

Death, and After This, the Judgment

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon emphasizes the reality of death and the judgment to come, and encourages listeners to put their faith in Jesus to avoid this fate and gain eternal life.

Duration: 54:24

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:7, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 2:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:3, Hebrews 9:27, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 20:14

Topics: "Eternal Judgment", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the certainty of death and the judgment that follows. He mentions significant events in recent history, such as the televised funeral services of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. These events serve as reminders of the inevitability of death and the need for salvation. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus died because all men must die and face judgment. He urges the audience to turn to Christ for salvation and asks those who have a reasonable hope in Christ to affirm their faith.

Transcript

In the last five years, you have been privileged to witness many things, but one thing especially, that no other generation of people have ever, starting a thousand miles off, D-E-A-T-H death has been televised around the encircling globe at least three times in the last five years. When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, the television went out of business for four or five days and did only one thing, conduct a funeral service attended by the heads of governments, communists, Buddhists, Mohammedists, so-called Christians from around the world. America went on a religious bend, the like of which history has never known.

In more recent days, Senator John F. Kennedy was assassinated. And again, with not quite so much coverage, but the world attended the funeral of a senator of the United States. A little before that, the Negro leader Martin Luther King, of which people all over the world, through the medium of television, were brought face to face with the last enemy of mankind, the enemy that has not been abolished yet, death.

This dumb creature was foolish enough to hope that an impression would have been made on people today that it's appointed unto men once to die and after that to judge them. Their children watched the four or five-day funeral procession. Few did.

And in two weeks, the world went back to business as usual and forgot that when we get down to brass tacks there's just one reason, fundamental, beans and cornbread, elemental, why Jesus died on the cross. And that is because men have to die. And after they die, they're brought to judgment.

In language that we don't need to interpret, we are told, and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that to judge them. For that reason, because that appointment has been made, and God made it, and because he's appointed that men die, and that death introduces them to a meeting with a Christ, Holy God. The scripture says, so, because of that, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of men.

Now, that's just two and two makes four. Don't have to be smart to understand that. If in our philosophizing we leave out this, we are dead wrong.

I wish somebody this morning to go wait in this building, penetrated by the grace and mercy of God, washed in the powerful, lightly downed blood of God the Son, vitally united to a living Lord, because you've got to die, and you've got to come to the judgment. I wish this next week, if the week has not brought you to the place doing a good deal of praying for yourself, I want you to turn to God and just pray for me. Oh, the burden, the crush of living in a day when people live and like to never will die.

When it seems we've got smart, we know everything except the very elemental things. When we're trying to convince somebody to need Jesus for some other reason, I'll tell you why you need the merits of what he did, placed over against your account, because you're going to die. You're going to die, and you're going to come to the judgment.

In my first pastorate, I brought the first sermon ever delivered in the city of Boulder, Texas. 50,000 people, no church. And I preached in the biggest saloon in the city.

I had seven professions of faith. I took them and two others that I could find in that city of 50,000 people, organized the Baptist church, baptized them, and they constituted their charter members. I preached to them on the 7th verse of the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, the whole chapter's description of a funeral procession, like the which we saw on television three times in our days.

It's the picture of a funeral procession going down the street while everybody's singing in a low note, while a man goes to his long home, and then the conclusion of the whole business reads like this then, shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave. And I preached to those people gathered there to threaten me and embarrass me. I was trying to raise money, and I was having to get it from the saloon, and find anybody else.

And they said they wouldn't give me any money until they heard me and got a sample of my preaching, and they stood me up on a beer tag and took pictures and surrounded me with deputy sheriffs and all of that. And I preached to them on what's certain for men and women in the future. I'll tell you what's certain, death.

And I'll tell you what's certain, judgment. And I preached on what God Almighty has done about that. I'll tell you what he's done.

Mercy upon mercy, grace upon grace, glory upon glory. Wish we could believe it instead of accept it. God hung the son of his love on a tree, and he put sin on him.

And I don't understand it. I can quote it, but can't explain it. He not only put sin on him, but he made him to be sin.

And he did it for sin. And I pled with men and women in the concept of fear. Don't make certain you die out of Christ.

Don't come to the judgment. You have to be over these hands with the Lord God and the God of the law. Most terrible thing that this preacher can possibly conceive of.

