



**What is Death?  
Selected Scriptures  
#1681 January, 2010 pm  
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**Introduction -**

So many questions surrounding death, so many anxieties and fears that come along with the topic of death

Some may think that one preparing to preach on death should prepare the hearers for a dark and depressing and scary message.

Because generally death is a topic that is avoided, its not a hot topic of conversation.

Maybe you are here tonight and you see this topic and you get uncomfortable or fearful, I want to encourage you.

[Not to disregard death, but to rightly understand it.](#)

The Word of God speaks to the issue of death and like with every other topic we have gone through in this series there is hope found in the Gospel, even in the face of death.

We all know the physical reality of death. But tonight is not about the anatomy and physiology of death.

Tonight we want to focus on the eternal implications of death?

We often view death as final and while there is a sense of finality to death (our earthly existence)

scripture teaches us that death is a transition into eternity, both for the believer and non-believer.

I believe if we understand this on both sides of the coin our entire outlook on our death will change, and not only that but our outlook on death for the unbeliever.

**I. The Origin  
What is death?**

**Romans 6:23a** clearly explains to us what death is...

It is the wage for sin - [a return on the work we offer](#)

And we find in **Romans 3:23** that...

All have sinned - [so all are offering a sinful life as their work](#)

So, if death is the wage for sin, and all have sinned, then all have earned death.

Ecclesiastes chapter 3 is correct when it says there is a season for birth and a season for death.

Death is a reality that we all have to face and the challenge for us is to face it, not in our own power and understanding, but through the power and understanding God gives us through His Word.

One thing we have seen week after week as we have gone through these foundational truths is that the intended order of creation was perfect and things like death were not God's desire.

So it is important for us to understand how death entered the picture.

## How did death come to be?

### Genesis 2:15-17

Man was given charge over all of creation but not without some instruction from God as to where they could eat.

God also brings to the table the consequence for disobedience.

### Genesis 3:19 - (overview of chapter 3)

Man was tempted to believe the lie of Satan over the promise of God and placed himself in the position of King and disobeyed God's command.

God reminds Man of the consequence or wage of this sin.

### Genesis 5

We see the reality of this consequence played out in the life and death of the lineage of Adam.

And we continue to see it to this very day.

We see this enemy of death throughout all of creation and we see it take many shapes and forms and effect in some way every human being.

But this enemy is not victorious over God's people.

### 1 Corinthians 15:26/Romans 6:23b

While death is a reality because of sin, life is a reality because of Christ and through Christ we can face death without fear and with absolute confidence.

One may wonder though, "if Christ gives life, then why do Christians have to die"?

## II. Implications for Believers and Non-believers

### Why do Christians die?

Our reality is, that we live in a world stained by sin and this fallen world effects all of our lives. (Until Christ returns)

So, as believers in a fallen world we battle against many enemies...

#### Sickness/Poverty/Pain/Disaster

Death is the final enemy we face, and make no mistake it is painful and difficult and there is mourning over loss

But for those in Christ this enemy defeated therefore we do not despair.

Death is a consequence of sin, but for believers death is not condemnation.

### Romans 8:1-11/Psalm 116:5

For believers, death serves as means of sanctification

[the process by which we are made holy, set apart to be presented as a bride to her groom.](#)

In this sense, death (like all things) ultimately serves the purpose of God's glory and the good of His people.

### Romans 8:29-30/Romans 14:8

[2 Corinthians 5:1-10](#) - gives us a good picture of this moving from where we are now to what is to come.

#### Earthy dwelling vs. Heavenly dwelling

#### Tent/Building

#### Temporary/Eternal

#### Groaning and Burdened/Rejoicing and Burden free

#### Not face to face with Christ/Face to face with Christ

I think we can see here a progressive wasting away of the outer (**struggle**) but also in Christ there is a progression to something better (**hope**)

So actually the very moment we are conceived we begin to die and death is really just the final chapter in the outer death we have always been dealing with.

