

Viewing Death Biblically

by Mack Tomlinson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of viewing death biblically, recognizing its certainty and uncertainty, and preparing for it as a Christian.

Duration: 59:43

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:2, Philippians 1:21, Hebrews 2:14

Topics: "Mortality", "Eternal Life"

Description

This sermon delves into the biblical perspective on death, emphasizing the certainty and uncertainty of death for all individuals. It highlights the importance of viewing death biblically, preparing for death as Christians, and ultimately finding peace and gain in the face of death through faith in Christ. The sermon encourages believers to face their mortality, prepare their hearts, and be ready to meet the Lord with personal readiness to leave this world.

Transcript

I want to speak to you on a subject that has been on my heart for several months and I felt that I should preach on this and I have been preparing over the months. Thoughts here, thoughts there, trying to determine the right time and it became obvious in these recent weeks that now's the time. I want to preach on viewing death biblically.

Viewing death biblically. If there's 120 people here today, there's going to be 120 who will die. So no one from the youngest who can even hear and understand at all what I'm saying, we know that this isn't just for adults, it's for children, it's for all of us or all will come to the day of their death.

Some will know it, they'll sense it because of prolonged situations of sickness, others will wake up healthy, encouraged, ready for the day, looking forward to the weekend, not knowing that it's their last day on earth. Viewing death biblically. Now, I just want to remind you, you don't even need to turn to these passages, you know them, but remember them.

And Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3 that there is, to everything there's a season and to every, a time for every purpose under heaven. And the very first thing he begins to list is there's a time to be born and a time to die, a time to die. There is a time for you to die.

We ought to praise God that we don't know when or how that is. Think how miserable you would be and how it would wreck your life if God showed you. Now, there were people in the Bible he showed, he told Moses the days are approaching when it's time for you to die, but that was unique.

He showed Peter by personal revelation, I suppose, that his time of departure was near. Perhaps he knew he was soon to go under the sword of Nero or rather under Roman's capital punishment, he wasn't killed by a sword. But the point is, Peter also knew God showed it to him, but normally that's not the case.

Ecclesiastes 3, 2, there's a time to be born and a time to die. And then Paul in Philippians, that well-known verse where he clearly says for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. To die is gain.

Only a Christian can say that. An unbeliever can never view death as gain because their death is the worst thing imaginable for all eternity. But for the Christian to die is gain.

Two sermons ago, I preached on the importance of singing. And I trust you've taken that to heart, you've laid that to heart and your own singing to the Lord has improved, has changed. You've seen how important it is.

It is wrong in the midst of worship to neglect singing, to be doing something else, to have something else on your mind. When it's time to pray, Christians should pray when they're praying together. When it's time to sing, they should sing.

When it's time to hear the scriptures read, it's time to hear. When it's time for God's word to be preached, it's time to hear. So the importance of singing.

And then last time I spoke on the importance of suffering, of suffering and trials. And today the importance of viewing death biblically, facing death, meaning facing your own mortality, facing the fact I am going to die. I can't ignore this.

I can't run from it. I can't neglect to be ready. I can't be afraid of it.

Facing death and conquering death while you're alive. Several years ago, Philip Neely remembers this story. My wife remembers it.

Some of you may remember it. But I was a chaplain in a large retirement village nursing home. And I would preach four times a day to the residents, four times a Sunday to the retired residents and a service in both campuses and then a nursing home service in both campuses.

And so I was in the nursing home service one day and I, I knew that I needed to help some of them as much as was possible to think about death. The most insane, foolish thing anyone can do is to not think about death. So I spoke on death that certain morning and I said, you must prepare your mind and your heart to die.

And I said, but not just you, not only elderly people need to be prepared to die. I need to be prepared to die. Even though I'm younger than you.

I said, next week, some of you could hear in this room. Did you hear the chaplain die? So I finished the sermon. I'm standing at the door.

They're walking out and a little lady walks up with a walker and looks up at me and said, when did the chaplain die? She didn't get it. Obviously. You know what? Most people don't get it with facing death.

You know why? Because we're never ready for it because it's morbid because we don't like to think about it. And so we ignore it. We put it off.

We think I've got a long time to live. And yet it is the utmost lack of wisdom to think that way. I hope this message is not morbid or depressing because I want it to be helpful.

