

To Die is Gain

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the profound topic of life, death, and the ultimate hope for believers in Christ. It explores the transition from this earthly life to the eternal presence of God, emphasizing the confidence and assurance that comes from faith in Jesus. The speaker reflects on the transformation that believers will experience at the resurrection, moving from mortality to immortality, and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where God dwells with His people in eternal harmony.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:51, Revelation 21:1, Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:10, Philippians 1:21

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Hope in Resurrection"

Description

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Transcript

Let's just pray, shall we? Father, we thank you, Father, from the depths of our hearts for this indescribable privilege that you've extended to us, Lord, in calling us and ministering to us and teaching us. Teaching us, Lord, concerning yourself and your purpose for men and women and giving to us, Lord, the extended privilege of being able to share the great truth of the Gospel with men and women. Father, we know that as we seek to share what we feel and sense in our own hearts concerning your word, that we so desperately need your Holy Spirit to take those words, Lord, and wing them deeply into the hearts of those who you have planned to hear.

So Lord, we look to you humbly and genuinely that you might move and that you might have all the praise and all the glory and that your people may be blessed and edified and we pray in Jesus' name, Amen. Well if you'd like to open your Bibles with me to the book of Philippians and to chapter one and as many of you will know and be aware, I chose to speak to you last week from the 21st verse of this chapter and the words are these, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain and I remember mentioning last week that we have here in this single verse twelve very simple words which fall into three phrases and last week I chose the first two which were for to me and we talked about that and then to live is Christ. Now this week I'd like to pay attention to the third statement that Paul makes here, so essentially what Paul is saying here is this, for to me to die is gain, alright? That's not the whole verse, he said for to me to live is Christ, well we dealt

with that, we're simply focusing on this last statement which amounts to the same thing he's saying, for to me to live is Christ and for me to live, forgive me, for me to die is gain.

And the question at the outset really is well what exactly did Paul mean when he made that statement to die is gain and I would imagine a second question, a sort of follow-up question to that which would be but did he really mean it, did he really mean those words to die is gain and then I can think of a third question and this would be directed to you my listeners this morning, do you share the same confidence? The fact of the matter is we know that death is the polar opposite to life, we also know and the scriptures bear this out, we know it in our own experience also, that death is our ultimate enemy, humanly speaking it's our ultimate enemy, it stalks us for the entire length of our journey as we live out our lives in this world, we also know that death is really the root of all fear and the rest of the Hebrew speaks about the fear of death who people who are under the power and influence of this fear of death spend all of their lives in bondage, in bondage under it because it's stalking us continually, it's there, it's never far from us and one further thing we know about death and it's this, that it is inescapable, it was many years ago in England, many years ago I remember being in a very very large gathering, the various fellowships that I have been associated with over the years over there in the UK came together from all over the UK because a young woman had passed into eternity, a young woman who we knew well and we knew her family very well, so this drew out people from far and wide and I can remember we were using a big Pentecostal church and there were people sitting in the windows and everywhere around the place was packed and the coffin was there in the front of the church meeting and the minister, an older man who was standing at the front, he looked down, I'll never forget this, it's just etched into my memory, he looked down over the podium or pulpit, looked down at the coffin and he pointed down to the coffin and he said as he addressed the crowd, you will all come here, it's only a matter of time, very thought-provoking statement certainly. We know that in our culture, the culture in which we live, there's a very real move away from having a coffin in church and going to a cemetery for the burial and the move, certainly in the parts of the world I live, there's a move toward what is being called celebrations of life and so only an immediate number of the family might go to the cemetery but then a crowd will gather and that might be the same day or it might be even weeks later and so on and there's no doubt different reasons for that, certainly in Ontario and places where the winter is more fierce it would be argued well we can't actually conduct the burial because the ground is so deeply frozen and so on so there's reasons which I understand but I think really what's going on if I'm not mistaken is that there's a tendency in our culture to attempt to mask the crushing reality concerning death and the grave. There can be no doubt that to actually stand at an open grave and stare into the unknown demands that we face our personal mortality.

It's impossible not to be in such an environment where we're saying goodbye, our last goodbye to some dear friend or dear relative and the whole thing is so, it's so foreign to us. We're designed for life and here is something which as I've said already is the polar opposite to life. It's strange in the extreme and then there's something else that goes on at those times I believe and in the book of Ecclesiastes there's a statement which maybe addresses this very well where it says that God has put eternity into our hearts.

