

April 17, 2022

Death's Solution? Resurrection!

Various Scriptures

Man's greatest fear is death. God's greatest provision is resurrection through the living Christ to all who believe.

LTS: 1 Cor. 15:1-26

Prayer

In 65 A.D. an anonymous author wrote a letter to his Jewish brothers about the glory of Jesus Christ and the need to hold fast and draw near to Him. We find that 13 chapter word of exhortation in the Bible simply entitled, Hebrews.”

In the 2nd chapter of text we read the following words (Heb. 2:14-15)
Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

This morning, I want to speak to you about death and resurrection. The climax of this message will come from

1 Cor. 15, so feel free to have that on the ready for later.

My goal for this message is to help you get some sense of how magnificent the resurrection of Jesus Christ really is. But before we can talk about resurrection, we need to think carefully about a topic that's not so pleasant. In fact, it's a subject that engenders fear in the hearts of men; namely, death. Believe it or not, it's good for us to think about death – not someone else's, but your own! I know that may sound morbid to some, but consider the words of Solomon who said, “It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of mirth for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.” It is better to go to the house of mourning. Why? Because nobody thinks deeply about the brevity of life and the inevitable experience of death at a party. No one challenges you to wrestle with questions of eternity and the dangers of wasting your short life at a celebration. So, from time to time it's good to go to the house of mourning and consider the implications of the fact that people die.

Before resurrection there must be death.

So, let's spend a few minutes thinking about frightening topic of death and then we can consider the glory of resurrection.

If you are taking notes, there are only two points: to keep track of.

I. The Terror of Death

II. The Glory of Resurrection

I. The Terror of Death:

1. It will repay us later to think first about a definition of death. What exactly is death? Well, at its root, death is about separation.

- A. Consider Physical death: When physical death occurs, there is a separation of the spirit from the body. The word of God teaches what most people already believe; namely, that man is MORE than a physical creature. We are also spiritual. Every human being has an eternal soul. And when that soul (or spirit) departs, there is physical death. In fact, in the Bible James rather bluntly declares that “The body without the spirit is dead.”

But death is not merely about the separation of one’s spirit from his body. Death also involves a separation of a person from other people as well. Loved ones mourn because the person who has died is no longer there to interact with and enjoy. So physical death is about the separation of the body from the spirit, and a separation of the deceased from those who loved him/her. This is Physical death.

- B. Aside from Physical death the Bible teaches that there is also Spiritual death: When Spiritual death occurs there is a separation of a person from God. You will remember that when God spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden He warned that if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would surely die. Clearly, Adam kept on living after he sinned, but his relationship with God was broken. The apostle Paul points to this when he says in Eph. 2:1 that everyone born into the world is “dead in their trespasses and sins.” In other words, because we are sinners, we cannot have a relationship with Holy God. In that sense all humans come into the world spiritually dead – we are separated from God. In fact, Hell is all about eternal separation from God. Those who die without being reconciled to God will be separated from gracious and loving presence of God. All they will know for eternity is the fire of His just and holy wrath. Jesus says that it is the place where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

- a. So this is death. No wonder humans fear it!

- C. Most people fear death:

- a. Even good people fear death. Job called death “the king of terrors” (Job. 18:14).

- Paul say here in 1 Cor. 15:26 that it is an enemy that must be defeated.

- Furthermore, the book of Hebrews says that death is used by Satan to keep people in slavery and fear all their lives (Heb. 2:15).
- b. On the one hand, the fear of death can be a good thing. It is often the impulse that keeps us alive in the face of danger. If you take a hike through Mineral Wells state park, for example, you may walk along the path that leads you near the rocky cliffs, but fear of death will keep wise people from stepping too close to the edge. On the other hand, the prospects of death cause some people to live in perpetual fear.

- Fear of disease.
- Fear of dying in a car wreck
- Fear of flight
- Fear of crossing bridges
- Fear of gravity
- Fear strangers
- Fear of making a bad decision.
- all kinds of other fears keep people in bondage all their lives.

D. Thoughts of death can really be frightening! And to make matters worse, in our most lucid moments we are very much aware that no matter how diligent we are to protect ourselves from it, death is an inescapable reality. All people die. Death is the great equalizer; whether you are a filthy drug-addict living under a piece of cardboard in a dark alley, or the president of the United States – everyone succumbs to the power of death.

BTW: Did you see that interview on the news the other day with the last known survivor of the American Civil War? No! You didn't! Because there are none! Every person in that generation has died.

Did you see that live broadcast on TV about the horrors of war by the last known survivor of WWI? No! You didn't! Why? Because Every member of that generation has died and there are ZERO exceptions! In fact, the last known Veteran of WWI was Frank Woodruff Buckles who died Feb 27, 2011. And it won't be long before the last WWII veteran will have completed his mission in this world as well.

Someone recently told the president of an organization I am familiar with that if his employees all purchased standing desks it would decrease their likelihood of death by 65%. To which this brother wisely responded, “The likelihood of death is 100%.” It’s always been 100%, and that won’t change until we are in heaven!

