

## A Lesson on Dying

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”

(Luke 23:46; John 19:30)



It's inevitable. We are all going to die. Sooner or later death comes to all of us. We are going to die regardless of the many years we've had on earth, the good times and struggles we have passed through, our service and work that we have accomplished for the Lord, and despite our family and friends that we have close ties or bonds within this life. Death is a sure

thing. It eventually comes to all of us; some sooner than others, but in time, we all die.

Job 14:1-2 states this fact:

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down (a fading flower): he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not” (a fleeing shadow).

These two illustrations of a fading flower and fleeing shadow speak of the brevity of life. There is a finality about human death. We slowly but inevitably move from the cradle to the casket. We can't escape death. We might try to avoid it and stay healthy and busy in life, so we might not think about it, but lurking in the corner of our mind is the reality that we are all going to die. We may attend a funeral thinking that something like this will never happen to us, but in reality, it will happen to us. We might be the next one to go. We may be the next one to die and depart from this life into the life beyond. None of us are exempt from death. Unless Jesus Christ returns for His beloved Church (Rev. 22:12), someday our body will stop breathing and we will enter the next life.

Are you ready to die? Do you know how to die as a Christian? Are you prepared to experience death and how will you face it when it comes knocking at your door? Jesus gave us a lesson on death when we see how He suffered and died on the cross. If we want to learn how to die, then look at Jesus on the cross.

Remember that old song “When I’ve Gone the Last Mile of the Way?”

“When I’ve gone the last mile of the way,  
I will rest at the close of the day;  
And I know there are joys that await me,  
When I’ve gone the last mile of the way.”

On the cross Jesus was facing “The Last Mile of the Way.” He had finished His work and time on earth, and He was about to die. But how Jesus dies, how He deals with that last mile in the journey of life is very important.

I was talking to a pastor friend of mine one day. He had suffered a heart attack and had a triple bypass done. He came out of the operation with no damage to the heart and a new start and lease on life. We were discussing together how short life is in comparison to eternity and the nature of our frailties in these present bodies. Our bodies are weak and we have no guarantee that we will be here tomorrow.

James 4:14 says, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour (mist or fog), that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”



We have all seen the fog that appears in the morning and because of the morning sun it burns off and is no longer here. Our lives are compared to this type of mist or fog. Our lives, relatively speaking in comparison to eternity,

are short and can be gone within a very short span of time. We have no guarantees on tomorrow.

Proverbs 27:1 declares: “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” There is not one of us who can be sure that we will be on earth tomorrow at this same time. Today may be our last day! We are not in charge of our lifespan on earth. God is! That is why we are to say, “If the Lord will.” We don’t know about tomorrow, but God does for He holds it in His hands! Every breath we take is a precious gift from a God, from the One who loves us with an everlasting love.

Are you ready to die as a Christian? Do you know how to die as a Christian? There is a Biblical way to die. If Jesus does not return for His children, we will one day die! God’s Word gives us some information on how to die. Lehman Strauss, in his book entitled, “Listen! Our Dying Savior Speaks,” reminds us of the importance of listening to and contemplating the importance of the words of Christ from the cross so we might learn valuable lessons and insights from them.

Luke 23:44-45 records:

“And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.”

Someone said:

“The cross of Christ will never mean anything to you until it takes your breath away and becomes the most important thing in your life.”

The darkness represented the time when the sins of the world were placed upon Christ and the untold trillions of sins He took upon Himself during these dreadfully long hours, paying the necessary fine or penalty for every one of those sins that were committed against a holy and righteous God.

In the garden Jesus agonized over the prospect of becoming identified legally (judicially) with the sins of the world. He would soon become legally guilty of adultery, theft, murder, child abuse, and every sin that was ever committed among mankind! He was the sin-bearer! He also agonized over the prospect

of being separated from the Father as He hung there on the cross! More than anything else, the heavy cloud of separation from the Father loomed over Him. But all of this has now changed. His redemptive work was finished (John 19:30) and He was now restored to fellowship with the Father. This is why we read Christ's very last words on the cross as committing Himself into the Father's hands.

At the close of His time on the cross, He committed His spirit into the hands His Father, and voluntarily yielded up His life.