He'd have to stand yonder at the time when men cannot escape. Howsoever hard they try, saith the word of God, when men shall seek to hide and call for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that sits on the throne. That time when the great of the earth, the kings and the great of the earth, shall seek to be missing when mankind is summoned to face the God of law.

And to have to deal with that law himself. When the man that God used as a channel through which he gave the law and fell under its sanction and its penalty and needed a bloody substitute or hell for him. Oh, if I just had one sermon and I could get somebody to listen to me.

Stand on the street corner and have worldwide television and radio and every human being in the world listen. That'd be the only thing they'd ever hear. Before they went out yonder, I tell you what I'd do.

I'd beg them, I'd storm at them as I would you this morning. I'd plead with them. Whatever else you do, bud.

All your little alibis I've heard them. All your excuses I've heard them. All your reasons I expect they're pretty good.

But in God's name and for your own sake, don't risk facing God. And having to look at yourself in the mirror of his holy law that you never would look at down here. And have it like Samson rending the lion's jaws.

Have that Christ holy, good and just and perfect. Lord God, tear you apart and leave you guilty and headed for hell and in for hell. Oh, it's a judgment men are going to have to grapple with a law that's so holy that even an omniscient or wise God couldn't find but one or two ways to deal with it.

Hang his own son up and turn him over to his law and watch his law stamp out the very life, blood of the King of glory or send everybody to hell. Even God has never found a way to deal with God's holy law except to expose his awful penalty. You got to die.

For the first 16 months of my little ministry, I knew no theology. I've been an infidel for six years. I went into the public ministry as soon as God saved me.

That's all I've ever known. But I lived with death. I was the only preacher in that old city of 50,000 people.

I averaged three funerals a day, preaching three funerals a day for 16 months. Then after 16 months they sent a young preacher in and started to measure this church. But for 16 months the only preacher in that city of sin, 50,000 people, almost as crazy as the people of Houston and Pasadena, almost as mad after everything except the things that count.

Oh, I lived with death until there was burned in my soul a little while, a little bit, that their commonplace proposition that I guess is the hardest thing for any human being to actually believe. I almost learned that people die. I just almost learned that people die.

God sought the dead so he hung his son on the cross. I wish I could recover. I'm getting so smart I ain't worth killing.

Know so much truth from a shotgun. Shoots at everybody and hits nobody. I wish I could call myself and you back.

Things have their place. Truth has its place and season. But what death generation of people this past is asking you to get involved with yonder in that apartment house and home and where you work! What death generation desperately needs to face, and somebody's going to have to face them with it, is that these desperate trees, they need to get afraid and need to become seekers and need to seek till they find and take not know for an answer the reason men desperately need to lay hold on God's Son is because they've got to die and come to the judgment.

Men die. Men die. You can't live as I did going from one funeral to another from one house of ill fame or gaming place or saloon or county hospital or courthouse or on the streets.

As I did, holding the hands of men and women who died every day in that ungodless city. Never last one of them, none of them knew my name, but when they had lost all hope that they could recover, inevitably they kept me running my legs off by seeing somebody go get the preacher. And this somebody would sit beside their bed many times as the ghost of a godless, rebellious, infidel life, as the ghost of a wasted life, trapped up and down on their beds and hold their hands as they begged me to keep them out of hell.

People die. I suggest we never get far away from just this elemental fact. The gospel story is not an option.

Christ is not a convenience. He's an utter necessity. For it's appointed unto men once to die, then the judgment.

People die physically. This old heart quits ticking. The next breath that the Bible says comes from God doesn't come.

And they take what they call people out for health reasons, put them deeply enough under the sod so as their bodies rot, our air will not become even more polluted than it is now. And we seek to put flowers on the grave, but there's no way you can make it beautiful. It's ugly.

It's final. It brings men to face God. I wish I could come out there and put my arm around you and beg you, don't die.

Like you are now. Don't make out like you don't believe there's a supreme God. You know there is.

Don't tell me nothing to it. You know there is. You know you're not a hog or a dog or a cat.

You know that the fact that there isn't anybody listening now that doesn't have tremendous responsibility in many different directions is all the proof you need that you're more than an animal. And if you're more than an animal, you're a responsible creature who got here some way and you didn't do it yourself. Oh, I wish I could sit down beside you in this fastest-growing section to tell me in God's earth where people come here as they did to the oil city to make money.

