

Our Last Enemy Death

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the Christian perspective on death, highlighting Christ's victory over it and the hope of eternal life for believers.

Duration: 18:25

Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33, Matthew 22:31-32, Romans 14:12, Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 3:19-20, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, Bill McLeod discusses the topic of death and its significance according to the Bible. He emphasizes that death is an appointment made by God that no one can escape. He highlights the importance of being prepared for death and the judgment that follows, as stated in Hebrews 9 and Romans 14. McLeod also emphasizes the opportunity for salvation and fellowship with Jesus Christ, as mentioned in Revelation 3. He concludes by reassuring believers that nothing can separate them from the love of God, as stated in Romans 8.

Transcript

Good morning, this is Bill McLeod from Winnipeg, Canada. I'm bringing a message on the subject of our last enemy, death. The Bible speaks hundreds of times of death in various ways, murder, war, natural deaths, all this sort of thing.

It's mentioned hundreds and hundreds of times. But there's one verse especially in Hebrews chapter 9 that says, it is appointed, now this appointment is by God himself so you can't escape it. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.

And so Paul tells us in Romans 14 that every one of us should give account of himself to God. Someday, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess. And we will be standing naked before God, nobody to help us, no judge, nobody to help us in the sense of a lawyer, an advocate.

We stand before God just as we are. Well, death is an enemy and yet it's a friend at the same time. We understand that too because the Bible makes it plain both ways.

1 Samuel 15:32 speaks about the bitterness of death. The bitterness of death. It is bitter to have to die when you've never experienced this before.

And it's sort of in a sense a leap into the unknown, yet it's not really that for a Christian believer because we've known the Lord for years perhaps and we know where we're going and why we're going and we're praising him. 1 Corinthians 15.26 is a verse that speaks about death being our last enemy. At one time, according to Hebrews 2.14, Satan had the power of death.

But Christ came and defeated Satan when he died on a cross and rose from the dead. And Satan doesn't have that power now. We read rather in Revelation 1.18 that Christ Jesus now has the keys of hell and of death.

And we ought to thank God for that. He has the keys. Well, we have a prophecy in Isaiah 25.8 that death one day would be swallowed up in victory.

And that prophecy was uttered some 700 years before Christ came to the great prophet Isaiah. And no doubt in the centuries that followed, people were hoping it might happen in their days. Well, it happened in the days when Christ was here on earth.

We know that. Death was swallowed up in victory by his death on the cross. There was another prophecy, Hosea 13.14, where God said, I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

That was another wonderful thought. Then Psalm 49.15, God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave. So these predictions, and there were others besides, created hope in people's hearts that someday death would be defeated somehow.

Nobody had even the slightest idea as to how or when, until the Lord Jesus came. And he said, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Then they asked this question, do you believe this? I think he's asking us the same question today. Do you believe this? You're listening to this message.

Do you believe this? That Christ is the resurrection? You see, if you have the Lord Jesus Christ living within you, you have the resurrection within you because he is the resurrection. He never explained resurrection, at least, and not perhaps as completely as we would like it to be explained. Paul said much about 1 Corinthians 15.

Other places, of course, refer to it and all of that. But we'd like to know more about it if we possibly could. In any case, Christ has the keys of hell and of death.

And we don't need to fear death any longer if we have feared death in the past because Christ has that power. He has the keys. Psalm 73, 24, Thou shalt guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

And that's a short biography of all of our lives as Christian believers. He'll guide us with his counsel. His counsel, well, in Psalm 119, it says, God's testimonies are our counsel or the men of my counsel, I think the Margin of Reading puts it.

So we do have counselors. He guides us with his counsel and afterwards receives us up to glory. Thank God for this.

Then in Proverbs 12, 28, it says, In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death. There is no death. Does this mean we wouldn't die? Well, physically we die, but in some respects

there's no death if you're walking in the way of righteousness, that is, in the way of God.

Psalms 23, 4 says, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. You're with me, so why don't you fear evil? Even in the time of death, facing death, knowing it's coming shortly, we'll fear no evil because God is with us and he has the keys of death. We thank him for that.