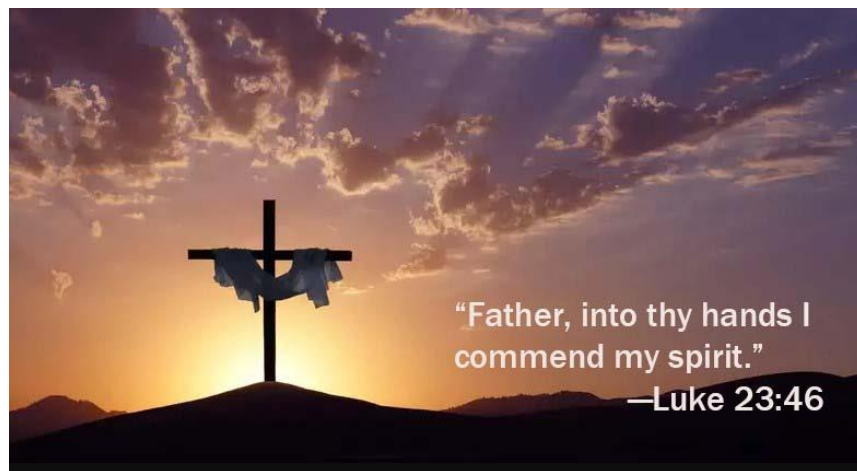
Luke 23:46

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

God's Word gives us a lesson on how to die. This lesson is revealed in the last words of Jesus on the cross. You might think that this seems very morbid – learning how to die! No, it's very practical. We must not only live in a Biblical fashion but also die in a Biblical fashion by following God's will and guidelines for death.

There are two lessons we learn about death. Let's hide these truths in our hearts today.

**1. We are to die in submission to God's sovereignty.**



Jesus died with the right attitude! He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Jesus died submissively. He died surrendered to the Father's will.

He knew it was His time to go and He was willing to accept it. He did not say, "Why Father, why now?" No, he submitted to the timing of His own death. He knew it was in the hands of the Father.

When Christ addresses the "Father" it implies that His relationship was restored to the Father after He suffered for the sins of the world. He no longer would say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But at this point Jesus committed Himself to the Father's purpose for His life, which included death, and He knew that the Father would care for Him as His life on earth expired. Jesus possessed a right attitude when He was about to die and enter the next life. He died submitting Himself to God's purpose and way for His life. The word "commend" means to deposit, commit, entrust oneself to another.

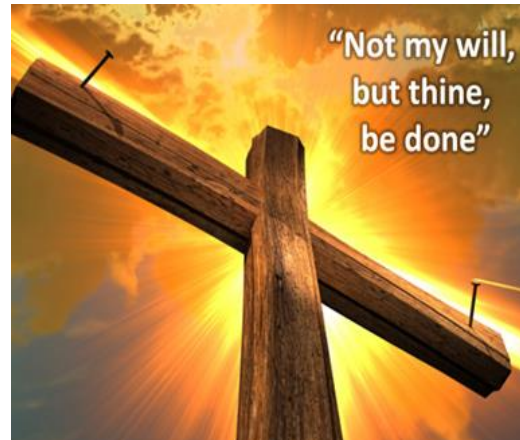
How does a Christian die? The same way Jesus died! I don't mean we must die on a cross but that we must die being submissive to God's way, His sovereignty and providence over our lives, and the timing of our death within the plan and purpose of God. When Christ commended His spirit into the hands of the Father He was committing Himself to God's sovereign purpose, into God's loving care and keeping, and placing His future into the hands of the Father. In a similar way, we must die with a right attitude. It's a submissive attitude that understands God oversees our death. This means we can turn the entire event over to Him. We can, like Jesus, commend, entrust, and commit ourselves to God's plan and care over our life and find rest for our departing spirit.

Yes, "The Last Mile of the Way" is coming for all of us. If Jesus does not come back, we will all eventually walk the final mile on our earthly journey. But are we ready to submit ourselves to God when that time comes as Jesus did? Sometimes we feel like we could have prevented our impending death by eating better, taking more vitamins, or not being involved in certain practices that might harm our bodies. In some cases, there may be an element of truth in this. But we must remember that even our shortcomings, sinful departures, the lack of caring for our bodies, and many other "what if" scenarios must fall under the sovereignty of God.

Erwin Lutzer said:

“Let me encourage you to take those ‘if onlys’ and draw a circle around them, then label the circle, ‘The providence of God.’ The Christian believes that God is greater than our ‘if onlys.’ His providential hand encompasses the whole of our lives, not just the good days but the ‘bad’ days too. We have the word accident in our vocabulary; He does not.”

