

**Knowing How To Die
Will Teach You How To Live**

“If a man dies, will he live again?” (Job 14:14)

This is “the” question that has puzzled man from the very beginning

- For example, Cain, after slaying Abel and seeing death for the first time in history, pleaded with God for protection against sudden death.
- “If a person dies, will he/she live again?”
- We sanitize death as much as possible. For example, cemeteries in the U.S. compared to cemeteries in Latin America—a display of memories and mementos trying to bridge a gap too wide to be bridged
- The living with thoughts, wishes and regrets
- The dead with deeds and memories left behind
- All this begging the question: “If a person dies, will he/she live again?”

Seeing death face to face for the first time

- My baby chick (chirping and...)
- My best friend and youngest uncle. If a man dies... if my best friend dies, will he...? My mother’s answer: “I don’t know, son!”
- Growing up as a devout altar boy in the Catholic church touring cemeteries searching for “the” answer to “the” most difficult question of all. “If a man dies, will he/she live again?”
- Diagnosed with an incurable disease in the 1980s

Our understanding of death always determines our philosophy of life

- Airplane and tornado in Argentina
- Death bed and appointment book

Biblical Christianity is absolutely unique. It categorically answers the most difficult question of all: If a man dies, will he/she live again? Yes!

- Jesus Christ bridged once and forever the gap of death
 - *“I am the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)*
 - *“I’ve come so that you will have life and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)*
 - *He said to the thief on the cross next to his: “TODAY you shall be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)*
 - Jesus Christ (THE life) fought Satan (the prince of death) on his own turf, and Jesus won!
“He himself (Jesus Christ) partook of flesh and blood (a mortal body) that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. And might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” (Hebrew 2:14-15)
 - Fearful wife, husband and thief
 - The gospel is not good advice but good news
- Jesus gave us written assurance in John 14:2-3 that *“in my father’s house there are many dwellings so that where I am, you may be also...”*

Life transforming implications:

- Heaven is our final destination
- God is our father
- Satan has been defeated
- Death is no longer to be feared

“If a person dies....? Yes! Yes! Yes!

The compelling value of these truths

- Why is it that so often we fail to transfer intellectual understanding of these foundational truths into practical applications?
 - Chinese communist officer and Dr. Hillis (3 to 1)
 - British missionary = tea or revolution
- Why?
 - Because of a less-than-perfect understanding of what eternal life and death is all about
 - This, in turn, distorts our perspective on five key issues
 - 1) Dying
 - 2) Aging
 - 3) Ministry (or service to God)
 - 4) Material possessions
 - 5) Eternal rewards

These five issues are foundational elements in our philosophy of life

Paul’s Teaching on Life and Death

II Cor. 5:1-9 “ For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens

v.2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven;

v.3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked.

v.4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

V.5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

v.6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord

v.7 for we walk by faith, not by sight

v.8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

v.9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

v.10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Tent vs. Building—“For we know that if this earthly tent... is torn down... we have a building from God...”

- What is the basic difference between a tent and a building? Lack of a permanent foundation
 - Permission to pitch tent
 - Strength of tent = lack of fixed foundation. Otherwise it tears along the lines of what it's anchored to. Example: carnal Christians (Holy Spirit vs. Devil)
- The tent as a symbol of our body is...
 - A reminder that the soil under it isn't ours
 - We must not develop roots
 - We must keep on moving. Roots make it painful, difficult and often impossible

The (Helpful) Groaning of Death (v.4)

“... While we are in this tent, we groan... because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life...”

- Death, our own death, is a fearsome proposition
- We'd rather not die. We prefer the rapture
- Death (v.4) = moment of nakedness. A journey from the worn out temporal tent we know and are familiar with, to the eternal building we haven't seen yet
- God will not build around the tent but rather have us use it until it is no longer useful, and only then will he strike it down in order to move us to the permanent building
- What assurance do we have? (v.5) God gave us the Spirit as a pledge. A pledge is like a ring, like a down payment
- How do I know God/Heaven exist? Because of the Holy Spirit living in, for and through me, I already have a touch of heaven. Example: A ford Pinto, four girls and five balloons
- There is a valley of the shadow of death but it's only a shadow because the SUN OF JUSTICE is shining on the other side. Example: Dad (widower), his daughter and the shadow of a truck

The Rewards of Knowing How to Die: A proper understanding of what the tent and groaning means will allow us to have right perspective

- On dying: v.8 *“We are of good courage... and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”*
 - Black mother, “I see them...”
 - Young widower, the bee and his daughter

- On aging: (4:16) *“Therefore we do not lose heart but though our outer man is decaying... this light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison...”*
 - Elderly couple
 - Our “new” home in Rosario, Argentina
- On ministry: v.9 *“Whether in the tent or at home with the Lord, our ambition is to please Him.”*
 - The priesthood of all believers. (Anointed for Business book) Examples:
 - Potter, baker, “for the glory of God”
 - Missionary from Africa
 - Who are you serving?
 - Who are you pleasing?
 - Who are you afraid to displease?
 - So often we make our ambition to please men because we covet, we crave man’s approval and consequently his rewards
- On material possessions: *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*
 - The Bible never condemns wealth but the love of it. April 15th is a revealing date.
 - Bus depot (Ruth, a long journey and an empty bench)
 - Check your luggage to the final destination
- On eternal rewards: (v.9) *Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.*
 - Wedding day—all we need is our spouse, but our guests enhance an already complete picture. The same is true regarding heaven. All we need is Jesus, but we can “populate” the party by our good deeds while courting Him.

Conclusion

- How an eagle dies and what we can learn from it
 - It flies to the highest peak
 - Sets its talons on a rock
 - Faces the sun one last time
 - It dies
 - My father died like an eagle
- 1 Cor. 15:54-57 *“O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting? (Example: Bee) Death is swallowed up in victory... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- Ps. 116:15 *“Precious is in the sight of the Lord the death of his godly ones.”*