Oh, I wish I could constrain that it's not nice to die without hope. It's not nice. Dixie was the queen of the dance hall girls of that wicked city.

Twenty-seven years old. Been married and divorced seven times. She brought a man up to my little study one time, wanted me to perform a marriage ceremony, and I wouldn't do it.

She cussed me out. Went and got somebody else. Not long after that, that beautiful queen, saying it not yet shown in her face, lovely, lovely, beautiful.

She was in the arms of a man on the dance floor of the public 25-cent dance hall. Another man came and the commotion started and the gun went off. Instead of hitting the other man, it lodged into the vitals of Dixie.

And they took her to the hospital and after a while, my phone rang and they said, Preacher Dixie, everybody knew Dixie, Preacher Dixie's dying and she's calling for you. And I went to that hospital room where that beautiful young lady lay. The doctor had left and the nurse let me in the room and she whispered, I'll leave you alone.

She's only a few minutes left and you can't hurt her. And I went and sat beside the dying Dixie and I began to say, Dixie. And at first she was so near gone, she didn't hear me.

And then she was aroused a little bit and in a bleary sort of way says, Is that you Preacher? I said, Yes, Dixie. And I said, Dixie, you sent for me. What can I do for you? And she said, Dixie, she said, Brother Preacher, call me Brother Preacher.

I'm dying and I'm afraid to die. Yes, God, I hope you may forgive me. You wouldn't be afraid to die.

Without hope and without God. And she said, Preacher, don't let me go to hell. Now, don't sit out there and tell me you don't believe all that bullshit about hell.

You know there's a hell. Sin brings hell right here on this earth. God would have to make the whole thing different if there's any difference in the life to come.

You know. She said, Don't let me go to hell. It's an awful pity that you and I live in a day and nobody will talk that way until we've just got about three or four breaths left.

Don't let me go to hell. And if you've got a heart, have a sort of break it. Don't let me go to hell.

And I had to say, Dixie, I can't keep you out of hell. Well, she said, For God's sake, pray for me, Preacher. I said, Dixie, it appears to me it's too late to pray.

Well, she said, My God, Preacher, I've got but a little while later, and I don't want to go to hell to pray. Is there any hope for me? And I said, Yes. This is unbelievable, my folks, this morning.

This is unexplainable. And I said to her, Dixie, if in your last dying breath and strength you could lay hold of the Christ of the gospel, and behold, that's the wonder and the incredibility of the grace of God. And she said, For God's sake, Preacher, how can I do that? And I said, The gospel is the death and enthronement of Jesus Christ and the command to repent.

And I said, There's just one hope for you, Dixie. God commands people to repent. There's never been anybody saved yet who missed out here.

And don't get in a theological argument here when you're dealing with a sinner. Oh, hear me! God knows if you can repent in your own strength, take to it, brother. And if you find you can't, become a seeker after God's grace and mercy that he'll grant you the ability to turn on yourself and agree with God and take your place as a guilty sinner.

With only one plea, my only hope, my only plea, Christ Jesus died and he died for me. And I preached to Dixie. And I preached that God saves sinners upon the condition of repentance and faith.

And he does. And not a part. And she heard me.

And then with what I thought was a wrench of her body that would kill her, she turned and faced the law. Never such heartbreaking wracking of a body did I hear and watch as she literally sobbed in agony with her face turned toward the wall. And I sat there, so dumb I didn't know what on God's earth to do! And then she turned back to me.

You needn't tell me there isn't hell. You needn't tell me God don't let folks see a picture of where they're going. The scripture I know says you won't have to cross Jordan alone.

It's the scripture that's on the scripture. And it's also so for lost men. You needn't tell me there's a hell.

Not a hell I saw. It mirrored on her face. You needn't tell me when death do come that you'll be brave.

If you have no hope nor fear you'll be scared. And she turned to me and she said, Preacher, I can't repent. And she died.

I can't repent. And she died. I can't.

I can't come clean with God. I can't take my place as a sinner. I can't owe myself to be under just condemnation.

I can't claim only thing, only one thing. And that is that I'm bound. The gospel says he's precious.

You're living in a day now when the millions who are still alive and will go to work tomorrow morning, this preacher is afraid, have reached the place, not on their deathbeds, when they can't repent either. That time when a space was given for repentance and the mercy and providence of God. Those times when God held back his awful judgment and the lightning lightened up the pathway and men were confronted with the living Lord.

