

Facing the Last Enemy

Dr. Guy Prentiss Waters

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Introduction

We've considered the question, "What is death, according to the Scripture?" Now we'll build on that in the next 4 sessions by asking, "How do we apply that truth as we encounter death in its many forms?" We'll begin by asking....

How do I Face the Death of Others?

First, we grieve.

- There are many examples from the Old & New Testaments (Gen 37:32-35; Acts 9:36-39) and especially in the life of Jesus (Isa 53:3; Jn 11:32-35)
- We are commanded to grieve, Roman 12:15, and in 1st Thessalonians chapter 4 Paul assumes that believers will grieve the passing of other believers

But the Gospel transforms our grieving

- There is Godly and ungodly grieving. The dividing line is hope (1 Thess 4:13; Eph 2:12)
 - Unbelief = hopelessness. This world is all there is (Eccl 3:20)
 - We grieve differently because of Jesus (Rom 5:1-2; 1 Peter 1:3; Heb 6:19-20)

1st Thessalonians 4 offers five lines of encouragement (1 Thess 4:14-18)

- Our belief is in the truth of the Gospel (1 Thess 4:14b)
- Death can't destroy the bond between Jesus and His people (1 Thess 4:15)
- Believers who die will not miss out (4:16)
- Although parted in death, we'll be reunited in glory with Jesus (4:17)
- After death, believers will always be with Jesus (4:17)

But how do we face the death of people we don't know to be believers? How does faith grieve in those circumstances?

- We still grieve, compounded by the fact that we have no confidence
- We pray. For ourselves, committing this hard thing to the Lord, and for the loved ones left behind.

Our preparation for our own death begins now. Two concluding thoughts

- Leave behind a testimony of a sound, confirmed, and fruitful faith so there is no doubt or uncertainty among believers left behind.
- Preach the gospel to yourself every day