

Sermon #1884 — Miscellaneous Notes

Title: **ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?**

Text: Hebrews 2:14-15

Subject: *Deliverance from the Fear of Death*

Date: Tuesday Evening — December 28, 2010

Tape # Z-100b

Readings: *Bob Duff and Allen Kibby*

Introduction:

I want to ask you a question, a solemn, sobering, serious question. It is a question you might prefer to avoid, but one you cannot avoid. You may suppress it, and postpone dealing with it; but you cannot avoid it. I have been praying all day that the Lord would use it to strike your heart and that he will cause it to continue ringing in your heart and mine long after the sermon is over. Here's the question — **ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?** That is my subject for tonight: — **ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?** We have some friends who will soon leave us. I wonder who among us the Lord will call home before the next year is ended. Who sitting here tonight will be in heaven before the next year's end? Who sitting here tonight will be in hell before the next year's end? So I cannot think of a more suitable message than this for my

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final message to you this year. — **ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?**

I have watched a lot of people die, some young and some old, some believers and some infidels, some with no hope, some with a false hope, and some with a good hope. I have seen some die in utter terror and some with great comfort, some in brazen blasphemy and defiance and some with peace and joy. How will it be for you, when you come to death's chilly waters?

Illustrations:

- *Harold Martin's Brother and Harold*
- *Percy Neal and Darrell McClung*
- *The Old Man at Lookout and Anthony Dutra*

I know a good many men and women who do everything they can to avoid visiting a rest home, a hospital, or a funeral parlor. They simply cannot face the fact that they must soon die. Even now, the fear of death terrorizes them. **I ask of you, what Jeremiah asked long ago. – If sickness and death**

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torment you now, “then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” Are you afraid to die?

NATURAL FEAR

The fear of death is a very natural thing to sinful men. And, the fact is — **If you are without Christ, you have reason to be afraid.** — “*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment*” (Hebrews 2:15). Soon you and I must die.

“Please view my grave as you pass by,
For as you are so once was I,
And as I am soon you must be,
So make your plans to follow me.”

Because of your sin and guilt before God, you must die. But death will not end your existence. You will stand before a holy, just, and righteous God in judgment. And you will reap the exact penalty due your sin, the infinite, eternal wrath of God in hell!

2 Corinthians 5:10-11 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every

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one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:11-15 “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead

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which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

For the believer, however, things are far different.

Turn with me to Hebrews 2:14-15. Here in Hebrews 2:14-15 God the Holy Spirit tells us that one great purpose of our Savior’s incarnation was that he might destroy Satan and deliver his elect from the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

There is an hour when I must part
With all I hold most dear:

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And life, with its best hopes, will then
As nothingness appear.

There is an hour when I must sink
Beneath the stroke of death;
And yield to Him Who gave it first
My struggling, vital breath.

There is an hour when I must stand
Before the judgment-seat,
And all my sins, and all my foes,
In awful vision meet.

There is an hour when I must look
On one eternity,
And nameless woe, or blissful life,
My endless portion be.

Proposition: Our text tells us that **the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world for this purpose:** — **that he might “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”**

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You and I, who are washed in the blood of Christ and live by faith in Him, should have no fear of death. If you are a believer yet struggling with this tormenting fear, this message is particularly for you. Do not expect to have dying grace until your time to die has come. Yet, we ought not live out our days on this earth clinging to the vanity of mortality and fearing its end.

LOOK TO CHRIST. There is no deliverance from the fear of death except by looking to Him whose death is the death of death. Our Lord has done many things to deliver us from this fear of death and its bondage.

DEATH'S POWER DESTROYED

First, our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of death by dying in our place and rising again. Since all of God's elect were partakers of flesh and blood, under the dominion of death, Christ became a man to suffer and die for us. It was not possible for our Representative to satisfy the claims of Divine justice against us unless He lived

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and died in our nature. By His substitutionary death on the cursed tree and His triumphant resurrection, the Son of God destroyed the power of Satan and the power of the grave over us. We are now more than conquerors in him. Why then should we fear death?

SIN REMOVED

Second, The Lord Jesus delivers us from the fear of death by removing our sin. — “*The sting of death is sin.*” It is sin which causes men torment in death. But in Christ we have no sin. In Him we are fully forgiven. By His blood our sins are washed away.

1 John 3:1-5 “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (4) Whosoever committeth sin

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transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (5) And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and **in him is no sin.**”

Be sure you have the forgiveness of sin by faith in Christ, and fear death no more. To die forgiven, “*accepted in the Beloved,*” is not really to die at all. It is simply the departure out of this world into the Father’s house.

REDEEMED BY BLOOD

For another thing, the law held us in bondage to the sentence of death and condemnation; but “**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.**”

“*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*” — He is the end of the law’s power to condemn. **In the book of God’s holy law there is no legal claim of condemnation upon any believer!** Christ satisfied that claim for us! Why then should we fear? If I am in Christ, I am dead to the law.