And they deliberately turned their back and went the other way. Those times are in the past. Now there's no lightning crossing the path of men and women as they plunge in their blindness toward the chasm of eternal hell and God's judgment.

And Dixie said, I can't repent. And Dixie, if this book tells the truth, went out to another experience when she'd experienced what the Bible calls the second death. That awful thing the scripture says don't let it hurt you.

She got ears to hear here and said, If you do, the second death won't hurt you. That death is not of the tissues of this body, not when the brain quits functioning, not after a while we're learning when the heart quits beating. But the second death, spiritual, the third, the final page is on the wages of sin, the experience and in its awful finality of the sin that God passed on every human being young in the garden, dying thou shalt surely die.

These glasses say Ralph Barnett dying. My body's pretty well riled. Ralph Barnett dying.

But praise the Lord for the hope of the resurrection, for the fellowship of the living Lord. Praise God I found a hiding place, and I rejoice in the hope I'll not be hurt of the second death. The Bible says three things about this awful second death, this eternal banishment from the very presence of God.

To you who are troubled, Paul said, rest with us. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his angels of might, inflaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, they too shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. That's awful, I can't even talk about it.

To be banished for all eternity. No wonder they make fun of the Bible now. No wonder! It's true, folks who go way back down, and maybe they're dumb, but not by our smart people.

Because if it's so, men and women who go out through physical death into the hands of a Christ holy God are in for being excommunicated from the very presence of the Lord. The Bible says of the second death that it's an eternal dying. Mark 9 has a word, I don't know exactly what it means, but it says every man shall be salted, preserved with fire.

I reckon that means that you'll be in a state of death, but you'll never die. Eternal death. The Bible speaks of the second death, being cast into the lake of fire.

Is that just a picture? I guess so, I don't know. But it's awful. You mean to tell me you're still dumb enough to believe that nice people give to their neighbors, not responsible for their own birth, not able to decide when they're going to die? You mean to tell me folks like that? You mean to tell me somebody's going to pick them up, forcibly, while they scream? My Lord said, when you send those fellas, and they start harvesting this, I'll piss.

He said, they're going to be weeping and wailing. I say, that's rough. Would you throw that old Bible away? I would, if it wasn't a graveyard around here pretty soon, pretty close.

I would, if I didn't know by every ache of my body and tiredness of my brain that I'm dying. I can't throw faith, afford to throw away the only book that tells me that there's something on the other side. And that for those who've been able to find rest in Jesus Christ, that something on the other side is the bliss of glory and the companionship of God.

It's the lake of fire, or it's the new Jerusalem. It's the comfort of God, or it's the torment of hell. It's crossing the river Jordan, praising God, or it's going out into the hands of the living God, who alone has power.

But God, just for this power, He has determination. The C-A-S-P casts people into the lake of fire. When old P.T. Martin lay dying on the second floor of the Baptist hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, everybody that could move got up on the second floor.

Every orderly doctor, nurse, and patient that could walk hobbled along crutches or go in a wheelchair. That hospital almost suspended operation for several hours. Crowded in the corridors and rooms of the second floor of the Baptist hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, to hear old man P.T. Martin die.

He had a little piping voice for you officers who never heard him. Here's how he died. He died singing, Oh, Jordan, oh.

I cast a wish for anything, Oh, who will come and go with me? Where my clothes set and dry, I am bound for the promised land. This is the hope of the power of God. This isn't a joke.

This is so true. This world hasn't done anything like this. Mine.

So, you tell me you gonna keep on toiling hands of hell for being an enemy. Hallelujah! But everybody, you know, thirty-odd years ago, we invented Texas. We took this for our last seminary in thirty-seven years since you've been gone.

She's three and a half years old. Oh! Hallelujah! To be in a holy war when all hell seems to pop against us, when the tide seems to go in the other direction. Hallelujah for the privilege, what little I weigh, to join hands with every blood, but blood redeems child of blood-stained Jesus.

And tell this generation you're not gonna rob us of the hope of the resurrection. No, sir. You're not gonna do it.

Come on, you little spot! Ten thousand times more than you've got. Come on with all... But you're headed right straight for the grave. And let that grave open... For good or bad.

When J. Frank Norris preached the funeral of our little baby girl, I told you a story. He started to preach it, but all he could do was cry. And three thousand people followed by and looked at the little baby.

