

Invincible in Christ, How Believers Never Die

by John Piper

This sermon delves into the concept of eternal life in Christ, emphasizing that believers do not truly die but pass from death to life through faith. It explores the idea that physical death is not the end for those who have eternal life, as they continue to experience unbroken fellowship with God. The message highlights the transformative power of being born again by the Holy Spirit, leading to a personal and experiential relationship with God that transcends physical death.

Scripture: John 11:25, John 5:24, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Hebrews 12:23

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Transformation through Faith"

Description

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Transcript

One of the most powerful moments in my seminary life was the funeral of James Morgan, my 36-year-old professor of systematic theology. Louis Smedes was preaching his funeral message, wife and four little children of the deceased. And at one moment, Louis Smedes, in his magisterial voice, lifted it up and cried out, James Morgan is not dead! And I remember to this day the tingling in my spine as the truth just crashed over that moment.

I've never forgotten it. It's just one of those unforgettable moments. So if James Morgan is not dead at his funeral, and James Morgan was not dead a few months earlier when I was listening to him teach theology, what happened in between? What was that? Well, let's let Jesus explain it.

I'm going to take you to two passages of Scripture where Jesus owns the paradox that I've just articulated. You're not going to die, follower of Jesus. You're not.

This is John 11, 25 to 26. Jesus is talking to Martha, the sister of the man who's in the grave. I am the resurrection and the life, John 11, 25.

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. Verse 26.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Yes, we die, as it says, though he die. Though he die, yet shall he live.

Verse 25. No, we don't die, because it says, verse 26, everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Lazarus's body lays dead in the grave, but Lazarus was not dead.

His body was dead. He was not dead. He had not died.

Now, here's the other verse. This one is even more important. It's John 5, 24.

It gets at it even more profoundly, I think. John 5, verse 24. Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment. He has passed from death to life. Believers in Jesus who keep his word have passed already out of death into life.

They now have what's called eternal life. Eternal life cannot, by definition, stop. For a second, it cannot stop.

You never lose it. It is eternal. There's not a five-minute pause in the hospital or anywhere.

Believers do not see death. They do not taste death. Our bodies die.

They die. They lie there. How many hundreds have lain here? And they look like they're sleeping.

And that's why, in the New Testament, death is called sleep sometimes. It's not because we consciously go to sleep. It's that we don't have any consciousness.

We wake up at the resurrection. That's a very bad interpretation. It's because they look like they're sleeping.

It's just an analogy. The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable. We shall be changed.

First Corinthians 15, 52. When our bodies die, we do not die. We have passed from death to life, eternal life, unbroken life, unending life.

And what that means is this. When we are born again, Chapter 3 of John, the wind blows where it wills. We don't know where it comes from or where it's going.

Such are all who are born of the Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Until you are born again by the Holy Spirit, you have no living spirit. You are flesh, mortal flesh. When you are born again, Spirit is awakened.

Life is given, eternal life. The Holy Spirit lives within you and imparts the life of God to you. This life is indestructible.

That's what happens. And now we experience God. We speak with God.

We hear from God by His Spirit through His Word very personally, experientially. We love God as the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This is the work of God, the Spirit.

We're alive to Him. We're alive to Him. We have fellowship with Him.

We walk with Him. We know Him. We taste and see that He is good.

We're alive. If somebody asks you if you were born, you shouldn't show them a certificate. You should breathe in their presence.

Speak, touch them. Don't look for your birth certificate as proof that you're alive. And when somebody asks you if you've been born again, don't look for your certificate.

Breathe. Breathe. Speak, pray, love, touch.

Enjoy God in front of them. You're alive. You know Him.

You enjoy Him. He's real to you. This is what never, ever ends.

It just gets perfected in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. Sometimes it just hits me. The older people will know exactly what I mean.

How close that moment is. Just a few years and I will sin no more. And I will enjoy Him face to face forever.

I'm 65. Suppose I live to 80. What's that, 15 years? I can remember 15 years ago like it was yesterday.

That's not very long. And I'm probably not gonna live to 80. This fellowship that we enjoy with God cannot be ended.

It cannot be broken. It is eternal. Wherein our bodies die, we do not experience one millisecond of break in fellowship with God through Christ.

It is in that instant perfected. Hebrews 12, 23. The life we have with Christ in God today because of the new birth will never end.

We will not see the end of it. We will not taste the end of it because there is no end of it.

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