

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - April 21, 2022

Prepared & Presented by: Pastor James G. Austin, Jr., PhD, D.Min.

Title: "When You Are Afraid of Dying"

Subtitle: "Scared to Death of Death"

Scripture Reference: James 4:14

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." [James 4:14 KJV]

I. Introduction [Part I]

A. I can imagine that someone may have read the title of this lesson and said to themselves, "Why would the pastor want to have a study session about death?"

B. Well, the answer is really quite simple. Death is a reality and the Word of God provides us with the absolute certainty that death is real and it is part of our human existence. Therefore, why not discuss it; read and learn about it, and also be encouraged by knowing that death for those of us who are saved, we have nothing to fear or worry about.

II. Introduction [Part II] - Sometimes Death comes in Unexpected Ways

A. Anthony Fernando, a twenty-one year old man living in Colombo, Sri Lanka went fishing one day off the coast of the island. He had no idea that he would never make it back home alive.

B. If you would venture to guess how this man lost his life, what would you say?

1. That he died from a heart attack?
2. Perhaps he fell out of the boat and drowned?
3. Or, how about a shark attack?

C. It was none of these things; here is what happened. A forktail gar fish jumped out of the water and cut him on the neck with its tail. This man bled to death before a fellow fisherman could get him to a hospital.

D. If you had told him before he left home to go fishing this would happen, he probably wouldn't have believed it.

E. Here is another true story about death coming in an unexpected way. Lance Foster, a twenty-three year-old student at the University of Kansas was studying at his desk one night. Little did he know that he would be dead in just a few minutes. How did Lance die?

1. Was he shot by a roommate?

2. Did lightning come through his window and strike him?

- a. It was neither; He was killed by a soda machine!

F. Lance became thirsty while studying and decided to walk down the hallway to get something to drink. When he rocked the vending machine back and forth to get the can soda, the machine fell on top of him.

G. He died from internal injuries shortly thereafter. If you had told him he would die when he got a soda, he probably wouldn't have believed it.

H. Just one more true story about an unexpected death. After winning \$3.6 million in the lottery, William Curry probably thought that he was the luckiest person in the world. But he wasn't lucky for very long.

I. Two weeks after hitting the jackpot, Curry, at the age of thirty-seven, died of a heart attack. His sister-in-law said the stress of winning the lottery killed him.

J. None of the above-mentioned people knew or even imagined that death was just moments away.

Point: Death can come unexpectedly upon anyone!

K. Have you ever thought about how you will die? Even if you haven't, each of us have an appointment with death.

L. Your and I have a one-way ticket to the grave, and the fact that we are getting older is a reminder that the train has not stopped but one day, we must disembark.

M. Statistics show that one out of every one person is going to die. It is coming whether we like it or not. When your time comes, you need to be prepared, because death is still going around, one per customer. [Do you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?]

III. Exposition [Part I] - Why Some People Fear Death

A. If we are honest, the truth is, many people are scared to death of death. King Louis XV of France was so afraid of death that he ordered that the word "death" was never to be spoken in his presence.

B. He believed that if no one mentioned death, it wouldn't happen to him. Well, I guess you know how that turned out; It didn't work: He still died.

C. Some people are afraid of dying because they don't know what lies beyond the grave. Actually, it's the fear of God's judgment that makes most people afraid to die.

Comment: Judgment can be a terrifying thing for people who don't know the Lord.

D. When W.C. Fields (an American comedian, Actor, and writer) was on his deathbed, a visitor found him reading the Bible. The visitor asked him why he was reading the Bible and Fields replied, "Looking for loopholes, my friend. Looking for loopholes."

E. I guess you know the answer - he didn't find any, but at least he went to the right source to answer his question.

F. Not everyone is afraid of death. Sinicia, the pagan philosopher, realized that Christians view death differently than non-Christians. He once stated, "Only Christians and idiots are not afraid to die."

Points:

- 1) Those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior have been delivered from the fear of death. ((Read Hebrews 2:14-15))
- 2) When Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, He will give you grace to face death.

G. W.E. Sangster (1900-1960), one of England's outstanding Methodist preachers was on his deathbed. He wrote to his young friend Billy Graham this note of hope.

"All my life I have preached that Jesus Christ is adequate for every crisis. I have but a few days to live, and oh, Billy, Christ is indeed adequate in the hour of death. Tell everyone it is true."

H. God places a supernatural peace and confidence within each believer that calms the fear of death. Throughout history we find many examples of Christians who were not afraid to die.

I. In the early fourth Century, a believer named Phocas lived outside the city of Sinope. He often welcomed travelers to his house to share his faith with them.

