

We Need To Talk About Death (1)

David Halbrook

I'm 38 years old, so I don't talk about death often. Do you?

Society has talked about death due to the "death with dignity" movement, recently publicized due to Brittney Maynard, a young woman with brain cancer who chose to end her life. We need to see what the Giver of Life has said about the end of physical life.

The book of Genesis teaches us that in the beginning, God planned for man to live on earth and avoid death by eating from the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). As religion in America has grown more liberal, many preachers and churches do not believe or teach that the book of Genesis is a record of literal history (does yours?), denying that a literal tree of life existed (Gen. 2:9). Jesus' and Paul's teachings prove they believe it is literal history (Matt. 19:4-9; 1 Tim. 2:12-14).

Genesis also tells us that God planned for man to die once sin was present (Gen. 2:17). Like the memorial at "Ground Zero" in New York City, death is a painful memorial of past events that must be remembered, but our society is forgetting the connection between sin and death. Have you forgotten?

Visit our website to read part 2.

Editor's Note: If this article sounds familiar, I preached on this subject a few weeks ago. If you heard that lesson and think it is useful, use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to tell someone something you learned or were reminded of in that lesson and encourage them to listen to it. David Halbrook can provide a CD or post it on our website, by request.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

church of Christ--Quail Valley

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The Quest For Things

J. Wiley Adams

This is a true story. The names have been omitted, not so much to protect the innocent, but to tell this account in a more objective way.

In a major southern city there was a fine family. The father and mother were both Christians with two fine small children. They all attended faithfully at a nearby church of Christ. They were a big asset to the church. They were all happy and the church was happy with them.

Things changed. He decided to take an early morning paper route in addition to his nine to five job. This was the beginning of sorrows. To get up in the wee hours in order to deliver his papers he had to go to bed very early and family life was interrupted in the evenings. On Sundays the delivery was very time-consuming due to the size of the paper. He started getting home too late to get ready to go to services so he sent the family on without him and he attended the evening service.

Things changed again. She decided to help out on their bills by taking a job also. She needed some new clothes and another car. This necessitated the need for a maid to come in and take care of the children. So in order to make more money it cost more and more to live thus increasing the need for more and more money. The rat-race was on.

The family life began to disintegrate. They hardly saw each other except to wave at each other in passing. Then the children became more and more unruly and would obey only the maid. They wondered why they loved the maid more than themselves. Well, the maid was there. That's why.

They became irritable and edgy and had quite a few family spats. Church attendance was relegated to the background in spite of the urgency of the elders for them to be faithful. Others from the church went to see them to encourage them to once again take their proper place in the congregation. All of this did not avail.

Finally, thank the Lord, they became so tired that they could hardly make it from day to day. Then, like the prodigal son they came to their senses. Once more they would allow the elders to help them figure things out. Here's what happened.

He quit the paper route. She quit her job. They sold the second car. They discharged the maid. They got their family back. They decided to live within their means on his salary, maintain a proper family life, regain their children, and came before the Lord and the church asking forgiveness for their covetousness and resulting unfaithfulness. They cried for joy when they came forward and brethren cried with them. This case turned out all right in the end.

I am thinking now of many other cases here and there. It is evident that some are making the same mistakes as those we have mentioned. They are on a tread mill which gets faster and faster. Some cases have already resulted in a broken home and leaving the Lord and His people. Others will soon be there as well. Unless they heed the Word of God and the advice of faithful brethren.

Some of the most enriching times of our lives were when Wilma and I had less of this world's goods. That's when the family really has to pull together. That's when the family is truly close. That's when we learn truly what happiness and contentment is all about.

Let's now hear from the Scriptures on this. Hebrews 13: 5 says, "... be content with such things as ye have..." Proverbs 15: 16, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is then a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Again in Proverbs 17: 1, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

Less is better than more if more leads you away from the God of Heaven and the family goes down the drain. I plead with the young families to heed the warning. We who are now older can see where you are heading. Will you take heed?

- *Searching the Scriptures*, October, 1991

Are You Saved?

Carrol R. Sutton

Are you saved? Of course, you are not saved eternally in heaven at the present time, but are you now saved from your past sins?

You are NOT saved just because you may desire salvation. The rich young ruler desired to be saved but he was not willing to pay the cost involved. So he went away from Jesus sorrowful (Matthew 19:16-22).

You are NOT saved just because you may think you are saved. Saul of Tarsus thought he was right while persecuting Christ but he was wrong (Acts 26:9).

You are NOT saved just because you may think you have had "an experience" with the Lord. Our "experiences" is not God's power to save.

You are NOT saved just because you may "feel like" you are saved! Feelings are not evidence of salvation! Feelings are produced by "belief" whether that "belief" is right or wrong. Saul felt like he was right with God while persecuting Christians unto death. He had a "good conscience before God" and "verily thought" he was pleasing God, but he was lost (Acts 26:9-11; 22:4; 23:1).

You are NOT saved just because you may be "happy." If you think you are saved, you will be "happy" although you are lost.

You are NOT saved just because some preacher may have told you that you are! Jesus warned of "many false prophets" who have gone out into the world. We are told to "believe not every spirit" but to "try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

You are NOT saved just because you are religious. Your religion may be in vain (James 1:26-27; Proverbs 16:25).

If you are dead in trespasses and sins, you are not saved! You need to be "quicken" by the gospel which is God's Word (Psalms 119:50; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16; James 1:18-22; and 1 Corinthians 4:15). If you are living in sin, you are not saved! You need to die to sin! This is accomplished by repentance (Romans 6:1-23; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 7:10). If you haven't believed in Jesus Christ, repented of your sins, confessed Christ and been baptized INTO Christ, YOU ARE NOT SAVED (John 20:30-31; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Eph. 5:17)

You can understand God's will for your life. This verse equates understanding with wisdom, for it is "unwise" not to understand the Lord's will. You will not find and understand the Lord's will by examining your feelings, your experiences or your desires. You will find it in the Bible. But you must have the wisdom to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16). It is foolish to hear God's word but not do it (Jas. 1:23-24). "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (Jas. 1:25). Be wise. Understand the will of the Lord. Put His word in your heart, obey it, and be blessed.

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