering that Jesus said,
 - "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).
- Keeping the cross in front of us means that we focus on
 - service to others and not on our "current" selves,
 - following the Lord who said that he "came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28).

17 Our Future Self

- When we follow Jesus, we keep crucifixion in our future.
- When we love one another and practice the Golden Rule, we practice the same kind of self-giving love that Jesus demonstrated when he died for us.
- The cross shows us just how far Jesus will go to show us
 - how much he loves His father and
 - all those whom His father would call.
- Moreover, Jesus didn't just focus on the cross but also on His resurrection and His glorification.

18 Our Future Self

- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)
-

- You see, there is a reward for taking up our cross and following God!
- In fact, according to Hebrews 11, the heroes of faith, bravely faced persecution so that they could . . . gain a better resurrection. (Hebrews 11:35)

19 Our Future Self

- According to an article in Psychology Today,
 - It found that studies show that delayed gratification is one of the successful people's most influential personal traits.
 - People who learn how to manage their need to be satisfied at the moment thrive more in their careers, relationships, health, and finances than people who give in to it.
- In other words, even the world knows that those who have their "Future Self" in view and plan according to making wise decisions are some of the most successful people around.

20 Our Future Self

- However, if our soul is empty and there is a void in our spirit, instant gratification seems like a good idea.
- This is why when we should embrace the cross and keep our eyes on the reward waiting for us in heaven, taking care of our future self becomes a lot easier.
- As said by the Apostle Paul,
 - Not that I have already obtained all this or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (Philippians 3:12)
 - I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

21 Our Future Self

- Even athletes who possess a great talent or skill know they must go into training if they expect to win the prize.
 - The same is true for Christians who are in Christ.
 - Faith doesn't grow and become strong
-

- unless it is put into action or
- tested by life's circumstances and trials.
- This is why the Apostle Paul says (1 Corinthians 9:25),
 - Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.
 - They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

22 Our Future Self

- Furthermore, Paul says (1 Corinthians 9:26–27 ESV),
 - So I do not run aimlessly;
 - I do not box as one beating the air.
 - But I discipline my body and keep it under control,
 - lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified.
- In other words, Paul is saying here and goes on proving his point with the history of Israel that weak or underdeveloped faith has little value to our future self.

23 Our Future Self

- You see, several things are on the horizon that our Future Self should be ready for:
 - Opportunities in which our faith can be used for good.
 - Participation in what God is doing in the world now.
 - The likelihood of trials, persecution, and temptations that will test our souls.
 - The morality of our own death and dying.
 - That one day, we'll have to stand before God and give an account on whether we put our "current self" or "future self" in control of our choices.

24 In Conclusion . . .

- Our “Future Self” will love us if we take care of business on this side of eternity so that we will have an abundance of treasure waiting for us in heaven. [See Matthew 6:17-19]
- In fact, Jesus has gone to prepare a place for our “Future Self,” which is kept safe in heaven—imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
- So then, how should our “Current Self” plan to satisfy our “Future Self?”
- If the Spirit of Christ is in you, use self-discipline and become imitators of God . . . love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, . . . (Luke 6:35)