It's as though something is written deep within us in spite of whatever our lives may be amounting to, whatever's going on in our circumstances. There's just a sense deeply that death really is our enemy. We're not designed to terminate.

We're designed for something infinite, something far more and so of course millions and millions of dollars are being spent regularly in attempts to at least postpone that inevitability or to mask it in some way and to take away or remove from us its real horror. I'm also aware that there are those who do a lot of speculation

just about the so-called hereafter and there are many different opinions and I'm sure endless books which have been written on the topic. There are people who claim to have had what are being called near-death experiences and their accounts are published and made known as you know but the fact of the matter is on so many or within so many of those accounts we find that there are frequently details that conflict with the teaching of Scripture and for Christian people we stand by this and in fact historic Christianity stands by this fact that the scriptures themselves are the final authority on all things that pertain to our faith and to our practice of that faith and so we must interpret our human experiences in the light of Scripture rather than letting our human experiences be imposed on Scripture either to manipulate what the scriptures are plainly saying or to discard them altogether and pay no attention to them and so the scriptures are to us very very very important I can't be overstated.

So today the question that we're really asking is this what was the basis for Paul's confidence that he had when he said to die is gain? I think to give an answer to that question and we want to do it biblically of course not just to pass a human opinion we need we need some background there's no sort of simple one text that we can bring and say well this is it and that's the end of it so to really understand what would cause a man a man such as we who feels the kind of things we feel about death and the horror of it and so forth we need we need a broad foundation someone was praying in the meeting just a few minutes earlier about the fact that we as Christians are those whose faith is built on the solid immovable rock which is which is the Word of God which is the Lord himself and so in attempting to answer a question such as this and I think it's a very important question it's a question that really applies to all of us in one degree or another in one way or another how can a man have such incredible confidence such bold confidence as to make a statement which allow me to remind you he said for to me personally to me to live is Christ and to die is gain and perhaps to do that we could turn in our Bibles to another passage of Scripture I'm going all the way back into the book of Genesis for this very briefly reading here in chapter 1 when we know of course without me going into all of the detail how that God is involved in the whole process of creation which is described in the first two chapters here of the book of Genesis but I want you to notice in particular the last verse of the first chapter where we read God saw that all he had made and behold it was very good and there was evening and there was morning the sixth day the words in particular I'm looking at are these God saw what he had created and behold it was very good and then if I move over into chapter 3 I can read this and as soon as I start to read you will understand or at least be reminded of the cataclysmic event which has taken place in between that statement and what I am about to read in verse 22 of chapter 3 then the Lord God said behold the man has become like one of us knowing good and evil now he might stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken so he drove the man out and the at the east gate of the garden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life what a change has taken place here that the fact is that God had created a paradise Eden a paradise it the design came out of God's own heart and it was a context in which God and man at that point had a perfect harmony they lived in harmony there's that precious statement there which says that God came down in the cool of the day and communed with Adam and their sin was unknown and love was was untarnished by lust and everything was beautiful I don't find a record of this but I know it would have been true that the antelope and the lion lived in perfect harmony in that context I also believe that weeds were unknown and access to the tree of life was not forbidden it was another tree that they were forbidden to partake of and so on and with that one exception that God made he said that concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die and this was of course the introduction introduction to death in this context and we know how the story unfolds and how Eve was first tempted and then of course this moved on to Adam

