

## **“How Do I Face the Painful Reality of Death?”**

Death is the most dramatic consequence of being born human. Every day over 86,000 of us (or our loved ones) die. Too often we ignore the inevitable until the inevitable happens. How do we prepare? How do we face death filled with peace and not terror? It has been said of Christians that we can die better? How can I be sincerely prepared?

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### **Introduction:**

- “The memory of the righteous is blessed...” Proverbs 10:7
- “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.” Psalm 116:15
- One out of every 113 people in the world will die this year.
- “It's not that I'm afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens.” (Woody Allen)
- Psalm 90:12 “Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

### **What determines whether a person faces death in terror or in peace?**

2 Timothy 4:6-18 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **I. Paul experienced fulfillment in life (2 Tim. 4:6-7)**

2 Tim. 4:6-7 “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith...”

- “I am poured out as a drink offering”

- “...and the time of my departure (Greek: analusis) has come” (i.e. “The time has come for me to take down my tent, to head out to sea and to move on to my next home.”)

Although Paul knew he was about to die, he also knew that his life had not been a waste.

- Like an Olympic wrestler... “I have fought the good fight”
- Like an Olympic runner... “I have finished the course”
- Like a trusted servant... “I have kept the faith” cf. Acts 13:36; Heb 11:14

What one line would you want placed on your gravestone that would accurately describe your life?

## **II. Paul anticipated future reward in Heaven (2 Tim. 4:8)**

2 Tim. 4:8 “...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

The Apostle Paul was anticipating his own special reward for his faithful service for Christ – i.e. an imperishable crown of righteousness that can never be taken away (cf. I Cor. 9:25)

“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Paul faced life's difficulties because he kept his eyes on heaven.

Whereas in the Olympic games there is only one who receives the prize, in God's race there are many winners.

## **III. Paul enjoyed intimate friends on Earth (2 Tim. 4:9-13)**

2 Tim. 4:9-13 “Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.”

### **1. Timothy**

Phil. 2:20 “I have no one else like him...”

2 Tim. 1:4 “...longing to see you (Timothy), even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.”

Those who have ever faced death know that when life is about to end our human relationships take on greater importance.

However, unlike the Apostle Paul, whose date of execution had been set, most of us will never get advance word of the actual date of our death.

Psalm 90:12 “Teach us to number our days that we may apply our heart to wisdom.”

## **2. John Mark**

2 Tim. 4:11 "...Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." (cf. Acts 15:36-39)

We need to make every effort to be reconciled with those with whom we are at odds, before it is too late.

Eph. 4:26-27 "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity."

If you were to die tonight, what conflicts would be unresolved?

In 2 Kings 20 the Prophet Isaiah told King Hezekiah to get his house in order before he dies.

## **3. The Parchments (The Scriptures)**

2 Tim. 4:13 "When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments."

The Scriptures were Paul's earthly link to His Heavenly Lord.

If the Word isn't a welcome friend while we walk life's road; it won't be a welcome friend when we come to the end of that road.

## **IV. Paul entrusted to God his foes in ministry (2 Tim. 4:14-16)**

2 Tim. 4:14-16 "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them."

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

In 2 Timothy 4:15 Paul encourages caution against those who opposed his TEACHING; in 2 Timothy 4:16 Paul encourages mercy toward those who opposed his PERSON.

There were no personal vendettas in Paul's life! In his mind, to oppose his teaching was more serious than to oppose his person.

Are we at peace with those who oppose us?

Have we done everything in our power to be reconciled to them before death interrupts that process?

## **V. Paul believed in a faithful God in Heaven (2 Tim. 4:17-18)**

2 Tim. 4:17-18 "But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

Although many had deserted Paul, he knew that God had not.

(cf. Psalm 23)

**Conclusion:**

Phil. 1:20-25 “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; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith...”

“Let me die the death of the upright and let my end be like his.” (Numbers 23:10)

1 Cor. 15:55-57 “ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Tim. 4:18 “...to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

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