

We Need To Talk About Death (2)

David Halbrook

Our experience with death is often very “sanitized.” Our loved ones die in a hospital or at home, and we last see them in nice clothes in a decorated box. A farmer’s or soldier’s experiences with death are not so clean. Why does this matter? Death is a visible illustration of sin (Gen. 2:17), so grasping the concept of death aids our understanding of sin.

Death is the absence of life, like darkness is the absence of light, and sin is the absence of God (Is. 59:1-2). When death separates us from our parents, children, or closest friend, this is God’s effort to teach us of our condition in sin without Him. That is the horror of hell---separation from your Father.

Death also reminds us of our weakness and limitations. *What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave?* (Ps. 89:48) Likewise, you cannot save yourself from sin. You are weak (Rom. 5:6).

Death and sin are painful processes (James 1:14-15), have repulsive results (Jn. 19:30), and end all opportunities for joy and reconciliation (Lk. 16:19-31). Are you learning?

Meditate on this, and your heart will be made better (Eccl. 7:3-4). Contact us for a free CD on this subject.

Editor’s Note: Consider using our *Arkansas Weekly* article to suggest someone read it and our articles each week, view our website, or request a CD of this lesson. If you can use it to have a conversation with someone about this topic, this may offer the best opportunity for teaching. In whatever way you are able, let’s spread some part of the gospel this week, and few things identify the value of the gospel more than sin and death do. Help someone this week.

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*
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Love and Truth: A Powerful Combination (Joe R. Price)

People who live in unrighteousness are deceived by sin and perish *"because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved"* (2 Thess. 2:10). Conversely, when love and truth combine they are a powerful force against evil. The devastation is eternal when love and truth are compromised and corrupted by sin. We are grateful to be reminded of the strength at our disposal through the love and truth of God. God is our great example to also deal with others in love and truth.

The world does not love you. Those who live in sin love the world with its pleasures and pride (1 Jno. 2:15-16). Worldly people will only love you as long as you endorse, approve and support them and their sinful ways. But rest assured, those who love the world will discard you when you decide to love God first and always. Jesus said, *"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"* (Jno. 15:19). We have a choice to make: Either love God with all our heart, soul and mind, or love the world (Matt. 22:37).

The world does not tell you the truth. The world is the dominion of the devil, the father of lies; *"there is no truth in him"* (Jno. 8:44). It is not surprising that his servants lie. Sinners will entice the innocent with lies. We must love truth in order to know and avoid their lies: *"My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent...do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path; For their feet run to evil..."* (Prov. 1:10, 15-16).

The power of love and truth. God shows us the power of love and truth. In love He sacrificed His Son for us (Jno. 3:16-17). By Jesus, God has spoken truth to us (Jno. 1:14; 14:6; Heb. 1:2).

The person who loves you tells you the truth. He does not lie to you. He does not deceive you. We do well to remember Paul's plea to the Galatians, *"Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"* (Gal. 4:16)

The love and truth of God powerfully combine in the gospel, which is His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Those who love you tell you the truth. They want you to be blessed now and eternally. Everyone who is of the truth listens to Jesus (Jno. 18:37). The world does not love you. The world does not tell you the truth. The world offers you momentary pleasure and eternal death. That's not love - and that's the truth!

“Let Brotherly Love Continue” (Steven J. Wallace)

“Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also” (Heb. 13:1–3)

After the Holy Spirit admonished the need for reverence because our God is a consuming fire, He then exhorts the continuation of *philadelphia*, or brotherly love. That brotherly love can wane is of course implied. If such could not end, then why admonish for it to continue?

The apostle Paul had encouraged this trait among the Romans: “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (Rom. 12:10).

Brotherly love is not a competitive shutting down of another, but rather preferring another. Quite literally in Romans 12:10, the act of brotherly love is tied to an honorable leading or going before another. Hence, brotherly love works in concert with the concern of an example that one places before his/her brethren. Brotherly love cannot be at work in isolationism. “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment” (Prov. 18:1). On the contrary, brotherly love seeks to promote godliness and happiness in the Christian community. Brotherly love seeks to bestow, rather than withhold, honor upon another. A church where all the members have brotherly love is a church that is sterile against the growth of cancerous vices such as gossip, slander, covetousness, envy, and selfish ambitions. This is no doubt a reason why the Holy Spirit commanded this grace to be added to godliness (see 2 Pet. 1:7).

When one turns and considers the text in Hebrews 13, brotherly love is manifestly seen. It is seen, for example, in generating hospitality to strangers (Heb. 13:2). Brotherly love is seen in remembering those brethren who were mistreated for righteousness and in a sense seeks to take upon or empathize with them by being chained with them (Heb. 13:3). Brotherly love recognizes the purity of the marriage relationship and guards against setting an improper example of adultery or fornication

(Heb. 13:4). Make no mistake about it, adultery violates brotherly love (cf. 1 Thess. 4:6). Brotherly love pursues contentment and strays away from coveting your brother's possessions (Heb. 13:5). Brotherly love is not fixated on self. It observes and appreciates those who “rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (Heb. 13:7; referring to elders). The disciple with brotherly love will esteem such laborers.

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13).

Brotherly love is established by godliness and also promotes such the household of God.

Email Education (Joe R. Price)

Unless you've been living under a rock this past week you've likely heard about the email brouhaha involving former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. There are some important lessons Christians can take away from observing this still developing situation.

Christians keep their word. Honesty and integrity are hallmarks of our faith. Email is not a "truth-free zone". We must take care that what we write and forward electronically is the truth. It is hard to imagine that someone thinks they walk with God while being deceptive toward others. The *"lying tongue"*, the *"heart that devises wicked plans"* and *"a false witness who speaks lies"* are despicable to God (Prov. 6:16-19).

Christians use careful, gracious language in every form of communication. Email and other electronic forms of communication (texting, etc.) does not give anyone the right to be unkind, rude, insulting or profane. The slang the world uses in email, texting, etc. is often full of euphemistic profanity and blasphemy toward God and men. Be careful what you write, because you will answer to God for it (Matt. 12:36-37).

Christians think before they push "send". Email has made it extremely easy to say things with little forethought (to speak without thinking). Once spoken or sent, words cannot be retrieved. *"He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction"* (Prov. 13:3).

Christians take responsibility for what they write. Email makes it more difficult to deny what one has said. By always *"speaking the truth in love"* we are prepared to account for our words (Eph. 4:15). If we should sin with our tongue, including email, let us readily admit it and seek forgiveness with a repentant heart.