Beautiful. Of course, she was ours. And that preacher, he couldn't preach.

He just bawled. Said, I can't talk. And then we followed that little white casket out to the cemetery.

And that afternoon, after the funeral in the morning, we went. Wife and I slipped away and went out, and already the flowers were withering under the hot summer sun. She knelt on one side of the grave and I left on the other.

And... Us men ain't worth killing. God ought to just kill us and get us out of the business anyhow. Once in a while you find a woman, seems like I got more sense than we got.

She had more than I did. She looked up into my face. We were just kids.

And she, through the tears, said, honey, Patty Sue's not here. She's with the Lord. She's with the Lord.

Got that out of here, brother. Got that out of here, because God knowing that Christ died, cause men had to die. God knowing people had faith in our son, and that eternity is not a picnic or a joke, it's a fact.

God did something about it. Amen. Oh, we're in a fight now.

We can't win it with weapons of the flesh. But as our hearts burn within us, because by experience, we've entered in to these graves, thin as pitch, of the love of God in turning His Son on, His back on the world,

that hope might be born, that the sting might be taken out of death, that blow red would yet conquer, it's appointed unto man once to die. So Christ came and died.

It's appointed unto men to come to the judgment. So Christ came and died. And you desperately need to run to Christ.

Boogie by your head. I wish you'd pay to the preacher this morning briefly. I wish every eye to be closed.

And I wonder how many people here this morning, you have a reasonable hope that you're there upon the Christ, He's yours and you're His. But to somebody here this morning, you have every reason to believe not in Christ. You know who they are.

You're burdened about them. I'd like to see the Christians that know somebody in this service that you believe to be on the road to hell and to judgment. I'm going to ask you to do something for me.

I'd like to see you lift your hands. You're a Christian. There's somebody in this service that you believe lost.

You're a man in a camp. Lift your hands, Christian. Let's see.

A little higher so I can see. Our Father, give us, give us a spirit of travail right now. Lord, I wish I knew how to beg people.

These who lifted their hands, I won't turn them over to you, but ask them to intercede now and not quench the spirit. Now as we come to this awful moment when we always tremble, when we know that life's just a bundle of decisions and that people will do things here right now and the next minute. It just scares me to death, Lord.

But it's worth it because of the hope of the gospel. I pray that you'll be kind, touch people, move people, constrain people, enable people right now to clothe with the Christ of the gospel. Oh, God, please do it.

I wonder if you'd stand. Nobody leave. Nobody put on a coat.

Nobody whisper. You honor the preacher's request. This is a desperate moment.

Let everybody stand, will you, please? Please don't come down here. I must, I must. This Reformation audio track, SWRB, makes thousands of classic Reformation resources available, free and for sale, in audio, video, and printed formats.

Our many free resources, as well as our complete mail-order catalog, containing thousands of classic and contemporary Puritan and Reformed books, tapes, and videos at great discounts, is on the Web at www.swrb.com. We can also be reached by email at swrb@swrb.com, by phone at 780-450-3730, by fax at 780-468-1096, or by mail at 4710-37A, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6L 3T5. You may also request a free printed catalog. And remember that John Calvin, in defending the Reformation's regulative principle of worship, or what is sometimes called the scriptural law of worship, commenting on the words of God, which I commanded them not, neither came into my heart, from his commentary on Jeremiah 7:31, writes, God here cuts off from men every occasion for making evasions, since he condemns by this one phrase, I have not commanded them whatever the Jews devised.

There is then no other argument needed to condemn superstitions than that they are not commanded by God. For when men allow themselves to worship God according to their own fancies, and attend not to his commands, they pervert true religion. And if this principle was adopted by the papists, all those fictitious modes of worship, in which they absurdly exercise themselves, would fall to the ground.

It is indeed a horrible thing for the papists to seek to discharge their duties towards God by performing their own superstitions. There is an immense number of them, as it is well known, and as it manifestly appears. Were they to admit this principle, that we cannot rightly worship God except by obeying his word, they would be delivered from their deep abyss of error.

The prophet's words then are very important. When he says that God had commanded no such thing, and that it never came to his mind, as though he had said that men assume too much wisdom when they devise what he never required, nay, what he never knew.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17398.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/rolfe-barnard/death-and-after-this-the-judgment/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net