



OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

What is a healthy or unhealthy view of death?

Romans 14:7-8 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Philippians 1:20-23 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

ARE YOU READY RIGHT NOW?

1.) In a world full of so many dangers, accidents, and disease, why don't we need to panic or be paranoid about death?

Psalms 91:3-7, 9-12 Surely [the LORD] will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ...If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

Revelation 1:17-18 "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

2.) Under normal circumstances it is natural for us to speak of death as something that is some distance in the future, but how can that assumption give people a false sense of security?

Ecclesiastes 7:14-15 A man cannot discover anything about his future. In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness.

Ecclesiastes 9:11-12 I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

Luke 12:18-20 “Then [the rich man] said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

3.) In addition to death, what other life-stopping event must we always be equally prepared for?

Matthew 24:36,42-44 “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ...Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

ARE YOU READY RIGHT NOW?

1.) How are we made ready to face death and enter eternity at any moment?

Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Revelation 3:11 “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

2.) What should we not rely on for assurance in the hour of death?

Romans 4:5 To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Matthew 25:44-46 They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"

Galatians 3:10-11 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

3.) Have we the capacity to do so, what might be some fitting thoughts for our final moments?

Luke 23:46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Acts 7:59-60 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

4.) What can we expect as we pass through death?

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

John 14:2-3 "I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.

Luke 16:22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side."

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Psalms 17:15 I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

5.) Often one of the most pressing concerns of believers whose end draws near is no longer for themselves but for those they leave behind. What comfort do we have that takes this burden off our hearts?

Deuteronomy 5:9-10 "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God ...showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Psalm 78:6 So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Matthew 6:9 "Our Father in heaven..."

2 Timothy 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

NEXT TIME: NEW STUDY: My Life in the Kingdom: A Study of the Life of Joseph