and because of the the order which God had ordained forever after that moment so far as the unfolding of Scripture is concerned it would be Adam who would be before whom the responsibility would be laid in all future references to this occasion but Adam chose to reject the authority of God and the result was this catastrophic fall we speak of the fall of man in this context the Apostle Paul writing to the church in Rome he said through one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and thus death spread to all men because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and we know that as the result of that initial act that took place in the paradise that God had designed and constructed and into which God had placed man and in which he fellowshiped with man that now God began to unfold his own judgment upon man and upon the creation itself Adam triggered immeasurable horrors into this world instantly he lost his own in innocence instantly he lost his fellowship with God instantly his perfect health began to deteriorate instantly he was subject to disease instantly he was subject to physical death and instantly man's nature began to be distorted and would continue to be distorted forever by sin God also introduced another law at that early time he said that the various species which he had created would reproduce after their kind and clearly that's exactly what the Apostle Paul has in his mind when he penned those words from Romans 5 and 12 which I've just read to you that it was by one man that sin entered into the world and death by sin so that all have sinned and what is really interesting I've closed my book from the Genesis reference but just eight verses on from what we had just read eight verses on into the following chapter chapter 4 we find murder introduced into the story and that of course as we know very well has become the story of the ages and this pristine creation that God created was a shambles and was in ruin if I could encourage you to just fast forward in your thinking right now just to today you know we can look out it's not every morning but we can look out in the morning and we could see a beautiful sunrise or in the evening and see a beautiful sunset it's very very thrilling and we were in awe as we watch it or we can we can listen to the something I have particularly appreciated when we've been at Andrew and Joe sorry forgive me Stephen Sally's cottage which was on a near to a lake we can listen to the call of the loons in the in the evening and their unique call to one another which breaks the silence of some mountain lake somewhere and it's beautiful and deeply touching or we could be thinking of the chuckles of the new little life that's come into the family that brings so much pleasure or on a totally different level we could be sitting enjoying our Jody's Boston cream pie but the blessings of life that we find today that we're surrounded by but the fact of the matter that all of these rich experiences all of these blessings apart from bringing pleasure to us in the immediate they're actually obscuring the reality of the savage conflict which is taking place which is raging around the world in which we live at the same time sometimes we look up at the night sky and at the stars and which all may be for us because we're so incredibly privileged to be so peaceful and so filled with wonder and yet it's hard to believe that under that same sky in places perhaps not very far from us perhaps even in our own neighborhood but certainly around the globe there's such demonic suffering and chaos that's taking place at the same time it's all very very strange to us but can you imagine this morning if everything sort of ground to an end so far as God's dealings with men and women at the end of Genesis chapter 3 can you imagine that if when having created this that he was so delighted with he saw what he'd done it was very good very good and then to have to pass the judgment that he passed that we read in the subsequent verses if that was the end of everything what would the state of the world be today apart from anything else it would have to leave us with the impression that well this God this almighty creator God has failed and Satan has triumphed that would be the obvious conclusion that we would be compelled to come to but what we know is that that was not the end it was not the end in fact it was just the beginning because a visitor came from heaven a son of God the Bible tells us that he who came was the radiance of his father's glory he was the great creator himself and he hung on a cross at Calvary and became the great Redeemer he shed his blood the blood of God he shed his blood a line in the hymn says cut off for

sins but not his own he paid redemption's price he paid a price to bring redemption to mankind and he paid that price in full and in the primeval darkness of that scene as Jesus hung upon the central cross on that pivotal day soon there would be that cry that that we rejoice in today it was just in our English language just one word finished he cried with a loud voice finished and as we've noted many many times in the past he did not cry out I am finished he was referring to the great redeeming work that was costing him more than we can even begin to measure or understand and he reached that stage as he hung on the cross just immediately before he released his spirit and he said finished the great redeeming work was done and we know that three days later a truly incredible thing happened and I could try to describe it but I think Stephen Townsend has described it wonderfully in a song he wrote and these are the words he said see what a morning gloriously bright with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem for he lives Christ is risen from the dead death is dead love has won Christ has conquered I want a wonderful collection of thoughts that he's brought together there in that great verse amen amen amen but now slight diversion but let's just call to mind that I don't know a woeful statement of the Apostle Paul when he's writing again to the church at Rome and in chapter 8 and verse 22 he says that the whole creation is longing to be delivered from its bondage and corruption the preceding verse verse 21 brings new hope because the Apostle inspired by the Spirit of God wrote creation itself will be delivered from bondage or from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God amen and amen to that this was the great promise that he incorporated into his words then we think of what the Apostle Peter had to say on this matter I'm looking into 2nd Peter chapter 3 and just a couple of verses here I'm reading verses 10 and 11 and 12 he says but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat and I'll just pause there right now amen and so he although this is sounding rather disjointed but it's not it's the Apostle Paul as put before us the fact that the whole of creation is longing to be delivered from its bondage of corruption and then we've we jump in right over to Peter he's approaching the whole topic from a different angle and viewing a particular feature of this great deliverance that God will bring about and he's talking about the destruction of the cosmos as we understand it at this particular time he does it in graphic words certainly but even as the Peter makes these statements he includes this wonderful word of promise and this is the verse that follows my reading when in verse 13 he says nevertheless we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth where in dwelleth righteousness wherefore beloved seeing you look for such things be diligent that you may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless so here Peter is bringing this promise which really captures a link without question from the book of Isaiah where God is speaking prophetically there in 65 as I 65 verse 17 read for behold I create new heavens and new earth for the former shall not be remembered or come to mind praise God don't forget where we started please remember the question that we asked ourselves and I'm coming back where we are but just to emphasize highlighted we're asking the question how could Paul have such confidence that to die was better than life and I'm saying it's because of this information that God has graciously put before us concerning his broader plan and purpose I create this is God speaking in the prophecy of Isaiah I create new heavens and new earth and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind it's interesting here that the word new which is used in that passage is not new because it's replaced but it means so it's a new thing but it's new in character it's going to have a different character all together and Peter John forgive me Peter is speaking here about fire fire that always describes purging it describes refining and clearly God's plan is that there is a day coming when he's going to do this new thing