The key is to view death with the faith that while our outer man is breaking down God is renewing our inner man, or our souls and using it for our ultimate good.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

But even in that we feel the tension of the here and now and what is to come. Understanding we have a purpose in our time here on earth but it is better to be at home with Christ.

For believers, death serves as that transition...

*from tent to building, from burdened to burden free, from temporary to eternal, from faith to sight.*

*death is an enemy that serves us and ultimately serves God*

**1 Cor. 3:21-23**

The reality of death for the believer is a sweet reality filled with hope and the anticipation of our eternal inheritance of dwelling in glory with our Savior.

But what about death for those who do not believe?

### **What is death for the Non-believer?**

A non-believer finds themselves on the other side of the coin, so death is just the opposite for those who do not believe.

If there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, then those who reject Christ are under condemnation.

For the non-believer death serves as the transition from this life into eternal condemnation and judgment.

**Luke 16:19-26** - We see again the distinction in this parable

*Lazarus - by Abraham's side*

*Rich man - Hell with torment*

So upon death we see that each individual is actively living in their state of eternity.

*For the believer it is blessing or Paradise*

*For the un-believer it is suffering outside the presence of God*

So there is no purgatory or soul sleep, there is an immediate transition for both believer and non-believers to their eternal destination.

There is no place in scripture that teaches that an un-believer can reverse or have that destination reversed after death.

**The chasm is fixed**

This is not something we can gloss over or sweeten up. This terrible reality is what makes the Gospel so sweet.

For one to pass through death to eternal life there is a standard to meet. That standard is righteousness and scripture teaches us that no one is righteous, not even the best of us because we have all sinned and earned for ourselves death.

But God provides a way through Jesus for the unrighteous to become righteous. Through his life, death and resurrection Jesus secured our forgiveness and offers us his righteousness.

Which leads to a new life that no longer lives for self but for Christ

So that whoever believes will be able to pass through death into eternal life instead of receiving what we deserve which is condemnation and judgment.

And that is the sweet reality of the Gospel, but for those who reject the Gospel and place their hope in something else, the Bible says "when they die, their hope perishes" (**Proverbs 11:7**)

**What are some of those hopes?**

But praise God for today, for this very moment, because even now for the unbeliever God has provided a way for hope, in light of death, through faith in Christ.

### **III. Hope in death through Christ**

#### **Why is there hope in Christ?**

Because even death can not separate the believer from the love of Christ

**Romans 8:35-39**

Because Christ is the one who moves us from death to life

**Colossians 2:13-14**

Because Christ came to fulfill the law and defeat sin with righteousness and remove the sting of death by His life, death, and resurrection.

**1 Cor. 15:54-57**

We can hope in Christ alone because Christ alone breathes life into our dead bodies and keeps us so that nothing can separate us from his love, not even death because he conquered it by living the life of righteousness that we could not.

And now even death serves the one who conquered it. Death is not outside of the sovereign control of our Lord.

### **Application -**

#### **What should our attitude be toward death?**

We should have an attitude of hope and faith

**As Paul did - Philippians 1:21-23**

Even in the face of a suffering death?

**Persecution/Pain/Tragic Earthquake deaths**

Stephen (**Acts 7:54-60**) - special measure of grace to endure

We can encourage one another with the Gospel in the face of death

those who have anxiety concerning death

We can encourage, teach and prepare our families to view death biblically

our death/other family members death/their own death

**John Flavel Quote - A Puritan from the 1600's**

#### **Knowing the hope we have as believers concerning death, what should our attitude be toward those around us?**

Our attitude should be a confident urgency.

Urgency with the Gospel - "today is the day of salvation"

Confidence that it is not up to us to save, but the power of the Gospel to do the saving

It would be Satan's desire for death to overtake you with fear and anxiety and despair, leaving you with a helpless and hopeless outlook.

However, it is God's desire that through death we would look to the Cross and see the victory that was won through Christ's work.

And live a life of hope in the face of death, which serves as a testimony of our Savior to those around us who do not know Him.

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