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Romans 8:1-4 “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

DEATH A BLESSING

Fourth, our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ delivers us from the fear of death by changing the character of death. For the unbeliever death is a horrible thing. For the unbeliever, anything short of death is mercy. But, for the believer death is a great blessing. **John Trapp wrote...**

“To those that are in Christ death is but the day-break of eternal brightness; not the punishment

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of sin, but the period of sin. It is but a sturdy porter opening the door of eternity, a rough passage to eternal pleasure.”

Why should Israel be afraid to cross the swelling Jordan into the land of promise, with the ark of God before them?

Believers do not die in the sense that others do.
Our Lord said, — “*Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.*”

- To the ungodly, death is the penalty of sin; but to the believer it is just a change of location.
- Death to the wicked is the execution of justice; but to the believer it is a deliverance from sin.
- To the worldling death is the beginning of sorrows; but to the believer it is admission into glory.
- To the rebel death is imprisonment; but to the believer it is freedom.

IMMEDIATE GLORY

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Fifth, our Saviour has also taken the fear of death away from those who trust Him by assuring us that our souls will go to be with him in heaven immediately. — *“Because I live, ye shall live also.”* — *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory.”* — *“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!”* Knowing this, I can no longer fear to die.

2 Corinthians 5:1-9 “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (6) Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing

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that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (8) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

CERTAIN RESURRECTION

Sixth, our Lord delivers us from the fear of death by assuring us of the resurrection of our bodies (1 Thessalonians 2:13-18).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord

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himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

This body must die. But, blessed be God, we shall arise! This is my satisfying confidence: — “*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me!*” With such a hope, the grave causes me no alarm!

Would you be free from fear of death? Look to Christ in faith: Christ as your Substitute, Christ rising as your Representative, Christ living as your Mediator, Christ coming as your King.

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If you would be free from the fear of death, think about death often and meditate on what it is to die in Christ. We know that those who die in the Lord are blessedly safe and happy. Even Balaam saw that and desired to die the death of the righteous. What makes the death of the righteous so blessed? It is this...

Death will bring us into the presence of many friends. — Death takes a wife from her husband, a child from its mother, and a father from his family. We cheer ourselves, however, with the prospect of a happy reunion in glory.

It is true, above all else, that we will see Christ and be with Him. But it is also promised that we will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When we die we will leave some behind, but we are going up to *“the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.”* And we shall know one another then, even better than we do now, even as the disciples knew Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, though they had never seen them, or even a picture of them.

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Dying in Christ means our most earnest and constant prayers will all be answered. — How often have we prayed to be free from our trials and temptations! When we close our eyes in death, we will leave this veil of tears behind.

- Does your soul long to be free from all sin? It will be when this body lies in the grave.
- Oh, how our hearts long to be more like Christ! And we shall be perfectly like Him in glory when we have put off this body of flesh.
- We pray for a brighter and clearer vision of Christ in His glory. After we are no longer hindered by the sight of things in this world, our eyes will be opened to see the Son of God as He is!

We need not to weep for those who have died in the Lord! We might well envy them, but not weep for them.

MANY COMFORTS

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Here's something to relieve the fear of death: — **The death of God's saints is accompanied with many comforts.** — Death can never separate us from the love of Christ. He will go with us through the dark valley. I am sure that many believers never have such full revelations of Christ's love, grace, glory, and greatness in this world as they are given in the hour of death. The Lord will make His people triumphant over the last enemy in that hour.

Exodus 15:16 “Fear and dread shall fall upon them (all our enemies); by the greatness of thine arm they shall be *as* still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, *which* thou hast purchased.”

NOT AFRAID

I know that I am a dying man. I try to think about death every day and frequently throughout every day. The Lord has graciously given me opportunity to look the prospect of immediate death in the face. And I rejoice to tell you that **I am not afraid to die.** I used to be. Oh, how the thoughts of death and hell, of

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God and eternity tormented my soul! But today, I am not afraid to die (2 Timothy 1:12; 4:6).

2 Timothy 1:12 “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

2 Timothy 4:6 “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”

It is not my desire to impress you with fine speech. I am not striving for eloquence. And I am not trying to show bravery. Bravery has nothing to do with this. But I do know something about what it is to be faced with death. Basically there are five things which cause men and women to fear death.

1. Their sin.
2. Their righteousness. – Is it sufficient enough”
3. The fear of the unknown.
4. Their families. – Their welfare.
5. The church of God. – It s welfare.

Let me deal with each of these common fears briefly.

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There is no reason for me to be fearful for God's church when I am gone. The church of God will survive very well without me. Truly, we are very proud creatures to suppose that the welfare of God's family depends upon us.