Like Jesus, we must commit our death into the hands of a loving Father and simply submit to God’s way and timing. Luke 22:42 brings us back the Garden of Gethsemane and how Jesus surrendered to the Father “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Jesus submitted Himself to the Father’s plan for His



death while He was in the garden even before the time came to die. He said, “nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.”

- Are we willing and ready to say this when our time comes?
- Will we be like Jesus as we face death?
- Will we die in submission and surrender to the Father’s timing and plan for our lives?
- Is it well with your soul?

“When peace like a river attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well with my soul.”

John 19:30 gives us more information:

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

When Jesus “bowed his head” it means that He was in submission to the Father’s plan! In fact, Jesus in the Garden had already submitted to God’s

plan for His death before the event occurred. There is a lesson for us here. We must yield to God's plan before death comes knocking on our door, so we are ready to commit ourselves to the Father when the time approaches. We should not wait till the end to commit ourselves to God's timetable for our lives. Instead, we should commit ourselves to the timing of our death beforehand. By faith, we should know that God always does what is best for our lives, even in relation to dying and taking us home to live with Him in Heaven.

In the garden Jesus expressed faith in the Father's plan regarding His own personal death, even before it occurred on the cross. And when the time came, He was ready to submit to this plan once again. Beloved, we should get ready before the time comes! Turn your death over to the One Who oversees it and rest in His providential plan for your departure into the next life. If we commit ourselves to God's "death plan" for our lives and rest in it, we will be ready to conclude what Jesus did when His time came, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Jesus turned His spirit over to the Father's will and purpose which was for Him to die on Calvary's cross. He prepared for His death ahead of time by submitting to the Father's will. Then, after the time of His suffering and sacrifice on the cross, He openly yields His Spirit over to the Father's plan for His death.

Jesus died with the right attitude (submission). He committed His death and eternity into the hands of the Father in Heaven. Ron Hamilton wrote these lovely words:

"I could not see through the shadows ahead;  
So I looked at the cross of my Savior instead.  
I bowed to the will of the Master that day;  
Then peace came and tears fled away.  
O Rejoice in the LORD  
He makes no mistake,  
He knoweth the end of each path that I take,  
For when I am tried and purified,  
I shall come forth as gold."

We need to agree with this as death looms over us. We must bow our knee to the will of the Master as death approaches us. Perhaps today someone's name will be called! Someone reading this is next! Are we ready to commit ourselves to the Father's will for our lives? It may be that someone has received some recent news that alarms them about death and dying. Beloved, let not your heart be troubled (John 14:1), God will see you through the valley and you can die as Jesus did with a submissive heart and attitude. You can die realizing that God knows what is best for you, even in respect to your time of departure into the next life.

James 4:15 says:

"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

We must submit ourselves to God, His plan for our lives in relationship to both living and dying.

Before his death, John Calvin said:

"Thou, Lord, bruise me. But I am abundantly satisfied since it is from Thy hand."

I do not understand the timing of death for many people, but I must rest in the sovereign work of God. I think of a man's wife who passed away. She died of cancer and left five younger children behind. Another woman's car crashed into an area of deep water, and she lost all her children. Beloved, we don't understand these things, but we must submit ourselves to God's plan or else we won't be able to go on! Yes, even those of us who are left behind must submit to God's sovereignty over the death of our loved ones.

I know Christians who have struggled with God's timing over the death of a loved one, whether it was a husband or wife, or one of their children, or even their own life. They found it difficult to accept. Of course, seeing our loved ones suffer and die is naturally difficult to pass through, but the difficulty should not be related to our failure to surrender to the Father's will. Sadly, some Christians might possess resentment toward God over the death of a loved one. We must learn the important lesson of being submissive to the Father's will as Jesus was when He died on the cross.



I usually share several thoughts with those who might be facing death themselves or the death of a loved one. There are four reminders that help us deal with our death and the death of a loved one.

**a. Remember that God gave your life.**

Acts 17:24-25

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

Instead of becoming mad at God or totally disillusioned over the death of a loved one, we must remember that God is the very One who gave us life in the first place. We would have never had any time on earth if God had not chosen to give it to us. This is because God in His own providence gave us physical life and allowed us to come into this life, be part of a family, and enjoy the blessings of life itself.