I want it to be equipping. I want this message to be a message that you can take and meditate on in the weeks and months ahead. And then it could, this one message can equip you to approach death victoriously, courageously, and to really be as much as God's grace can make us be ready to die.

Because it's not only important to sing well and suffer well and to go through trials well, it's important to die well. John Wesley said regarding the early Methodists, our people die well. And Christians ought to be able to say that about one another.

Our Christians die well. And I am qualified to speak on this subject because in 60, from the time I was three, people in my life began to die. I've had around 30 people close to me die, many relatives and many people that I was very close to.

So I'm qualified to speak on this because I've experienced it so much. And even here in our church, hasn't this been an amazing two months approximately? Death has been a frequent visitor to the lives of families in our church in these days. In the last five to eight weeks, seven times, death has knocked on the door of people we love and know.

Death, unlike any other thing in this life, touches us. It hurts us. It changes us.

It changes the living who have lost those that they care about. And if we've been touched in recent weeks, at least seven times, and there might be people you know that you've respected, acquaintances, colleagues, distant relatives, other deaths. I'm leaving some out.

There have been deaths. If there's seven to ten deaths in our lives in the recent weeks, the fact is in coming years, it will be 20 to 30 times that. Because death is coming, always.

Death in relation to human life, death in relation to this earthly existence, is the biggest, most important reality of anyone's life. Obviously, after their salvation, death is the biggest reality in life. Bigger than marriage, bigger than parenting, bigger than career, bigger than inheritance, bigger than your future plans, because you will bury your mate, one or the other, probably.

Unless you die in a car wreck together, unless you die in a plane crash together, one of you, as a wife or husband, will bury your mate, your children. Children, you will be at the funeral memorial service of some of your parents. And I'm not trying to scare you, because God does not want us to be afraid of the reality of life in the Christian faith, as a Christian.

But this is the biggest, most important reality in anyone's life. Nothing is as important, nothing is more applicable to us than death. And the Lord wants to use this period of weeks we've been in, when death has touched so many.

He wants to use it in our lives right now to equip us, and to teach us, and to deepen us, and to do something for us. The Bible says the righteous perish, and no one lays it to heart. It's astounding.

The most famous, the most wealthy, the most glamorous, the most famous people in the world die. And it's a big story. It's a big, ornate celebration.

And it's a big news story, that the godly woman and the righteous Christian, who's unknown, whose life meant more to this world, and the most famous wicked person, they die. It's not going to make the news. The righteous perish, and no one lays it to heart.

Well, we need to be equipped with this issue of death. We need to be equipped to face it, and deal with it, because none of us can run away from the fact of death, right? Babies die. Our first child died after she was born.

Lynn and I faced death the second year of our marriage, as we buried our baby. Children die. Teenagers die.

Adults die. You will die. Everyone you love will die, either before you or after you.

Everyone you know will die. We all will deal with it. We all will experience this more and more continually in our lives.

So here's the purpose and goal of this message. To equip each of us to view death biblically. To face its reality.

To not ignore it. Not neglect it. I don't want to talk about it.

I have my children and grandchildren. Whenever I bring the subject up, they cut me off. And I don't want to talk about it.

No, I'm not going to talk about it. Well, children ought to listen to their parents when parents want to discuss the future reality of preparing for this. The more people ignore it and won't deal with it and face it, the less equipped they will be when the day comes.

But the more they face it, the more we deal with it in terms of talking about it and facing it and thinking about it and meditating on it and preparing ourselves for it as far as readiness of spirit and mind and approaching it in faith. The more we do that, the easier death is when you face it. I want to prepare you more today to handle death in the future.

To help you face the death of others and to help you face and be ready for your own coming death. Because the greatest reality is we naturally avoid, neglect, and deflect and disregard and try to stay far away from death. The very issue we most need to learn about, to study, to deal with, even to become intimate with the issue of death.

Now, people feel, some people who will hear me talk about this began to think this way. Well, that's just morbid. That's just depressing.

I just don't like that. This is just, I don't want to listen to it. Something's wrong about that.

You see, that's our problem. We've been brainwashed. We've not had our minds renewed to the truth that we need to be equipped.

We need to face this reality. But emotionally we avoid it because of one thing. The fear of death.