which will be the fulfillment of these prophetic statements that I have made and others also of course and that God is going to do something that that will eliminate every trace of sin from this fallen creation and all of its effects so far as the cosmos is concerned and this is the promise this is the promise of God Peter's court was aware of it and has caught it and then moving on again I think of the Apostle John and what John was able to say about these things and God gave to John an advance glimpse into the end of the purpose which is being worked out at this point in time and I'm looking into the 21st chapter of the book of Revelation where John was on the isle of Patmos and was given this vision and we read the words although they're familiar to many of us because we've read them so many times but we cannot hardly read the words without sensing almost bated breath in which we hang on every word that we're reading let me just read two verses here from the 21st chapter John says I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea sea meaning separation there was no more separation and I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband amen if there was time we could read a lot more but let me leave it there the fact is these prophets who were speaking now John who's actually seeing things in in vision form are given the responsibility to communicate what God has said or what God has revealed to them of things outside of this whole dimension of life that we're familiar with and their responsibility was an awesome one they had to somehow describe what they were seeing or what they were hearing in a way that people could relate to and understand and that was really mission impossible and we need to keep that in mind as we read these passages they're filled with symbolism in the book of Revelation what something which is very thrilling is to watch the various symbols which which we're finding there and see how in so many cases we've come across them before in other passages of the Bible it's as though they're all being gathered together here in this great prophetic statement that we have here amen and although they were stretched beyond their own comprehension they seek to explain this this new dimension which God has ordained to be and I mean Isaiah when he was writing this just to emphasize what I'm trying to say to you just now he made this statement in Isaiah 65 and verse 22 he said he's talking about the time of man's days and he said they at this time when this prophecy is fulfilled they shall be extended as the days of a tree but John he expands on that statement and he said death shall be no more you know they're being information is being revealed they're doing the best to comprehend it and express it well it's like a tree that lasts for you know a hundred and more years and John says there's more to it than that and I've been there and I've had this and I know this to be true that there's the death will be known no more and that the song I just quoted before at that statement death is dead love has won remember and and that same chapter in Isaiah 65 speaks about this time this experience in the new creation where there'll be complete harmony the writer says where the wolf and the lamb will feed together and where the lion eats straw like an ox and revelation 21 here says in the third verse and I heard a great voice out of heaven saying behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away and he that sat upon the throne said behold I make all things new and he said unto me right for these words are true and faithful amen you know this really that we're looking at here we're doing it in a very abridged almost scattered form I appreciate that but really these these statements are coming out of what today would be something that would be referred to as a meta narrative it means a huge narrative in other words the whole story of the bible the whole story of the bible is as I've said so many times it's the story of Jesus in one way and the whole bible's about him the whole bible has to do with God and his plan his design and his activity and involvement and his incredible sacrifice that he has brought together in order to provide that which the apostle Paul will call his ultimate

