

After Death, Before Resurrection

David Halbrook

After learning of death and resurrection many wonder what happens in between. Luke 16:19-31 offers the most help---

A separation (v22-23) These two men are separated from each other by a *great gulf* (chasm). One is in a place of torment and the other is comforted—both in a temporary residence for souls until Judgment. This is not “Purgatory,” where Catholic tradition claims sins are purged by temporary punishment---neither Jesus, nor the apostles taught this.

A memory of loved ones on earth (v28) The man in the place of torment feared that at death his five brothers would join him. We all have loved ones in this place—they also are hoping we do not join them. So, at death, we are conscious. We are not like a computer that has been unplugged. Our bodies appear to be sleeping, but our spirits return to God with the knowledge we had at death (Eccl. 12:7).

This is where Jesus went after death and before He was raised (Acts 2:27). At the moment of death, atheists and agnostics are convinced, hypocrites are exposed, all who are deceived see reality, and faithful Christians have comfort. Someday, we will all agree—don't wait until death to learn!

Editor's Note: You will meet someone this week who is lost and needs to think about death, resurrection, and “in between.” Use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to offer a reminder to one such person 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.

Please check the back bulletin board for simple ways you can serve (willing workers are needed to prepare the Lord's Supper or roadside sign).

Our spring gospel meeting is April 26 – May 1. Be praying and preparing for this work we've committed to.

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
April 5, 2015
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Troubled Over Immorality

Connie Adams

Nothing can create more havoc in a home or a congregation than immoral behavior on the part of Christians or their children. Webster defines immoral as "Inconsistent with purity or good morals." Immorality is defined by Webster as "the quality or state of being immoral: wickedness, esp. unchastity." It is immoral to steal, lie, cheat and a host of other things opposed to righteousness. But the term is often used of illicit sexual intercourse, including incest (1 Cor. 5:1), adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), homosexuality (Jude 7), and cohabitation of the unmarried (1 Cor. 7:2).

Immorality was a common problem in the first century, especially among Gentiles. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. 4:3). This had been a pattern of life among some of the Corinthians before their conversion. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Our bodies belong to God who made us, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Paul said that sin is not to rule over us. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:12,13).

Troubled Over Immoral Mates: Jesus said that fornication is the only reason one can put away a spouse and marry another (Matt. 19:9). It is the ultimate betrayal of trust and vows made before God and man. The husband's body belongs to his wife and to nobody else. The wife's body belongs to her husband and only to him (1 Cor. 7:3,4). How many hearts have been broken and how many tears have been shed over this sin? This immoral act causes great trouble for the innocent party in the marriage. Even if the guilty is penitent, it is a fact that trust has been betrayed and the question arises as to whether you can ever fully trust again. The problem is compounded when there are children involved and agony arises over what is best for them.

But there is also trouble for the guilty one. Should the innocent exercise his/her right to put that one away, then the guilty has now forfeited the right to marriage. Some think that is too heavy a price to pay. But the Lord said, "Whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). The worst problem of all is that God is offended. A soul is at stake. God made His marriage laws strict on purpose. Marriage is ordained of God for the good of the human family. It is the basic unit of all orderly society. While present culture tends to treat adultery as a normal (even expected) thing, God does not view it so. And neither should we.

But must the innocent exercise the right to put away the guilty when repentance is evident? Some think that unless the innocent remains in this marriage, now betrayed by fornication, that forgiveness has not been granted. Of course, unless we forgive those who sin against us, we cannot expect God to forgive us either (Matt. 6:14,15). But actions have consequences. It is God's law that the innocent may put away the guilty. Some are able to reestablish the relationship and make the best of it. Others have difficulty. Those on the outside do not know how many times the innocent has been wronged. Was it a one-time fling? Or a part of a pattern of infidelity? It does not take long to betray your vows, but it might take a long time to restore trust and rebuild credibility. What trouble would be avoided if people would just do right.

Troubled Over Pornography: This is an age old problem. It is rampant in our culture in recent years. The viewing of pictures and images of people engaged in every form of sexual activity has spawned a huge industry in this country and around the world. "Adult" bookstores and video houses are springing up, not only in seedy neighborhoods, but up and down the interstate highways. The computer age has brought it into homes all across the world. Businessmen and women, housewives, husbands who stay up late and surf the web, children in their own bedrooms, or at the family computer when they are unsupervised, and sometimes preachers have been caught up in this immoral trade. Homes have been broken up because of it.

The works of the flesh include "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:19,20). Peter described those who have "eyes full of adultery" (2 Pet. 2:14). Can there be a more accurate description of this sin? Jude describes them as "filthy dreamers" (Jude 8). Jude also said, "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own lusts. These be that who separate themselves sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 17-19). Paul warned Titus of those to whom nothing is pure "but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15,16).

If we could keep our minds thinking on the kind of things Paul mentioned in Phil. 4:8, there would be no room or taste for pornography. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...of good report...of virtue..." and worthy of "praise"; then he added, "Think on these things."

In addition to violating what is taught in the foregoing passages, the trouble with pornography is that it arouses passion, distorts reality, creates false and unreasonable expectations in marriage, causes women to be seen as objects rather than persons of worth, and reduces people to the level of the brute. When you purchase such material, you help subsidize an evil which is contributing to the downfall of souls and our nation as well.

When a husband (or wife) is found to have such an attraction for pornography, it is time to sit down and have some soul searching talks. It is not a time to scream and yell and sharpen sarcastic tongues. Talk frankly about your sexual life. It may be that one has unrealistic expectations. Or that one has not been satisfying the other. The pressures of daily work and life may contribute to it. One may tend to be cold, prudish, or unresponsive. And sometimes there are much deeper problems. Some are just given to sensuality. They have allowed their minds and hearts to be corrupted.

When children are found to be caught up in this sin, it is time to have some no-nonsense education about sexuality, keeping it within the bounds of dignity and casting it in a context of what the Bible teaches on the subject. Children caught in this snare may have a hard time ever being realistic about their own expectations in marriage. Parents need to supervise what movies are seen, what television shows are watched and the use of computers must be monitored. Again, yelling will not solve the problem.

Like Job, we need to "make a covenant with mine (our) eyes" (Job 31:1). "The lust of the eye" (1 Jn. 2:15-17) is a powerful force leading us in the wrong direction. The images we see have a direct influence on what we think and "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Pornography corrupts the heart and so corrupts the person, preventing him from being fashioned in the image of Christ.