

Use Death to Celebrate God

I. The Biblical Posture to Death

- The Bible starts with a glorious story about life, and it ends with an *absolutely amazing* story about life that will last forever and ever with no possibility of death.
- But death is what we find in the entire middle of the Bible. There's death on nearly every page. And though the story ends with glorious eternal life for some, for billions and billions of people death will last for an eternity.
- Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Genesis 5
- Because God loves us so much, and because He doesn't wish "*that any should perish*" (II Peter 3:9), God sent His Son Jesus to die for us.
- Jesus died a terrible, horrendous death on the cross to pay the infinite debt you owe. And — what's ever more amazing — is that He rose from the dead three days later, conquering death, and showing through His own resurrection His ability to save people from death.
- However, God didn't promise that once someone becomes a Christians he or she would never die (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus' sacrifice on the cross saves us from a spiritual death for all eternity in Hell. You see, in Hell, people don't cease to exist. Everyone's spirit is eternal.

II. Why We Need to Be Aware of the Biblical Posture to Death

- We need to understand the significance of sin.
 - If we're sheltered from the realities of death, we're sheltered from the significance of our sin. If we're sheltered from death, we're sheltered from the debt we owe. If we're sheltered from death, we're sheltered from an appropriate understanding of the immense nature of Christ's sacrifice.
- We need to understand that we are not God.
- We need to understand that this life is short.
 - James 4:14; II Corinthians 6:2; Luke 12:20-21
- We need to be disillusioned of our delusion.
 - Yes, death is scary. Yes, it cleanses children of their "innocence." But, if by innocence we mean delusion of the single most important realities of life — then I am happy to remove that delusion from children.
 - None of us — children included — should be sheltered from the realities of death. And I do believe we should be introduced to it early and reminded of it often.

III. How to Celebrate God in Light of Death

- **We need to celebrate God's gift of an afterlife.**
 - We need not merely understand the reality of the human life-cycle, we need to praise God for it.
 - Do you look forward to your own, personal afterlife? Are you thanking God now that He didn't design your life to end in oblivion?
 - God is to be worshipped and praised and adored for not only not giving Christians the consequences they deserve, but also furnishing an eternal life we definitely *don't* deserve.
- **We need to celebrate God's plan for the afterlife to start with judgement.**
 - God talks a lot about the afterlife, and He says it starts with judgement.
 - The Great White Throne Judgment for Unbelievers — Revelation 20:11-15
 - The Judgment Seat of Christ for Believers — II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12; I Corinthians 3:10-15

- We will be judged for the lives we lived, and it will happen in the Judgment.
- God should be celebrated for this eternally wise plan. If our life choices will not have consequences, the vast majority of humans would do whatever they wanted. In fact, it's probably very safe to say that you and I would be among that number.
- But God gloriously created a reality where for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Our choices have a ripple effect not just in the here and now, but into the afterlife also.
- In addition, God doesn't leave us on this earth to live for ourselves. That kind of shallow living is idolatry and will result in separation from Him for all eternity. No, God leaves us here to be Ambassadors for Him. Not only will our actions have eternal consequences for us, our lives will also play a part in the eternal consequences for others.
- The Lord has created an impossibly intricate plan whereby each of our choices has eternal value for us and the billions of people making thousands of choices every single day. And their choices are impacting us as well.
- And yet God is sovereignly facilitating them all! Do you ever stop and praise Him for that?
- **We need to celebrate God because the point of life after death is exactly the same as life before death.**
 - The funny thing is that most people who have any kind of idea about what Heaven may be won't be surprised to hear that the afterlife is all about God.
 - What may surprise them is that their life in the here and now is also supposed to be all about God.
 - God isn't visible at this point, and, sure, there's sin in the world, but we were created to worship God. We need to do that now just like we need to do it in eternity.

IV. Practical Ways to Discuss Death

- *You can ask them if they think ghosts are real.*
 - II Corinthians 5:1-10; Job 7:9-10
- *You can ask your fellow disciples if they think the Devil lives in Hell.*
 - Matthew 25:41
 - Most depictions of the Devil give us the impression that he lives in and runs Hell. The world would also would have us think that the fire and discomfort doesn't bother him. Even amazing works like C.S.Lewis's "The Screwtape Letters" give us that same impression.
- *You can ask your disciples what they think about immortality?*
 - Many fictional characters are immortal, including vampires. I mentioned that the fictional idea of immortality is so intoxicating to humans because we actually are created to be immortal. Unfortunately, unbelievers and distracted Christians are so stuck on living *this* life as long as they can because death seems to be the end of life, not merely a transitional stage.
 - That's like a child staying in their diapers as long as they can because they're afraid of what comes next. Imagine a 22 year old still using diapers — that's exactly what humans are like who aren't looking forward to the afterlife.

To *not* talk about our immortality is to mislead people about God's amazing plans for their lives. To not talk about death is to lie to people about sin. The wages of sin is death. To not talk about the afterlife is to confuse people as to the point of their existence.