The fear of our own death. The fear of those we love dying. Hebrews chapter 2 verses 14 and 15 says an amazing thing.

Hebrews 2, 14 and 15. The writer to the Hebrews said this. And as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he, that is Christ himself, likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and release those, listen to this, who through fear of death all their lifetime were subject to bondage.

Who through fear of death all their lifetime were subject to bondage. I want us to hear God's voice this morning about this. I want to talk about several things.

I want to talk about the meaning of death, the certainty of death, the uncertainty of death, the Christian in death, and our preparation for it. So just follow me in these great realities. First of all, let's talk about the meaning of death.

What does it mean to die? I'm talking about physical death. Children, I want you to listen to this. People believe sometimes that when a person dies, somehow they cease to exist.

That's called annihilation. They believe with physical death comes, the soul just kind of goes to sleep, and the person doesn't exist anymore. They're not out there anywhere.

But that's not true. What is the meaning of death? Death has to do with this physical person, this physical body, the tent, the tabernacle, the house, the dwelling place that you live in. Paul called this the house made with hands, God's hands.

But we are a physical structure. We are a human tent in which dwells an eternal soul. And this tent is the occupancy of every person's soul as long as they're alive in this world.

So physical death is what? It's simply this, the physical body stopping through an accident, through sickness, the organs shut down, be it the brain, the heart, the kidneys, other organs, or cancer takes over and sickness and decay sets in. Even old age does this. You've heard people say they die out of natural causes.

In other words, they just get too old that the body shuts down and quits. So the body ceases to be alive and the heart stops beating. And in that physical body, there's no life anymore, no physical life.

And the body is dead. Now, where's the soul? Is it floating around like some ghost? By the way, children, you know, don't you, that there's no such thing as ghosts? Like the tooth fairy, like the Easter bunny, like Santa Claus. Let's see, what else could I name? Ghosts don't exist.

There's no such thing as ghosts. So just, you can quote me on that to one another. Brother Mac said there's no such thing as ghosts, and there are.

There are demons that masquerade as if they're people who've gone on into the other world and they try to scare people. That's demons. There are no ghosts.

People don't have ghosts. People's spirits and their souls depart from the body when they die. Some of you need to listen and not be playing around.

People's spirits depart from the body and they go into the eternal world and they cannot come back into this present realm of life. It just doesn't happen. The soul has left the body.

When the body dies instantly, the soul, the real person is gone into eternity. They're gone. The real person is gone.

And that's why it doesn't have to be weird or awkward or scary to be around a person's body who has died. My mother, my adoptive mother, died at our home with me on Thanksgiving Day 2002. I was the only one there.

Lynn and the children were at her parents' for Thanksgiving. And the funeral home, because it was a holiday, couldn't get there for six hours. And it was her body and me and the Lord there for six hours.

Perfect peace. It's not weird. It's not scary.

Her earthly remains. And she's gone to be with the Lord. So the eternal person is gone and their tent, their earthly remains, their corpse, starts decaying immediately here and then will be buried.

It's not them anymore. They're gone, but their house remains here, prepared to be buried, right? To be laid in the grave. They don't have a ghost that floats around and they can't come back anymore.

That's the meaning of death. Death is the physical body ceasing to be alive, which is temporary, and then it's buried. But that is not the person.

Well, that's the meaning of death. Next, let me talk about its certainty, the certainty of death. Our text that I read from Solomon, there's a time to be born and there's a time to die.

Death is certain for all of us. All, every person goes to one place, death, place of death. And Solomon said there in Ecclesiastes 3, verse 20, all return to the dust.

He doesn't mean annihilation. He means the physical man, the body returns to dust. From dust we were created, to dust we shall return.

And how does that happen? Well, decay sets in. The body decays and it returns back to dust in various ways. Death is certain.

Hebrews says that it's appointed unto all men once to die. And after that, what? The judgment, the judgment to God. Psalm 49 says to God belong the issues of death.

Death, death takes no denials. Death takes no bribes. No one, death doesn't, death doesn't keep a calendar and say, well, maybe this one won't have to die.

Now we know God caused two men in history to never physically die, Enoch and Elijah. Those were the exceptions and they were pictures of a greater redemptive reality. But that being said, to God belong the issues of life and death.

