

**Ecclesiastes 12: 6-8; “Before the Silver Cord Loosed”, Message # 82 in the series –
“Remember Your Creator”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on April 24th, 2022, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We have here one of the most profound of all the word pictures that can be found, in the whole Word of God, of what it means to die. “Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel is broken at the well. We know that these metaphorical pictures refer to death, for the 7th verse spells it out in its literal physical and literal spiritual descriptions for us. “Then the dust will return to earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

At this time, I would like to take you on a short tour of what physical death will mean for each one of us, whether we are a believer in Christ, or an unbeliever without Him. For every person it will mean these 3 things. 1st – It will mean that the Silver Cord is loosed. 2nd – It will mean that the body will turn to dust. And 3rd – It will mean that the spirit will return to God who gave it. Through this message I pray that we will become more aware of how fearfully and wonderfully we have been made, and what our responsibility to God consists of; that is, to remember God in the days when we have physical strength.

1st of all – It will mean that the Silver Cord is loosed.

I am going to attempt to interpret all the metaphors of verse 6 in this first point of our study, in relation to this first metaphor. “Remember your Creator” before these physical calamities happen to your mortal body. Before the silver cord is loosed. The silver cord refers to the spinal cord which is silver in its color, if we were doing a dissection of the human body. The Spinal Cord is connected to the brain and is about the diameter of a human finger. Let me give you a little anatomy lesson here. From the brain the spinal cord comes down the middle of the back and it is surrounded and protected by vertebrae. The spinal cord itself is surrounded by a clear fluid called Cerebral Spinal Fluid that acts as a cushion to protect the delicate nerve tissues against damage inside of the vertebrae.

The anatomy of the spinal cord consists of millions of nerve fibers which transmit electrical information to and from the limbs, the trunk, and organs of the body, back to, and from, the brain. The nerves which exit the spinal cord in the upper section, the neck, control breathing and the arms. The nerves which exit the spinal cord in the mid and lower section of the back, control the trunk and legs, as well as the bladder, bowel and sexual function. The nerves which carry information from the brain to muscles are called Motor Neurons. The nerves which carry information from the body back to the brain are called Sensory Neurons. Sensory Neurons carry information to the brain about skin temperature, touch, pain and joint position.

The brain and spinal cord together are referred to as the Central Nervous System, and the nerves connecting the spinal cord to the body are referred to as the Peripheral Nervous System.” I believe that the “silver cord being loosed” is referring to a person’s no longer being able to breath, or move, or talk, because the whole central nervous system of the body has ceased to function. It has ceased to function because of the progression of some disease within the body; some accident happening, or because old age has brought that person to that point where the soul can no longer work together with the body, to tell it to do what it would like it to do. Further, we can say, that this central nervous system is the cord which holds the person in this life; physically speaking.

It is the life of the soul, given by God, and watched over by God, which keeps this cord intact. When this vital connection (this cord) between the soul and the body is loosed, then physical death occurs. The “golden bowl” is a word picture for the skull, and the brain within it. The skull is somewhat shaped like a bowl, and it houses the brain which is a lightly golden color. The brain is connected to the spinal cord at the cerebellum, and it is there within this bowl, that the

soul co-ordinates and channels thoughts through the physical matter of the brain in regard to the mental exercise of thought. It also co-ordinates all of the physical deeds that are to be performed by the body. So, once again there is this coordinated activity (both conscious and unconscious, to the person themselves) which is taking place between the soul and the body. This activity is continually going on in the brain. And so when this coordinated activity, taking place in golden bowl is broken, then death is a certainty.

The pitcher which is shattered at the fountain is the physical heart which receives the blood and pours it out continually; pumping it throughout the body. When the heart stops beating, then the body dies. Directly related to this is the wheel at the cistern, which is a description of the great arteries through which the blood flows. The whole circulatory system of the blood is aptly described here as “a wheel” which receives the blood being pumped from the heart, and in connection with its passing through the lungs, a person regularly draws in oxygen by breathing in the air, and this brings the necessary oxygen into the body as a regular supply, for the continuance of physical life.

The whole process of breathing in, and the circulation of blood over and over again throughout the whole body is beautifully described by the metaphor of the wheel at the well drawing up water. When the drawing in of breath ceases, and when the pulse stops, the person’s circulation stops, and the person physically dies. What a great pictorial description of the end of physical life we find here! But what is the application for ourselves? It is that you should remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

And even more, You should remember Him before you die. Because at death all of your earthly deeds will come to an end. Your whole life for all of eternity will depend upon whether you have remembered your Creator before the silver cord was loosed. Heaven for you depends upon your remembering. Hell for you will come if you have not remembered. To remember God is to think upon Him often as you live your life. It is to think upon Him all through your life, for this life is given to you, to prepare for the next life. This life is a life of probation. That is, it is the time when God tests your character, and you yourself should test you own character, to see if you believe that you are fit for heaven, having been changed and transformed by the grace of Christ.