- a. Statisticians say that right now the world death rate is 55.3 million people per year. That’s approx. 151,600 people per DAY!
 - b. The older I get the less theoretical these statistics become. And there is another dynamic that we have to wrestle with as well. And this one is the most fearful of all.
- E. After death we must all give an account for how we lived. The author of Hebrews makes this clear when he writes, “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.
- a. “Death is an inescapable reality that ushers one into accountability before the Creator.”
 - b. As one author explains, “Death is not a guaranteed transition to a peaceful non-existence or nirvana. Nor is heaven the default destiny for all who die.” Your existence in eternity will be determined by the perfectly righteous judgment of a holy God.
 - c. You see, death is a fearful thing, and I’m not here to tell you NOT to be afraid. There is good reason to fear.
- F. How do people respond to the fear of death?
- a. Some try to put it out of their minds and just suppress the truth about death and the existence of God. But the reality is everyone knows God exists. The heavens and earth declare his glory and they see it clear enough. Therefore (Paul says (Rom. 1:20) they are without excuse.
 - b. Some drown the fear of death in the pursuit of pleasure, or accomplishment, or materialism. “Let us eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die!”
 - c. Our culture suppresses the reality of death (Parlor/Living room)
 - d. Some try to cheat death. There was a heart-breaking story in the news a few years ago, of a 14 year old girl in Britain who responded to the fear of death by appealed to the courts to allow her to be cryogenically frozen in a tank of liquid nitrogen here in the US. Her hope, like hundreds of others, is the false hope the one day (perhaps 100 years from now) she will be thawed and brought back to life and healed of her cancer. How hopeless!
- G. There is one more thing we need to know about death. It came into the world through sin. The word of God tells us that the first man, Adam, served as our representative.

When he sinned everyone in the human family suffered the consequences. The Apostle Paul writes (Rom. 5:12), *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.”* And back in chapter 3 he revealed the consequences of sin by stating, *“The wages of sin is death.”*

H. So, you see, the biggest problem mankind faces today is not the...

- war in Ukraine.
- It's not global warming
- It's not racial disunity
- It's not gender dysphoria
- It's not the price of gas
- It's not a rocky or abusive marriage.
- It's not what someone said about you on “Facebook” or Instagram.
- Your greatest problem is that the wages of sin is death and you are – by birth and by choice – a sinner.

I. We are all born in an un-reconciled state with God. Because of sin there is NOT the slightest possibility that it will go well for on the day we see Jesus face to face. Furthermore, there is nothing we can do to fix it. So, what can be done?

J. This is where Jesus Christ comes into the picture. We have learned about the terror of death. Now let's discover the glory of Resurrection.

II. The Glory of Resurrection:

1. Because of sin, God kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden, but He never stopped loving them. In fact, we are told in the Bible that before the creation of the world, God hatched a plan to rescue sinners in such a way that would bring them eternal life and simultaneously glorify God's only begotten Son - Jesus.

2. How can sinners be rescued and the Son be glorified? There is only one way. God the Son would have to become a man. He would have to set aside all the rights and privileges of being God, and be born of a young virgin girl, live the kind of life that would perfectly satisfy the requirements of God's law on our behalf, and then die in our place as if He were the most evil, vile law-breaker who ever lived. Only then could sinners be reconciled to God. Only then could we be rescued from the clutches of death.

3. And this Jesus did. Listen to how Paul says it:

- Phil. 2:5-8
...though he [Jesus] was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- 2 Cor. 5:21
 For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- 2 Cor. 8:9
 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

Rich in God. Rich in Christ.

4. You may say, “That’s wonderful news, but where does the resurrection come in? If what we needed for salvation has come to us through Jesus’ perfect life and bloody death what was the point of the resurrection? Why did Jesus have to rise?”

5. The answer may be simpler and infinitely more profound than you think.

6. Listen, my friend; Jesus had to rise from the grave because a dead Messiah cannot save.

Why? Because eternal life comes to us through Union with the Living Christ! In fact, everything we receive from God comes to us through the Living Christ!

7. So, we can look at 1 Cor. 15 and understand Paul’s meaning when He wrote:

A. (14) “If Christ has NOT been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is vain.”

B. (17) “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep [died] in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hoped in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

C. (20) “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man [Adam] came death, by a man [Jesus] has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

And that means even if we die in this world we too will be raised.

D. (54) “When the perishable [your body] puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is

swallowed up in victory!” O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

8. My friends, the Remedy for the Terror of death is not

- to suppress the truth about it.
- It isn't flooding your life with pleasurable and empty distractions.
- It isn't the false hope that being frozen in liquid nitrogen will give time for science figured out how to cure all disease.

9. The only solution to the terror of death is

The Living Christ

The Life-giving Christ

The Risen Christ

Everything you need or could ever hope to receive from God comes to you through
union with the Living Christ,

10. The Only question that remains is, how can I be united with Christ?

11. Paul answers that question very briefly in Rom, 10 where he says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

- Are you troubled by your own mortality?
- Are you afraid of what will happen when you come face to face with God after 2 seconds after you die?
- Then my friend, I urge you to
 - fly to Christ.
 - Run to him and confess that the only thing you have to offer is your sin. Ask Him to accept you, to receive you, to save you, not on the basis of your good works but on the basis of Jesus perfect life and bloody death on your behalf which he freely offers in love so you can be saved. Then, and only then, will you be united to the living Christ and receive His eternal LIFE!

12. My dear friends, man's greatest fear is death. But God's great provision is resurrection through the living Christ to all who believe.