From conception to our formation in the womb of a mother, to the first breath that we draw when coming out of the womb, all of this was a blessing from the hand of a sovereign God. We would never have been born or enjoyed any time on earth had it not been for God. We need to keep perspective on God, who is the giver of life, as we are facing our own death or the death of a loved one. The God who has the prerogative to give life can also take life. As we near our time of death and departure (2 Cor. 5:8) we should remember to celebrate the time God gave to us or our loved one on earth. We should give thanks to God for the time that He has allotted for us here on earth, for every breath He has chosen to grant us, and the joys and blessings that we have had.

**b. Remember that God saved your life.**

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done (*legalism*), but according to his mercy (*loving compassion*) he saved us (*liberating us from*

*sin's penalty*), by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (*life of God being implanted within us*).

"Heartaches, broken pieces,  
Ruined lives are why You died on Calvary.  
Your touch was what I longed for,  
You have given life to me."

Here is the good news. God saved us from the penalty of all our sins – past, present, and future. God's salvation or deliverance that He brought into our lives was an act of mercy – not justice. Our salvation is based on mercy – not human merit (Eph. 2:8-9).

Justice demands that we suffer for our sins in Hell, but mercy, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, provides a way to withhold this judgment from every Gospel believer. Paul explains the entire conversion experience as the "washing of regeneration" which refers to the moral and spiritual cleansing from the filth of sin (essentially forgiveness) which results in the believing sinner being born again, receiving God's life through the Holy Spirit who is the Agent of regeneration, the implanting new life within our human spirit.

When our time of departure comes, we must remember that God has saved us through the work of His Son Jesus Christ and brought new life into our human spirit by the work of the Holy Spirit. In short, we must remember that we are forgiven and born again! This should cause rejoicing in our hearts. Because of our cleansing from sin and new birth our death should be something that we can face as a graduation day!

Dwight L Moody awoke from sleep shortly before he died and said: "Earth recedes. Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go." And Moody's son said, "No, no, Father. You're dreaming." And Moody replied, "I am not dreaming. I have been within the gates. This is my triumph; this is my coronation day! It is glorious!"

Yes, when we know Christ as our Savior, our death should be a time of celebration. This is because God has saved us, given us new life, and we are

about to enter the presence of Jesus Christ in Heaven and live with Him throughout eternity. Someday those of us who have trusted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior will leave this life behind and go to the place He has prepared for us (John 14:3). The journey may be difficult or uncomfortable, but we can certainly look forward to the final destination.

Composer Don Wyrzten wrote the music for a wonderful song that pictures our earthly life as a “tempestuous sea.” But the song ends with these words:

“Just think of stepping on shore—and finding it heaven!  
Of touching a hand—and finding it God’s!  
Of breathing new air—and finding it celestial!  
Of waking up in glory—and finding it home!”

Some might wonder if we will really sense God’s nearness to us in such a way as this. But I can assure you that the best part of Heaven is that we will in a very intimate and special way experience God’s presence. If you think walking with Jesus is wonderful in this life, wait until the next life! We will sense God’s loving touch and nearness in ways we cannot imagine in this life.

Revelation 21:3 says:

“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.”

There is a special nearness and intimacy that every saint will experience with God throughout eternity. It is really indescribable but it will be very real and wonderful.

Revelation 22:4 gives this promise:

“And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

This means that in Heaven we will see Jesus Christ face to face. The Bible teaches that “his name” (Rev. 22:4) which is now said to be “in their foreheads” (a figurative expression) means that Christ’s presence, intimacy, fellowship, ownership, and security (Rev. 2:17; 3:12) will be impressed upon

our minds and heart throughout eternity. We will have a very close and intimate awareness of His presence.

“Some day the silver cord will break,  
And I no more as now shall sing;  
But oh, the joy when I shall wake  
Within the palace of the King!

And I shall see Him face to face,  
And tell the story— Saved by grace;  
And I shall see Him face to face,  
And tell the story— Saved by grace.”

Beloved, when we see Jesus face to face for the first time - we will finally be home. So, even our death is something to celebrate. Why? It's because when we die forgiven, possessing God's new birth or spiritual life, we will be with Jesus! We need to take time and reflect upon our salvation and new birth as our death approaches. We will find peace and hope when remembering what God has given to us and what awaits us!

**c. Remember that God blessed your life.**

- He has given us physical blessings

Ecclesiastes 5:19

“Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this *is* the gift of God.”