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Revelation 1, I am the first and the last, and I'm alive forevermore, and I hold the keys to hell and to what? Death. Jesus holds the keys. The reality ahead about all our lives is that we

will face the death of those we know and the death of those we love.

And I'm not unique, but God had a strange purpose in my life. My mother died when I was two years old. I have no memory of her.

She was 36 years old. My father died six years later when I was eight. I remember that.

I have no memories before that, and I have few after that until I was about 14. But I remember, I don't remember the funeral. I don't remember any conversations after that about it.

What I do remember is someone coming in my second grade class unwisely and coming in and telling me that my father had died and they left. And I remember I walked over to the corner where the little library section was to hide from everybody because I didn't want them to see me cry. And I went and I started looking at the books as if I was trying to find one.

I wasn't trying to find one. That's not a way to tell anybody that their father has died. But he died.

My second father died when I was 12 on a Saturday morning when my adoptive mom, Wilma, had gone into town. And I was there in our living room on Saturday morning with my second father, my stepfather. It was like a grandfather, father, both.

Very loving man, very kind man. And I thought he was asleep in his chair and he had died. He had died quietly in his chair.

And then, Wilma, my adoptive mom, dies later. Linda's father, a good father-in-law, a good father, we went through his death. Her mother died several years after that, a good mother, a good mother-in-law.

Three close friends, men of God, who were especially my mentors in the Christian life, who I was close to, have died. My experience is not unique because all of us will go through, if you haven't yet, the death of those closest to you. The day is coming.

Some of you have buried parents. Some of you have not. But one of the blessed things I love, as I watch Philip Neeley's life, he has been an example of this.

The other day we sat together and he said, it's a great joy that I have no regrets in relation to my mom. You know why? Because he spent time with her regularly. He took her to dinner.

He communicated with her. He appreciated her. He does the same with his father now.

They take special trips together. That's the way to have no regrets when your parents die. Treasure the relationship because the great reality is you're going to lose them.

Don't have regrets on that day. And you yourself, you and I will die on our own, alone. I didn't mean we won't have people around us, but they're going to be living.

You're going to be dying. I faced death or the real potential of it on the operating table twice where I knew I might not wake up. It was real to me and I had to face it and I had to make sure my heart was ready.

Lord, I'm yours. I'm ready to die if you take me. Two things you will do on your own.

Two things you have to do on your own and that is come to Christ and the second is die. Now, God controls the death of every person. He controls the events of it.

He controls the how. He controls the timing. He controls the day and the hour.

Death is certain. Next, I want to talk about its uncertainty. Its uncertainty.

There is nothing more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the time of death. We know we will die. We don't know when and how.

Death sends out no memos. It doesn't post a warning. I knew a man, a very gracious man, and it did seem like he was a true Christian.

He was a pilot and he flew out of Dallas every day round trip to New Mexico and back in his work as a commercial pilot for a small company. They had seven or eight, ten planes. He flew to Albuquerque and back to Dallas every day.

And I was offered a ride. He stopped in Amarillo and I was offered a ride to Amarillo. And so I flew with him to Amarillo.

He dropped me off. He went on. We had a delightful visit.

About a month later, he had flown it hundreds of times. Something went wrong. I don't know if it was fog.

I don't know if it was instruments. He flew into Albuquerque and he flew right into one of the mountains near Albuquerque and he was gone instantly. A month later.

Death is uncertain. In Luke 16, I want you to turn there. Luke 16.

And I want you to be reminded of a story that the Lord Jesus told about this very point of presuming on life. And it was, it is spoken in the context of riches, but the greater lesson too in it is presuming on life. Luke 16.

Look at verse, you know, I think of, yes, verse, starting with verse. Well, I can't find it now. I'll just tell the story because I marked it wrong.

A man, Jesus is giving warning about loving riches and wanting to store up in life. And he talked about a man who was so wealthy. He said, life's good.

I just need to sit back, eat, drink, and be merry. I'm going to build bigger barns where I can store my goods. And what did the Lord Jesus say about that man? You fool.

You don't even know that this night, your soul will be required of you. Presuming a long life. And he was going to die that very night.

How many people wake up on a great morning, an encouraging morning, they feel good and they don't know it is their last. We do not know, James says, what a day will bring forth. So what's the answer? Fear? No, the answer is faith.