2nd Corinthians 5: 9 – “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Now, in this life, is the time to receive God’s Word to yourself, so that you might learn to keep it and to do it. To be able to do this, you must Christ, as your Savior and Lord. It is only in Christ that righteousness and strength are found. And now is the time to repent of all of your sins and learn to forsake them.

To really remember God in the right way, you must have Christ. For Christ fully represents God to you, and you to Him. He is the only Mediator between God and Men. He has fully declared the Father to every seeking sinner, in His coming into this world. He Himself, as a Man, was perfect, pure, and holy. He has set forth the path which leads to eternal life in the Words that He spoke. He said – I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me. He said – Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Will you not receive these words? If you do, you will find that He will guide you into all the truth.

2nd – Physical death will mean that your body will eventually one day turn to dust.
(verse 7)

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was...” When you die, if your body is not cremated, when it is placed in the ground, it will eventually over many years period of time, turn to dust. We need to turn back to Genesis Chapter 2 and remind ourselves of certain things here.

Genesis 2, verse 7. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” This was what Adam, the first man, was made of. And this is what we also are, as his descendants – Living dust. But even though we are living dust, nevertheless we were originally designed by God to live forever. The reason that I say this is because of what is said in verse 27 of Chapter 1. “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Follow my reasoning, now. If man was created in the image and likeness of God; part of that image relates to the eternity of God. Man is like God and different from all of the animals, in this one very important way. Even though created from the dust, God breathed the breath of life into his “clay man” whom He formed out of the dust. Nevertheless this dust, joined together with man’s spirit, was originally designed to last forever. But something changed all of this. And that something was sin entering into Adam’s being through the eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Look over at Chapter 3, verse 17, and you will find these very revealing words. “Then to Adam God said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.’ ‘Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.’ ‘In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.’” There it is; the cursing of the ground for Adam’s sake; his having to work in the sweat of his brow to obtain the fruits of it, having to work hard to provide for himself until he returned to the ground, for he was made from dust, and to dust he would have to return.

This is the curse of physical death; that the body which was designed to live forever, would have to return back to dust again. Because of sin entering the world, came death, through the one man Adam; our Federal Head. He represented us all in his fall into sin, and therefore we all must die. We confirm our sinnership in Adam in many ways during our lifetime, and therefore it says in Hebrews 9: 28 – “It is appointed unto men once to die, and then comes judgment. And this leads us on then to the 3rd aspect of what death will mean for each one of us.

3rd – Death will mean that your spirit will return to God who made it.

Verses 7 and 8 say, “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.” “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, all is vanity.” Here we find it plainly declared, what will happen to every man upon their death. Their dead body will be left behind, here upon the earth, and their spirit will return to God who gave it. We should understand from this that man did not evolve, and creation did not take eons of time, but that God gave Adam his spirit in the beginning. And He still gives each person who comes into the world a spirit as well. God gives it upon the conception of the child in the womb, or there would be no life.

Turn with me over to James Chapter 2, verse 26. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.” So, we see here, that there can be no life without the spirit being given to man. When any person dies, their spirit goes immediately back to God for judgment. Hebrews 9: 27 – “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many...” We should further understand that the separation of the righteous from the wicked takes place immediately upon death. If we say that we believe in Jesus, then we should bring forth works to match our profession of faith. We should consider the way that we live, and whether we have a love to help the poor.

You can see this if you will turn over to Luke 16, verse 19-23. “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.” “But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” “Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.” “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.” “The rich

man also died and was buried.” “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

You can see here, from what the Lord Jesus is saying here, that both of these men died, and in both cases, their spirits lived on. But not in the same place. When the beggar died, he was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; the Old Testament place of God’s eternal blessing; that is, into the very presence of God in heaven. The rich man also died. He is not once named in this passage. And his body was buried, but he, being in torments in Hades; the Old Testament place of waiting for eternal judgment, he was in torments it says. Then in verse 24 it says – “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’” “But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.’” “And besides all this, between us and you there is great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.”

Here we find proof of a complete separation between the righteous and the wicked after their death. Both of these men died at approximately the same time, and they are in separate places; Lazarus was brought into the place of comfort, and this man was brought into torments. The reason that Solomon said “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” is that all is vanity if we do not remember our Creator; to believe in Him, and to trust in his word, and to repent of all of our sins, and bring forth good works to glorify His holy name. This rich man did not have a name to live. And so, his name was not mentioned in this parable.

Let us remember and glory in the fact that it is because of Christ, that all not is vanity. Even a beggar with sores can find eternal joy and happiness. Lazarus had a name to live in the parable, and he will live forever, if he was a real person, and not simply a parabolic character. But if you being a real person, will remember your Creator is also the One who saves sinners, through Jesus Christ our Lord, then I trust that when you die, you will go to spend eternity spiritually in the bosom, not of Abraham, but of the Lord Jesus Christ.