purpose his eternal purpose glory to God so it's it's it's a theme which is progressive suppose we in time are concerned it's progressively unfolding and we're part of that and we we're reading here that in this new creation there'll be a new heaven and a new earth and they will they will merge together the new heaven will somehow merge with the new earth and we're still trying to get our minds around this but we can't do very well with it but heaven and earth we're told are going to be eternally merged and become God's eternal dwelling with his people amen and it would be true to say that we are led to understand by the very words of scripture that eden was this ultimate paradise that God created but we have every assurance that in the light of the new creation that initial paradise will be completely eclipsed by this paradise of God amen this this um with the you know the heavenly bridegroom be wonderful to talk more about that which will be finally and fully united with his bride his blood-bought people his sanctified people Charles Wesley says through all eternity to prove thy nature and thy name is love i believe that today even as we are here in the room today even while we're we're hearing all of these statements being made by the various leaders concerning the nature of things in the world and the new regulations that were mentioned earlier in the meeting excuse me for those who didn't know i i spoke in the middle of the night for an hour to a church in another part of the world and i'm paying a price amen but at this point in time the holy spirit is is drawing and gathering the men and women the the elect the redeemed the bridal company who in that day will populate this new Jerusalem amen all this is wonderfully spectacular and i am not doing justice to it i'm not sure that any man can but spectacular as it is there's another question that rises in my mind i'm i'd like to believe it it's stirred in your own heart as well this is all very very wonderful and we we choose to believe it all but what about the transition how do we move from who we are and where we are to be part of this great eternal work of god well i can say to you in answer that question first part of my answer would be this that the majority of men and women who are part of that company will transition into that world by sleep the countless millions of men and women through the ages who have been powers of the elect people of god these believers in the redeeming work of christ these true christian men and women even under the old covenant but more fully called that in the new testament and so on they've fallen asleep the fact of the matter is as we read through the bible that the word death for his people is an entirely is given an entirely new meaning uh the word death is never used either in the old testament or in the new testament to describe the experience of um it's described in a different way for those who are not the believers i'm meaning to say but for the people of god let me rephrase this for the people of god who have moved on from this scene into eternity they're never the experience is never referred to as death but as sleep they've fallen asleep revelation 14 13 those who are sleeping in jesus amen what a wonderful thought that is um i can remember uh many years ago this a scene and a moment and some of my own words that i will always remember i know i have bruce here in the meeting um but it was actually his his mother-in-law who had passed away in ontario and i can still remember standing around the grave with a group a large group of people on that occasion it was my privilege and responsibility to have a role in that moment and i remember encouraging the people that when the moment came when we'd finish that service they were to leave the graveside and leave the cemetery unafraid and under no illusions we were not leaving k in the cemetery because already she is not here i said she's gone the lord jesus said this in john 11 verse 26 whoever lives and believes in me shall never die you see they shall never die and then jesus followed that with a question he said do you believe this i think it's as though he's saying can you really believe this um that he however it is who lives and believes in me will never die you know sometimes it's common for people to refer to a loved one or person as having passed and that's the most unfortunate statement just standing as a one-word statement what does that mean um but no doubt for those who are true christian people a fuller statement would be that such a body this loved one has immediately passed more fully into the presence of the lord let me read a few verses to you i hope i'm not

tiring you and i hope i can keep speaking just a little bit longer i'm looking into second corinthians for some important words from chapter 5 i'll read i'll read eight verses are you ready for this for we know 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 but for in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked for we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life now he that has wrought for us this self-same thing is god who also has given unto us the earnest of the spirit or the down payment of the spirit of god therefore we are always confident knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the lord for we walk by faith and not by sight we are confident i say we are confident i say and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the lord there you have it amen and we probably should read some other verses but the wonderful thing is here is the writer makes reference to our physical bodies as being as being like a tent it's the tent that we've lived in as we've journeyed through this life but then there comes a time when the it's the time for the tent to be folded up it served its purpose and that's really what he's talking about and he's saying that in that moment we we will then instantaneously be liberated from the tent experience from this body in order to be immediately present with the lord amen clearly paul didn't believe in some kind of extended soul sleep or all the other things that we've heard suggested and so on this apostle said to die is gain to die isn't just to be somewhere hanging around waiting for thousands of years or whatever it is but he said to be absent from the body is present with the lord we're not in some kind of limbo situation anywhere the fact of the matter is that there is a day coming when the trumpet will sound and i know i'm be i will be accused of conflating two events into one but i respond by saying no you're inventing two out of one um but there's there's the trumpet will sound the apostle says it's the last trumpet in first corinthians 15 and we may look there in just a moment and he's making it plain that this moment as the trumpet sounds will be the defining moment um the the um the second coming of the lord jesus let me read to you from from first thessalonians just one more time here well actually i don't think we've been here directly i'm looking in verse 16 of chapter 4 for the lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of god and the dead in christ shall rise first then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the lord wherefore comfort one another with these words amen what a wonderful statement that is and contrary to what so many people seem to get from that text i think the text is plain and clear that this day is coming when the trumpet will sound and it will be a sudden event and it will be a noisy event going on here um it'll be a noisy event and it will be a transformational event and let me go to first corinthians 15 to see how paul puts it there as he writes in verse 50 51 will do for us we should read more widely but let me read here behold i show you a mystery we shall not all sleep all right we know what that means now don't we but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed for this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must part on immortality so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory let me just pause there amen very wonderful suddenly transformed suddenly transformed suddenly free from sin free from damage free from disease free from pain and yet i believe that in this in this new thing that god will do with us at that time we shall all be changed there will still be i believe an identifiable continuity of our individuality there's a great pattern that we can base that on and that is jesus himself when he was raised and we know that he was recognizable he was recognized by mary was recognized by his disciples they he was the man they knew or had known in the past the man that they had walked with but now he was different and that's the point different yes