Our wealth, family, friendships, and enjoyments in life have all come from God. They are gift from God to us. As we pass from this life into the next, we must remember the many physical blessings God has granted to us throughout our days on earth. Paul and thank God for them today.

- He has given us spiritual blessings.

Ephesians 1:3

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.”

Even more important than the physical blessings are the spiritual blessings granted to us through Jesus Christ. Our salvation, redemption, justification, sanctification, and every spiritual blessing we have experienced comes from the Lord. Therefore, as our time of death approaches, or the death of a loved one, we must reflect on the multitudes of spiritual blessings that have been given to each one of us from the hand of our loving God. God truly has blessed our lives in so many ways.

“How can I say thanks for the things  
You have done for me?  
Things so undeserved yet You gave  
To prove Your love for me.  
The voices of a million angels  
Could not express my gratitude.  
All that I am, and ever hope to be  
I owe it all to Thee.”

I should never express resentment and disappointment with God! If you resent God for the prospect of losing your own life, or for taking your loved one in death, then you need to do some soul inspection today and make things right with God (1 John 1:9). If you resent the fact that God is winding down your life on this earth, then you must check your relationship and walk with the Lord. God wants you to reflect on the many blessings He has brought into your life and cause your heart to be thankful and hopeful – not resentful toward Him.

**d. Remember that God gives your hope in life.**

1 Peter 1:3-4

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again (*the rebirth that results in our hope*) unto a lively hope (*the reality of a living and daily hope*) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (*the reason for our hope*). To an

inheritance (*the reminder of our hope*) incorruptible (*deathless*), and undefiled (*spotless*), and that fadeth not away (*timeless*), reserved in heaven for you" (*safeness*).

The promises that God gives to us of Heaven and our future inheritance are to provide every Gospel believer with a living and daily hope. It's a hope that is not to be distant or way out in the future, but a hope that should fill our hearts with joy and anticipation today and every day of our lives. Hope for today and bright hope for tomorrow!

1 Peter 3:15

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer (*a defense*) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"

Hope spring eternal!

"Whispering hope  
Oh, how welcome Thy voice,  
Making my heart  
In its sorrow rejoice!"

On one occasion on an airplane flight Dr. Criswell found himself seated beside a well-known theologian. He desperately wanted to start a conversation and they did get to talk. The man told Dr. Criswell about how he had recently lost his little boy through death.

Dr. Criswell listened as he told his story. He said he had come home from school with a fever and we thought it was just one of those childhood things, but it was a very severe form of meningitis. The doctor said we cannot save your little boy. He'll die. And so, this seminary professor, loving his son as he did, sat by the bedside to watch his coming death.

It was the middle of the day and the little boy whose strength was going from him and whose vision and brain was getting clouded, said, "Daddy, it's getting dark isn't it?" The professor said to his son, "Yes son it is getting dark, very dark." Of course it was very dark for him. He said, "Daddy, I guess it's time for me to go to sleep isn't it?" He said, "Yes, son, it's time for you to go to sleep."

The professor said the little fellow had a way of fixing his pillow. He fixed his pillow like he always did and laid his head on his hands and said, "Good night Daddy. I will see you in the morning." He then closed his eyes in death and stepped over into Heaven.

Dr. Criswell said the professor didn't say anymore after that. He just looked out the window of that airplane for a long time. Then he turned back and he looked at Dr. Criswell with the tears coming down his cheeks and he said, "Dr. Criswell, I can hardly wait till the morning."

As a born-again Christian we have a living hope! It's real! It's certain! Joy comes in the morning! No one can take away our hope from us – not even the Devil!

**e. Remember that God is sovereign over your life.**



Jesus knew this and so should we! This is why He commended or committed His spirit into the Father's hand at the time of His death. As Christians, we should be reminded that God can do *whatever* He wants to do, with *whomsoever* He wants to do it, *whenever* He wants to do it. This includes ending our life on earth and taking us into Heaven.

Luke 23:46:

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

Jesus turned Himself and His death over to the Father. You must do the same, not only for yourself, but also for others that you have loved, and which God has chosen to take. If you want to be like Jesus, then you must submit to God’s sovereignty as you face the death of others, and even the timing of your own death.