And there is no reason for me to be fearful about the welfare of my family when I have left them in this world. The Lord God is infinitely wiser, kinder, stronger, and richer than I am. He can meet the needs of my wife and daughter, my son-in-law, and my grandchildren without me.

Illustrations:

“She's mine, not yours. I'm a better Father than you can ever be.”

Shelby's Comments to the Lady in California

Martin Luther wrote in his will, “Lord, thou hast given my wife and children. I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the

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fatherless, and judge of widows, nourish, keep, and teach them.”

My sin does not cause me to fear death, because I have a perfect, all-sufficient Sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken my sin upon himself. He bled and died as my Substitute under the penalty of my sin.

- My sin is gone. – So the sting of death is gone.

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought,
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, it is well with soul!

- God has no wrath for me. – He exhausted His wrath against me upon his Son. He says, “*Fury is not in me*” (Isaiah 27:4).
- The law and justice of God have no claim upon me.

But am I good enough, pure enough, righteous enough, holy enough to meet God’s approval and be accepted before him? Even that question does not alarm me. — **Jesus Christ the Lord is the Lord**

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my Righteousness. God demands perfect righteousness. He will not accept sincerity, or good intentions, or the best I can do. He demands perfection. Jesus Christ is my perfection, my righteousness. And that gives me peace.

And life after death is no hidden mystery to me. I know that when this body is empty I will live before the Lord. I know that though my body returns to the dust, it shall one day be raised again in immortality! (Job 19:25-27).

(Job 19:25-27) “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: (26) And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (27) Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.”

HEAVENLY FORETASTES

Seventh, our blessed Savior delivers us from the fear of death by giving us foretastes of the glory that will

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follow it. — “*Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*” Yet, he has given us his Spirit, which is “*the earnest of our inheritance.*” This much we know, to die is to be absent from the body and present with the Savior. When these eyes see you no more, I shall see my Savior “*face to face!*” To be with Christ and see Him, who loved me and gave Himself for me, — that is heaven!

What does it mean to be with Christ? What will it be?

- We will have a clearer vision of Him.
- We will have a fuller knowledge of Him.
- We will have more intimate communion with Him.
- We will have unbroken fellowship with Him.
- We will love Him perfectly.
- We will behold His glory (John 17:24).
- We will possess His glory, all His glory as the God-man, our Mediator (John 17:5, 22).

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Truly, this is far, far better, infinitely preferable to anything we can know in this world. We cannot comprehend this glory, but we can think upon it. In Christ heaven is ours, the throne of Christ is ours, the glory of Christ is ours, the crown of life is ours, eternal joy is ours! God is mine! Christ is mine! Heaven is mine! Death is not to be feared, but anticipated! Were it the will of God, according to the purpose of God, for the glory of God, I would much prefer to die than to live.

Application:

If you would be free from the fear of death, **trust the Son of God**. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Christ and life eternal is yours!

If you would be free from the fear of death, **live every day as though it were your last**. Get into the habit of dying to this world. Let us die daily. **Hold everything here with a loose hand**. Learn to live in this world in the awareness that everything here is perishing. Live not for the perishing things of time, but for the lasting things of eternity. Live as a traveler

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through this world. Do not become too fond of it. Soon you will have to let it go. Be prepared at a moment's notice to do so.

If you would be free from the fear of death, **walk with God**. “*Enoch walked with God: and he was not; because God took him.*” Walk with God; and when you die you will walk into glory. Press as much as you can into each day for the glory of Christ and the service of His kingdom. You must soon die: put your affairs in order. Be ready for that happy day when the Son of God calls you home!

Should I drop this robe of flesh tonight, should you hear tomorrow morning that Bro. Don died during the night, don't be alarmed and don't believe the report. I promise you, when I have breathed my last breath in this world, I will not have died. I will have simply pulled off a shoe that hurts my foot and laid aside forever a worn-out tool for which I have no more use.

John 11:25-26 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (26) And

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whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Psalms 17:15 "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

When I have breathed my final breath
And dropped this robe of flesh in death,
When my appointed work is done
And my allotted time is gone,
Don't stand around my grave and cry.
I'll not be there. I did not die.

My Savior came to call me home,
And I with Him to heav'n have gone!
Now I am free from sin and pain;
And with the glorified I reign!
Don't stand around my grave and cry.
I'm glorified! I did not die!

Seated with Jesus on His throne,
Glorified by what He has done,
I am a trophy of His grace.

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Rejoicing, I behold His face:
Don't stand around my grave and cry.
I am with Christ! I did not die!

My body lies beneath the clay
Until the resurrection day.
In that day when Christ comes again,
Body and soul unite again!
Don't stand around my grave and cry.
Rejoice with me! I did not die!

Amen.