

“The Road Home”

(What happens after death)

Scripture:

Philippians 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Introduction:

I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said, “live a godly life so your preacher doesn’t have to lie at your funeral.”

You know life is very short, and the death of our physical bodies is close at hand.

-James 4:14 “...You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”

-Time passes by so quickly. Can you remember being 4 or 5 years old and feeling in your heart that time would never end.

Ecclesiastes 3:2 “A time to give birth and a time to die...”

-In other words death has an appointed season

God tells us that we all have an appointment with death.

-Hebrews 9:27 “.. .it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,”

I was talking to my dad on the phone the other day and he asked me what to expect when he dies. It dawned on me that we don’t talk to much about this subject.

So, this evening I would like to talk to you about death.

You know a lot of people are afraid of dying?

-My dad said it is kind of scary

-Because its an unknown place.

-People that have gone there don’t do Oprah shows.

-He wonders if he has understood God correctly

-Have I understood forgiveness

-Have I done enough

-Separation from family

Well, of death Job raises the question:

-Job 14:14 “If a man dies, will he live again?...”

-Or are we like Rover “When we are dead, we are dead all over”

Transitional Statement: So, how can Paul say to die is gain?

Lesson:

I. First, lets talk about Physical Death

- A. Our bodies are made fragile to last only for a little while.
- 2 Corinthians 4:7a “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels....”
 - That’s right God planned for our physical bodies to wear out.
 - Why? Because the physical is meant to pass away.
 - Yet some people think that when death occurs:
 - The heart stops
 - Breathing stops
 - Our living cells start dying
 - Decay begins
- *That God has failed in some way
- God hasn’t’ failed, this is planned (2 Corinthians 4:7b)
 - “....so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves”
- B. At Physical death the body and the spirit separate and the conscience/ soul lives on.
- Ecclesiastes 12:7 “.... then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”
- C. Closes the books (Story of Rich man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31)
- No second chances
 - No more invitation songs
 - Fate will be sealed

II. After Physical death we go to a Waiting Area

- Called Hades in the(Greek) and Sheol in the Hebrew
- *Most of the time it is translated the “Grave”**

LETS LOOK AT THIS WAITING AREA

Luke 16:19-31

"Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' 27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house

— 28 for I have five brothers — in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

-General

- The waiting area is divided into two placesa good and a bad area
- The waiting areas are separated by a great chasm that can't be crossed
- Here people can still remember and think of their families

-Paradise

- Jesus to thief on cross (Luke 23:43)
- Abrahams Bosom
- Being comforted
- Protection
- Sleeping in Jesus 1 Thess 4:14
- 1 Samuel 28:15 "Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"
- Rev 14:3 Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

-Tartarus

- No more chances
- No comfort
- Torment & agony
- Can't reach those who are good
- 2 Pet 2:4 Bad angels sent to await judgment
- With the Hells angels

III. When the Lord comes again

A. It will be Resurrection Day

- The Lord will come a second time (Heb 9:28)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

-Grave opened

- John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

-Raised to life or death

- John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

-Given imperishable bodies

-2 Corinthians 5:1-3 “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. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.”

-1 Corinthians 15:35-38 “But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" 36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; 37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

-1 Corinthians 15:42-44 “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

-Flesh has no place in heaven

-1 Corinthians 15:50 “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

-Not everyone will die and go to the waiting area

-1 Corinthians 15:51 “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

-1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

B. When the Lord comes again it will also be Judgment Day

-Phil 2:10...every knee will bow and every tongue confess

- All will give an account
 - Matthew 12:36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.”
- Each will be checked against the great book of life.
 - Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”
- The good and bad are separated
 - Matthew 25:32-33 “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

V. Eternity

A. Eternal Life (Heaven)

- Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”
- Zion...the heavenly Jerusalem ...city of God
 - Philippians 3:20 “For our citizenship is in heaven...”
 - Heb 11:13 Pilgrims on earth
- Shelter of his wing
- Rest Job 3:13
- Peace
- No tears, crying or pain Rev 21:4
- Worship Rev 4
 - Holy, Holy, Holy
- John 14:2-3 “In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.
- Treasures laid up Matt 6:19-21
- Revelation 2:10 “...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

B. Eternal Death (Hell)

- Matthew 25:41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ' Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels”
- Many will see this end
 - Matthew 7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate

is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”

- Revelation 20:14-15 “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

-2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 “For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

-Eternal death ...separation from God

-Let take a closer look at the word Hell in the Greek is Gehenna

-Represented a trash dump outside Jerusalem (Hinnom) where:

-Stink of filth and garbage

-Fires were constantly light to burn the trash

-Dead animals were put there

-Children were sacrificed to Molech

-Great fear and weeping

-Maggots and worms unending

-Dogs gnashing their teeth fighting for food.

- Mark 9:43-44 “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 [where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]

Conclusion:

So how can Paul can say to die is gain:

-1 Corinthians 15:19 “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

-Psalms 116:15 “Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His godly ones”

The death that we should be concerned with here and now is spiritual death.

-1 John 5:16-17 Sin unto death

-2 Timothy 1:12 “... I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”