- Do you want to be like Jesus as you face death?
- Are you willing to accept your physical condition and put the future in God’s hands?
- Have you forgotten the many blessings that God has given to you including the blessing of life itself?
- Must you confess your feelings of resentment toward God because He took a loved one?
- Have we been selfish because we want to keep our loved ones with us?
- Are you living with the hope of Heaven in your heart as you are facing the reality of death?
- How can you be dissatisfied or disappointed with God who has given you both physical and eternal life?

We must learn to accept our death and also the death of our loved ones as coming from the Lord’s hand. Many times we only think about ourselves instead of our loved one who is in Heaven and rejoicing with Jesus. If we would know even half of what they are experiencing right now in Heaven, we would never wish them back or become disillusioned and angry at God for taking a loved one away from us.

“Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

Someone said:

“Jesus died like a child asleep in his father’s arms.”

Christ committed Himself to His Father’s will and purpose, to His loving care over His life, and placed His future in the Father’s hand. Jesus died



victoriously because He surrendered to the Father's plan, rested in this plan. Beloved, we can die victorious too. We don't have to die with anger, bitterness, and resentment. We must bow before the God who is in control of death and dying. We must be willing ourselves to die with the right commitment to God's providence over our lives and surrender our death and the death of our loved ones to the sovereignty of God.

“What a privilege to come into God's presence,  
Just to linger with the One who set me free.  
As I lift my eyes and see His awesome glory,  
I remember who He is and bow the knee.

Bow the knee, bow the knee,  
He is King of all the ages, bow the knee!  
God alone on His throne,  
See Him high and lifted up and bow the knee!  
Kneel before Him, all adore Him.  
As you live to love Him more, bow the knee.”

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism said: “Our people die well.”

These words may sound cold and out of place, but they remind us that we can die victoriously by commending our spirit to the Father and submitting to His sovereignty over our time of death. Dying well is a mark of a Christian's robust faith in the Lord.

There is another lesson we learn about death as we look at Christ's own death on the cross.

## **2. We are to die with reassurance in God's authority.**

Our present verse teaches that Jesus, as God, has complete authority over the realm of death. This is good news for us as a believer in Christ. It reassures us that we are going to Heaven when we die.

Luke 23:46 once again says: “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” Jesus was able to dismiss His own spirit which means He

was in complete authority over the realm of death. In fact, as God, Christ had total authority over death, Heaven, and Hell. Therefore, when I die, I know God oversees where I am going. As a believer in Christ, this means I can die knowing that Jesus will take me to Heaven on the basis that He has total authority over the realm of death (John 14:6). We can be absolute certain and sure about this.

The words recorded by Luke in this verse, “he gave up the ghost,” remind us how Jesus’ death occurred because He willed it to happen. Taking His last breath (Luke 23:46) He voluntarily gave up His life. Yes, Christ has complete authority over the realm of death. He was God and therefore could give up His own life whenever He so desired.

In John 10:17-18 Jesus taught:

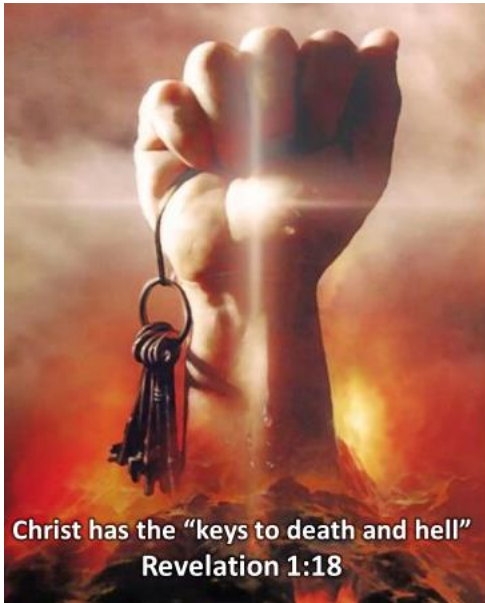
“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Christ was in one sense in charge of His own death. He willingly, as the eternal God, gave Himself over to death and dying. He had the authority to lay down His life when He chose and did so when the time was right.

Jesus also said in Matthew 26:53:

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”

Christ was in full charge of His death as the eternal God. Man was not in charge of His death. Jesus was! He had complete authority over the timing of His death and departure. But how does this authority which Jesus possessed over death apply to us when our time of departure approaches? Although we don’t possess the same authority Jesus does, since we are not God, we do possess the God-given victory and authority over death supplied to us from God. This authority Christ has over death is transferred to us through His defeat of the Devil.