Well, in John 8, 51, Christ said, If a man keep my saying, he will never see death. Now, he couldn't have meant physical death because we keep the sayings of Christ, we still die physically. He must have had something else in mind.

There's something else in mind would be this. The Bible speaks about the second death, the second death, and the second death is described as being the lake of fire. So, we die physically, yes, but we don't ever experience the second death being cast in the lake of fire if we're born again by the power of God.

So, if a man keep my saying, he'll never see the second death. 2 Timothy 1, 10 says, Christ has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He's abolished death.

Don't we die physically? Yes, we do. Well, in what sense, then, has he abolished death? Well, here again, we have the second death in mind. It must be.

There's no other way we can explain this. And we'll never see the second death because we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and he is the keys of hell and of death and so we're his child forever. And then, Hebrews 2, 9 says, Christ has tasted death for every man.

Well, if he tasted death for me, why do I have to taste death too? Well, again, it's not physical death he's talking about here. It's the second death and Christ tasted that when he died on the cross. When God forsook him, Christ experienced what every sinner in hell will experience someday, being separated forever from God.

The fear of death is being removed by Christ in Hebrews 2, 14 and 15. And he came. And for as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, so that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Are you subject to the bondage, the fear of death? You shouldn't be. It probably means you're not born again. You've never received Christ into your heart.

You need to do that. You can do that even now. Just whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

You don't have to pray a pretty prayer, a poetic prayer. Just call. Ask him to save you through his precious blood and he will do that.

Okay, so keep in mind that Jesus now has the keys of hell and death. Hebrews 2, 14 says Jesus destroyed him, the devil, that had the power of death and that's gone. In 1 Corinthians 3, 2 and 3, death is presented as a gift from God.

Let no man glory men for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Peter or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ's gods. So there,

death is presented as a gift from God. And it really is, because as Paul said, to depart and be with Christ is far better.

1 Corinthians 15, 56 and 57 reminds us that the sting of death is sin, and the strength and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God. He's removed that sting by being stung to death himself on the cross for our sins and by our sins. The sting of death is sin, but the sting of death is gone now because the Lord Jesus Christ died, tasted death for us.

1 Corinthians 15, 51, it says we're not all going to sleep, that it's not all going to die. Some of us will be alive when Christ comes back, and the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. So there'll be millions living when Christ returns who will never experience death.

That's made very clear, 1 Corinthians 15. Beautiful thoughts there. We're going to be equal to the angels according to Luke 20, 36, in the next life they won't be marrying, and we'll be equal to the angels.

That's a mighty, I think a very powerful statement. Equal to the angels? Wow. Luke 16, 22, we have a man who died, and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

How would you like to have angels for a palm bearer when you die? I don't care who carries my body because that's not me, that's just my body, that's the carcass I had, that's the little house I lived in for some years. Now I'm free from that prison, and I'm carried by the angels. I'm sure if one man was carried by the angels, it'll be true of all believers, and so we thank God for that.

Carried by the angels, that's a wonderful thought. Psalm 90, 10 says, Life is soon cut off and we fly away. We can't get away.

Remember, it's appointed unto men who wants to die, but after this the judgment. Who shall separate us from the love of God? That question is asked and answered in Romans 8, 35-39. There is nothing can ever separate a believer from the love of God.

You're His child forever. We are in the hand of Christ, whose hand is in the hand of God, and forever His. Nothing, nobody can ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Luke 9, 27-35, we have Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Moses died, and God buried him. Satan tried to get his body after he died, but Michael defeated Satan, and that never happened.

But when he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, as far as we know, there was no difference between him and Elijah, who never died. Elijah was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind, as we know. A flaming chariot.

And yet there the two of them were. And the apostles who were there, they instinctively knew who they were. We didn't need an introduction.

They just knew who Moses was, who Elijah was. We are told certainly that in 2 Corinthians 5, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now we mentioned the second death a number of times.

There are some scriptures you might look up. Revelation 2.11, chapter 20, verse 6, chapter 21, verse 8. And it's made quite clear there that the second death is a lake of fire. No believer in Christ will ever experience the second death.