but still recognizable and we believe that there will be that kind of continuity i'm looking still in uh in first corinthians 15 where i read in verse 42 so also is the resurrection of the dead it is sown in corruption it is raised in incorruption it is sown in dishonor it is raised in glory it is sown in weakness it is raised in power it is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body and so it is written the first man adam was made a living soul and the last adam was made a quickening spirit albeit that was not first which is spiritual that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual and so it goes on as we've borne the image of the earthy we shall in that day bear the image of the heavenly that's in verse 48 and 49 amen and this is all very very wonderful amen the the truth is that in that moment i need to sort of pull away from this because i'm taking a long time here but in that moment when someone falls asleep their spirit is immediately transported into the presence of jesus but we believe in this event which i've just been describing from scripture when the last trumpet sounds as the lord descends with 10 000 of his saints with him those who have slept already that he will bring with him and in that moment there will be this this transformation that takes place where that that that that spirit of that individual is reunited with their renewed body with their heavenly body somehow paul goes to lengths to say this in chapter 15 we've not read it actually but he's talking about when when the remains when the tent if you will is laid into the grave it's as though we're putting seed into the ground this is how paul describes this and that which comes from that will not be the same not look like seed it'll be it'll be transformed it'll be entirely different but there will be a continuity and i believe that is what is being emphasized here that there will be the launching of this new phase in god's great purpose as all his people are gathered together into this new thing that god has ordained to be completed you know i trust that in this very simple overview here i've been able to at least remind you of in some way of what lies ahead and what would have caused the apostle paul to have such great confidence that the end of his journey in this life no matter how that would be affected would not be the end by any means nor was it something to be fearful of because he believed that it would only just trigger a transition which would launch him into the immediate presence of jesus and he would sleep in jesus until that moment of resurrection there's another element in all of this that we can't discuss this morning and we only understand so faintly but we understand that somehow in in this transition that i've most recently been referring to as the um the final transformation takes place at the resurrection we we are all launched somehow out of this dimension of time into the dimension of eternity and that of course raises many many questions for us because we're creatures of time and we can't relate to it all we think well we think in linear time this happened then this will happen such and such and then it'll be but god he exists in eternity and there is the eternal state into which he is bringing his people to dwell with him for all of eternity amen all this that i've been describing here is that which lies ahead for and is the great hope for those who in time in the journey of their life span they have heard the christian gospel and they've surrendered their lives to his redeeming grace and to his lordship they've become his people this is for the people of god and it's only those people that can have the kind of conviction that we started out thinking about and were able to say with the apostle for to me to live is christ and to die is gain may god bless you amen let's pray amen father we know that we've been attempting the impossible this morning we've been trying to get our minds around things that are so far greater than our human abilities can extend you call them mysteries they are mysteries but they're all known to you lord they're all ordained by you and lord we bow before your throne this morning and worship you lord you lord who does all things well we remind ourselves ourselves that your ways are above our ways all your thoughts are far above our thoughts but lord we bless you forever intervening in our journey in our lives and making known to us the ways of life and the truth of the gospel lord we praise you pray lord that we will do exactly what the apostle peter has so strongly and clearly recommended lord that knowing these things that we shall be very diligent about the way that we live and conduct our lives anticipating that there is a conclusion to this time

and there's an opening up of a new day and something lord which is grand beyond human description and for that lord we praise you and we trust you amen

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