The Bible teaches that when Jesus died and rose again He stole the keys of death from Satan and now through His redemptive work He gives to us authority over Satan and the realm of death! In Revelation 1:18 Christ boldly declared: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades) and of death." Jesus holds the keys to death. Keys speak of the authority Christ has over death and life, Heaven and Hell, eternal life, and eternal judgment. This is something to shout about! We can die

knowing the authority that Jesus has over death and that He will take us to Heaven when we die as He promised (John 3:16 6:47).

Hebrews 2:14-15 speaks of Christ's victory: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same (*the humanity of Jesus*); that through death (*Christ's sacrificial death on the cross*) he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (*destroying the devil's power and authority to keep us in the realm of spiritual death which is ultimately separation from God in Hell*); And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (*providing us with deliverance from Satan's power, slavery, and authority by giving us salvation and new life in Christ*).

The Devil no longer has any authority over our death. Jesus does! We are no longer bound to the Devil's accusations against us and authority to demand spiritual death for us. This is because Jesus died on the cross, passed through death, and rose again from the grave stealing the keys of death away from the Devil. Christ has full authority over death and my death personally. I can rest in this!

Do you remember this prayer?

“Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.  
And if I die before I wake,  
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.”

Lehman Strauss wrote:

“I see nothing wrong with this prayer, except that it might be uttered, as many prayers are, by someone who had not received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. But for those who are redeemed, it is an assuring experience to know that at death, whether it be day or night, you have committed your soul to God.”

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Yes, we can commit our soul to God’s authority over death and know that He will take us to Heaven when we die. This means that we can also die as victors over death when we give up the ghost or spirit, as we submit to God’s purpose for our lives, entrusting our future into the loving care and hands of the Father.

In reality, we should never say of a believer, “He has departed.” We should rather say, “He has arrived.” Why? It’s because we are victors over death! We enter Heaven the moment we pass from this life into the next. And it’s all because of the authority that Jesus has over death!

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 is our song of victory:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave (hades), where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul is teaching that our death and departure into the next life will not harm us if we are one of God’s children through faith in Christ. Death will not harm us but actually heal us! The promise is that the believer in Christ will not face the sting of death which is God’s wrath and judgment. We will bypass His judgment because it was passed on to Christ when He suffered and died on the cross in our place. Yes, we are victors over death through Jesus Christ who is Lord over the realm of death. Death can no longer harm us! We can claim His authority and rejoice in the hope of eternal life!

2 Corinthians 5:8

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

Yes, we too shall one day “give up the ghost” as Jesus did (Luke 23:46). However, because of the authority and victory Christ has provided for us over death, we will at the time of our departure fly away into the presence of our blessed Lord and Savior! What a difference Jesus makes!

Let’s end this study on a victorious note of blessing, bliss, and beautiful contemplation.

“Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away.  
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.  
When the shadows of this life have flown, I'll fly away.  
Like a bird thrown, driven by the storm, I'll fly away.  
Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away.  
To a land where joy shall never end, I'll fly away.”

Jesus promised in John 14:1-2:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

If you are not sure that you are going to Heaven, make sure today. Place your faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save you from Hell. Jesus died on the cross taking your judgment (the wrath of God) and He arose from the dead the third day to give you eternal life (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Transferring your faith to Christ results in God forgiving your sins and giving to you the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

Romans 10:13

“For whosoever shall call (express faith) upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Here is a prayer that may help you express personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: “Dear Lord Jesus, I am placing all my faith in Your death and resurrection to save me from God’s wrath and give me everlasting life in Heaven. I understand that You are the only way to Heaven and receive your free gift of salvation and eternal life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Dearly Beloved, there's a time coming when we will dwell in another world where we will live free from all sin, sickness, sorrow, and death.

Revelation 21:4 looks forward to this day and destiny:

“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.”

There is a door that leads into a spectacular place and land called Heaven. Here will be our life and home. And we are staying here forever in the beauty of this place for we “shall go no more out” from our permanent dwelling place (Rev. 3:12). When our time approaches our prayer should be, “Take me home. Take me home.”

Just reflect and meditate on how wonderful and glorious it will be when we travel the last mile of the way and enter our heavenly destination!



“I shall see the great king in his beauty  
When I've gone the last mile of the way.”