The answer is faith. We must look upon the reality of our coming death at some point as an appointment that we must and will keep. And we must look at it as an experience and we must tell ourselves, I will go

through this and no one can keep me back from walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

I'm going there. And because of that, we must look on this world as a thing we will part with. And every earthly relationship, we will say goodbye to.

I'm going to talk about the Christian and death. Those who have welcomed Christ can welcome death. That's a great, great reality.

Because the cross has turned the enemy of death into a friend for the Christian. Death is no longer your enemy. Now, Paul says that the last enemy, he's talking about all mankind, and he's talking about eschatologically, at the end, death is going to be over, it's going to be gone, and the last enemy that will be destroyed is death, Paul says.

But death is now not the enemy of a Christian. Death is their friend. Why? Because death will be a servant, escort the Christian into the immediate presence of Christ.

That's a good friend. Death is the door into paradise and into eternal glory. So it's nothing, ultimately, death is nothing the Christian has to dread.

And you see what homework we have to do? You see what process we have to work out in our life and in our salvation? Learning to view death biblically, learning to have a readiness to face in God's grace and by His courage. The believer's death, the Bible says, is precious. Psalm 116.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is what? The death of His saints. We don't view death as precious. When was the last time a Christian you know and love, I bet Philip and Christa didn't say this week, and they had hope at the moment, but you have a Christian that dies that you know and love, you hear that they have died.

None of us say, well how precious is death? None of us use that word about death. That's why God's not like us. He does use that word about death.

But you see, we can view it as precious. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Ecclesiastes, you can listen to it, I'll read it.

Ecclesiastes 7 says this. This is one of these things, it's like precious is the death of a Christian. Look what else God says about death.

A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of one's death better than the day of one's birth. Ha! Who believes that? Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living take it to heart. Do you view the coming day of your death as a better day than the day you were born? The living take it to heart, Solomon says.

It's better. The day of death for the Christian is better. Why? Because the day of a Christian's death is better than their wedding day.

They are with the Savior. A Christian's last day on earth is his best day ever in life. You talk about your best life now, that starts the moment you die.

Not before. When death strikes the Christian down, someone said, when death strikes the Christian down, they fall into heaven. So do you fear death as a Christian? Look, here's what's going to happen.

You may suffer from sickness, you may fall over of a heart attack, you might get hit by a semi, you won't feel a thing, you won't even know what happened. And you know what's going to happen? You're going to be awake in eternity. A glorified spirit, immediately in the presence of Christ, to be absent from this body is to be what? Present with the Lord.

What an easy trip it was. It's like going to sleep and waking up. And there's no soul limbo.

There's no purgatory. There's no soul sleep. There's no time gap.

When you die as a Christian, you are with Christ, which is far better, Paul says. When you read the Old Testament, just take notice. I've started through Genesis again.

And Adam died. And Noah died. Just this morning, yesterday and today.

And Sarah died. And Abraham buried her. And Abraham, being full age, 175 years old, Abraham dies and he's buried with Sarah.

And the list goes on and on, doesn't it? Genesis 48, I love the story of Jacob's death. He says to his sons, behold, I'm dying. Dad, don't talk like that.

You're going to get better. It's going to be okay. You're going to get... No, don't say foolish things like that.

He says to his children, behold, I'm dying. And the Bible says when Jacob had finished speaking to his sons, Joseph's sons, he drew his feet up into bed and breathed his last. And Hebrews 11 says, by faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed his sons and he worshipped.

Good way to die, isn't it? Will you die that way? Can you die worshipping? If you're a worshipper while you're living, you can be a worshipper when you're dying. You don't know how to worship when you're alive, you're not going to be ready to worship on your death bed. The Bible's perspective, the Bible's view for the Christian, Numbers 23.10, it says, let me die the death of the righteous and let my end be like his.

Lord, I want to die as a Christian. I want to die in a way that will honor you. I want to die in faith.

I want to die victoriously. I want to die trusting you. Let me die the death of the righteous.

That's a good thing to begin to pray. Doesn't mean God's going to answer it soon. Don't worry about that.

Because our times are in His hand. The times of our life are in His hand. There is no such thing as a premature death.

There's not. For anybody, the issues of death belong to the Lord our God. No Christian can die prematurely.