J. During the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, an order was issued that all Christians were to be put to death. The name Phocas of Sinope was high on the list given by the magistrates.

K. The officers of the magistrate, hot and weary from a long day's journey, arrived at Sinope.

L. Phocas, as he had done with so many travelers, welcomed them into his home. As the soldiers refreshed themselves, Phocas asked them their business in the area.

M. The Officer-in-Charge told him, "We have orders from Rome to execute a local Christian named Phocas. Do you know him and where he lives?"

N. "I know him well," Phocas replied. "Why don't you and your men rest for the night, and I will direct you to him in the morning."

O. When the men from Rome retired for the night, Phocas went into his garden and began to dig. By sunrise, the hole he dug was large enough to bury a human body.

P. He then woke the Roman soldiers, informing them, "I am Phocas, the Phocas, the man you are looking for."

Q. The soldiers were shocked and insisted that they couldn't put to death a man who had been so kind to them.

R. "Oh, please do," said Phocas. "I am a Christian and am not afraid to die. If you do not fulfill your orders, you will get into trouble. You must do your duty. It will not alter my love and affection for you."

S. Phocas was executed and lowered into the grave which he had dug in his own garden. He was not afraid to die because he knew where his spirit would go after they killed his body.

Point: Once you are assured that your spirit will be received by Jesus into heaven, the fear of death will leave.

IV. Exposition - What Happens When You Die

A. When you go to someone's funeral, you are looking at an empty or a vacant shell. The real person has left the body.

B. One young minister was doing his first funeral. He explained to the congregation how the spirit departs from the body when a

person dies.

C. Then he pointed to the corpse in the open casket and said, "Folks, what you see here is just a shell. The nut has already departed!"

D. Perhaps those weren't the best choice of words, but the point is clearly illustrated: When a person dies, the spirit departs from the body.

E. James 2:26 tells us that the body without the spirit is dead. The spirit lives on after death and enters eternity. While the body is left behind.

Comment: Death does not stop your existence. It is simply the door through which you must go to exit this world and enter into the next world.

V. Exposition [Part III] - What Death is Like for the Christian

A. The thought of passing through the death door bothers some people. What will it be like? The Bible tells us that death for the Christian is like sleep. It doesn't hurt when you go to sleep.

B. Neither does it hurt when a believer dies because when Jesus rose from the dead, he took the sting out of death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55)

Comment: Just like a bee loses its stinger when it stings, death lost its sting when it stung Jesus.

C. One little boy asked his mother what death was like. "Do you remember when you fell asleep in the living room?" she ask. "Your father picked you up in his big, strong arms and took you to your bedroom.

D. When you woke up, you found yourself in another room. Death for the Christian is like that. You go to sleep in one room and wake up in another."

VI. Exposition [Part IV] - It's Better on the Other Side

A. The apostle Paul said - "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far

better." (Phil. 1:23)

B. Heaven will be far better than life on earth could ever hope to be. It is filled with eternal joy, without pain or suffering. It is a place where we will reside in God's kingdom forever and ever.

C. When a loved-one who is a believer dies, you miss that person on this side. But remember, your loved-one is greeted by Jesus on the other side.

D. Understanding the joy of heaven will shatter your fear of death. In heaven there is no sickness, pain, suffering, or sadness.

E. If you are a Christian, you need not fear death but instead, know that there is nothing but joy in the presence of God in heaven.

Conquering the Fear of Death

- Ask Jesus to come into your life and forgive you of all your sins.
- With Jesus in your life, you then have a joyous future.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the Scripture passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. All Scriptures have been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"If a man _____, shall he _____ again? All the days of my _____ time will I _____, till my _____ come."

[Job 14:14]

"And as it is _____ unto men _____ to _____, but after this the judgment."

[Hebrews 9:27]

"Now he that hath _____ us for the selfsame thing is God,

who also hath given us the _____ of the Spirit. Therefore we are always _____, knowing that; Whilst we are at _____ in the body, we are _____ from the Lord."

"For we _____ that if our _____ house of this _____ were _____, we have a _____ of God, an house not made with hands, _____ in the _____."

[2 Corinthians 5:1]

"And God shall _____ away all _____ from their _____; and there shall be no more _____, neither _____; nor crying, neither shall there be any more _____, for the former _____ are passed _____."

[Revelation 21:4]

Let's read Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 together.

I do trust that you have been blessed by this study and if the fear of facing death has been a part of your existence, because you are in Christ and have love, perfect love casts out fear.

Jude 3
Pastor Austin