That's been taken care of. Christ died that we might not die. He tasted death for you and me.

So we would never taste death that is the second death. So Revelation 12.11 says, Of believers they overcame Satan by three things, the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Have you ever looked at that carefully? The blood of the Lamb.

There's no other way. There's no salvation apart from the blood that Jesus shed. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

So we read in Revelation chapter 1, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. There's no salvation apart from blood. Leviticus 17 tells us that God gave blood for the soul, to cover the soul, to make an atonement for our sins.

So we have to keep this in mind clearly. They overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb. I noticed in some liberalistic churches in their hymn books, they've taken out all references to the blood of Christ out of the songbook.

I'm not surprised because they're not preaching the gospel of Christ and I'm not surprised to find that they take all reference to the blood away because that's what Satan would have us do. He hates the doctrine of the blood. And then the word of their testimony, you know if you are a Christian and you're not testifying for Christ, then you're not going to have much victory over Satan.

You're going to fall again and again. You have to learn how to speak up. Christ said, if you're ashamed of me, my word, I'll be ashamed of you when I return.

Don't run that risk. Witness for Christ whenever you can. Ask God to give you strength every day.

And then the third thing was this, we're not to love our lives unto the death. There's a peculiar statement by Christ in Luke 14, 26, that we're supposed to hate our family and our loved ones and ourselves. What does he mean by hating our loved ones and our family? We have to turn over to Genesis 29 because you remember that Jacob had two wives, Rachel and Leah, and it says that he loved Rachel more than he loved Leah.

The Bible says when God saw that Leah was hated, he did something about it. Well, she wasn't hated, but she wasn't loved. She wasn't the first love that Jacob had.

So when he's talking about us hating, he's talking about us hating in that sense. You know, Scripture describes or interprets Scripture and we find that in this particular case. So, all right.

Genesis 29, 30, verse 3. When he saw that Leah was hated, then he gave her many children, and Rachel had a hard time because she had none. At that point, she did have later on. Thank God for that.

Well, so we see to depart, Philippians 1, 2, and 3, to depart and be with Christ is, the Bible says, far better, far better. Not just better, but far better. Matthew 22, 31, 32.

The Lord Jesus referred to the Old Testament. He quoted this where God said, I am, not I was, not I will be. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And so, he said that because they were not lying dead in the graves. They were already in the glory of God, in the presence of God. Their soul was with God.

Your body's in the grave. Your soul is with God. You are with God.

You've got to keep this in mind. And if we don't understand that, we don't understand death and dying at all. What does Paul mean in Philippians 1, 23, when he said to depart and be with Christ is far better? Well, it's not far better if I'm still dead somewhere.

I'm lying in the grave somewhere. And there are people who claim to be Christians who believe that. To depart and be with Christ is far better.

Far better. So, I'm alive like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were all alive.

God said, I am the God. I'm not. I was.

Not I shall be. But I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is the truth we need to understand.

Clearly. So, death is not something to be feared. Because, remember again, I keep my saying, you'll never see death.

Christ has abolished death. Brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1, 10.

The previous reference was John 8, 51. Christ has tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2, 9. Hebrews 2, 15.

The fear of death has been removed. Revelation 1, 18. Christ now has the keys of hell and death.

Hebrews 2, 14. Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered us through fear of death for all our lifetime, subject to bondage. It's a gift from God.

We saw that. The sting of death is simply gone. It's gone.

Because Christ was stung to death by our sins on the cross. And that sting of death is gone, as far as we're concerned, by the grace of God. If you've never received Christ as your personal Savior, why not do it right now? Repent of your sins.

Turn to God with all your heart. He understands, and he gave us this great promise, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

Thank God. You can be saved. You can be saved.

In Revelation chapter 3, the Lord Jesus Christ said, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Then he said, Behold, I stand at the door knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. This means we'll have fellowship, living fellowship with the living Christ, the moment we invite him into our

heart to become our personal savior from sin. May God bless you richly.

May God bless you richly.

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