Now, I don't understand the mysteries at all of a Christian going into such severe sin that God chastens him and God could take their life. I don't understand all that. I'm not preaching on that now.

But there's no accidents with God. He's in control of things. Revelation 14.13 says, Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me this.

And this is what I'm saying to you. This is a voice today through the Word from heaven saying this to you. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

Yes, that they may rest from their labors and their works follow them. Some of you have godly grandparents and parents who have died. And they've died in the Lord.

And it's a blessedness. And their works are following them. When Paul is thinking about finding a word to describe death and life.

Here's the purpose. Here's the purpose. For me to live is Christ.

Is your purpose of living Christ? Or is it to get married? Is it this? Is it that? Is it your children? For Christ's sake, don't make your children your purpose in life. They're a part of life. And so is family.

But ultimately, for us to live is Christ. And to die. Paul's looking for a word.

To die. To die is gain. Gain.

Gain. Great gain. Eternal gain.

Perfect gain. Unending gain. To die is gain.

Why? Because neither death nor life will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. And you have to know that love of God in Jesus Christ for death to not separate you from that love. Paul said the last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

Now here's another thought for the Christian. Scripture's perspective on death. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Listen, ladies. He's not going to come and hand you a Kleenex and walk away. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

And there shall be no more death. For the former things have passed away. Christ's resurrection killed death.

He conquered death. The cross stung death to death. Isaiah says God will swallow up death forever.

Because death is conquered now by a living Savior. And the Christian doesn't have to fear death because Jesus said though he dies, he will live forever. You will never die.

Your real person, the eternal soul, the person you are will never die. You're going to shed this mortal coil. You're going to put off this mortal flesh.

It will decay. It will be dead and in the grave. But you will never die.

You'll be long gone and you would not want to come back if you could. You would not want that. Simeon is a great example in this.

In Luke 2, you don't need to turn there. Here Luke says there was a man in Jerusalem. He wasn't a priest.

He wasn't a prophet. He wasn't a religious figure. Luke just says there was a man in Jerusalem, Simeon.

And Luke describes him. He was a man of the Scriptures. Because the Bible says he was waiting for the consolation of Israel.

He was waiting with hard expectation for a Messiah to arrive. His heart was there. He was waiting.

And he was a man of the Holy Spirit. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he wouldn't die until he saw the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple.

And what happened? Joseph and Mary brought the child in according to the custom of the law. And Simeon sees it. And Simeon apparently walks up to Mary and takes him in his arms.

What does Simeon pray there? Lord, I can die now. Lord, now let your servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen your salvation.

He said, I can die now. Can you say that today? I'm not saying you're ready to go. I'm not saying you've done everything you want to do or accomplished everything you want.

All your goals may not be met. No. But can you say in your heart before God, Things are well with my soul.

I can die now. I could go. Or can you not say that? You've got to come to that place.

If you want to die in peace. If you don't want to be so gripped by fear when your mom or dad are dying, Or you're laying in the hospital with a life-threatening sickness or injury. You don't want to be gripped with fear about dying.

You don't want to go there. You want to, by God's grace, now face this thing and say, Lord, bring me to the place where my heart can be free to say, Lord, I can die now. I can go.

Lord, give me Simeon's end. Let me die with Christ in my arms. That's when the Christian can say, Oh, death, where's your sting? It's not there.

Oh, grave, where's your victory? It's not there. What an amazing reality. Paul, right after that, he says, Thanks be unto God, for through our Lord Jesus Christ who gives us the victory.

There's a hymn we often sing. One of the lines says, Death is coming. Hell is moving.

Death is coming for us all. But the Christian already has conquered it through the Savior. Beloved, what can we do? Let me talk briefly about our preparation for death.

I want to talk in a practical way, because those of us who have ignored this topic shouldn't ignore it any longer around our table, in our living room. We shouldn't ignore it any longer. Is it not a dangerous thing, if you're not a Christian, is it not a dangerous thing living even one hour in a condition you don't want to die in? If your sins aren't forgiven, do you want to die unforgiven? And why do you keep living, hour after hour, day after day, in a condition you don't want to die in? That's for the unbeliever.

Jesus said in John 8 to the Jews, If you don't believe in Me, if you don't believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. Well, think about this. A man dies in his car.

A person dies in a suit. They die in an airplane. They die undercovers in a hospital bed.

They die in something. Jesus said to the Jews who wouldn't believe, you will die in your sins. Now think about that.

You have guilt, or greed, or covetousness, or lust, or pride, or arrogance, or you're claustrophobic, or you're afraid of something. An unbeliever who has those realities in their life, guilt, sins in their life, when they die, they're going to die in their sins. They'll be in those sins forever.

Never relief. Never freedom. I remember when I was in elementary school, they had built, I guess it was supposed to be a bomb shelter.

I seriously doubt if it would have saved anybody, but we had this drill. They'd send us down underneath the school, and it was like four feet high ceiling. Everybody had to sit down.

And I looked up at the ceiling. Ever since then I've been claustrophobic. When I've had to be in an MRI, they'd give me an open one, or put me to sleep.

I just can't handle it. And I think of the things we dread, we can't take. Think of dying in your sins.

Think of living in lust for eternity. Think of living in anger, and hatred, and bitterness. Think of living in your sins forever.

Jesus said, if you don't believe in Me, you will die in your sins. In every one of them. What a miserable thing.

How does a non-Christian prepare for death? Coming to Christ, only one way. But don't go another hour living in a state that you don't want to die in. But how do we as Christians prepare? We view it rightly.

We begin to face death, and think about it, and read about it, and meditate on it, and become acquainted with it. Martin Lloyd-Jones said one of the things every Christian should do the older they get and the longer they're a Christian, is to prepare to die. How do we do that? We give thought to it.

We prepare our hearts. We face our mortality. We tell ourselves.

We preach to ourselves. We talk to ourselves. I'm not going to live forever.

I don't know when I'm going to die. We talk about dying with our husband or our wife. Do you ever do that with your mate? Don't avoid it.

Talk about it with your children. Children, when your parents want to talk to you about this, as hard as it is to think about, just listen. Ask questions.

This is a natural reality in life now because of the fall. Read about it in the Scriptures. What about this one? Plan your own funeral service.

Well, I'm not dying for 60 years. No, really. Plan your own funeral service.

What do you want read in the service? What do you want sung? Who do you want to speak at your funeral? Plan it. Why? Because the Bible says, what is your life? It's a vapor that's here and gone. We are a flower quickly fading.

We're a wave on the ocean that comes in, hits the shore. That wave never exists again. We are a vapor in the wind.

You and I must prepare progressively and get ready for that day when God says, like He said to Moses, behold the day's approach when you must die. That ought to be a life motto. That's not morbid.

That's being real. And it's facing the greatest reality of life with grace, with courage, in victory because He who believes on Me, Jesus said, will never die. Behold the day's approach when you must die.

It is never too soon to become intimately acquainted with death. What readiness does Christ require of us? He requires of us a personal readiness to leave this world and meet Him. That's the main way to get ready.

Personal readiness to leave this world and meet Him. Like Simeon, I can die now. And when you're dying, all you've got to believe and all you've got to say is, Lord, I'm a sinner and Christ is a perfect Savior.

A.W. Pink said this, since Christ has made a full atonement for the believer's sins and has obtained forgiveness for you, death can no more harm the Christian than a wasp whose stinger is removed but it's buzzing around you, scaring you. All it can do is buzz and attempt to disturb you. But you can, without fear, just ignore its threats and wave it away.

Can you in your heart say today, I can die? Now some of us think, I don't want to say that yet because I'm so young, there's so much before us, but remember, beloved brethren, there have been two or three families in the last months. A young woman in St. Louis. A young pastor in Louisville.

A young mother and wife in Austin weeks ago. They were saying that same thing too. And they buried their 30-year-old husbands and wives.

We cannot presume. We must all live life as if we're going to live to be 100 and love life and live for Christ and be prepared and ready to say, I can go anytime because to die is gain. Let's pray.

Father, would You just take Your truth and please seal it in our hearts in a way that will help us and strengthen us and encourage us and equip us. Make the truth of this real to every heart. And Lord, let us adjust our relationship with You and adjust ourselves to the truth accordingly that we would be equipped to live and equipped to die.

We thank You that Your Word is profitable in all things. So bless it and seal it to our hearts. In the name of our living Savior, we pray.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0M7Nc4WYqzs.mp4>
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