

“Death Abolished”
2 Timothy 1:10
(Preached at Trinity, January 30, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been admonishing Timothy to press on in boldness without fear. In **Verse 8** Paul told him to share with him in the suffering of the Gospel. Don’t cease to declare the gospel when men respond with hostility because God has given us access to His power from on high – absolute power, omnipotent power – the same great power by which we were saved.
Verse 9 – This is the same great power of God by which He "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity"
2. In **Verse 10** Paul adds that this is the same great power by which Jesus Christ has "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,"
3. This morning I want us to look at the phrase “who abolished death.” It is a statement that many have become so familiar with that it has lost its great meaning. This is one of the greatest demonstrations of power that God has manifested upon this earth – that God by His great power has abolished death.
4. Death is the way of all humanity. Both Joshua and David described their death in this way: "I am going the way of all the earth."
It is the ultimate testimony of our mortality.
5. It is the way of all humanity but it was not God’s original design. Death is the result of sin.
God made the covenant of works with Adam – (covenant of life)
Q. “What was Adam bound to do in the covenant of works?
A. “To obey God perfectly”
 1. Spurgeon #12 – “When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.”
 2. This covenant between God and Adam, our federal head, carried a promise of life and a threat of death.
 3. **Genesis 2:16-17 NAU** - "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;
¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
6. The Bible actually speaks of three different deaths resulting from sin: Spiritual death, Physical death, Eternal death also referred to as the second death.
This morning I want us to look at the three-fold nature of death—all of which have been abolished by Jesus Christ.

I. The Nature of Spiritual Death –

The first result of sin was spiritual death - a complete corruption of our whole nature

Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

A. This is the heart of what is called Total Depravity.

It is important to understand what this does not mean.

1. Total Depravity does not mean Absolute Depravity—that we are as wicked as we can possibly be.
2. It does not mean that man is completely void of virtue.
 - a. Human beings are capable of high moral character.
 - b. Lost men have given their lives for high positions of principle.
 - c. Lost men have given great sums of money for the good of mankind
3. Spiritual death does not mean that man's spirit is inactive
 - a. The fall has marred and corrupted our spiritual nature but has not annihilated it.
 - b. All men have an understanding of the Divine – yet it is suppressed
Romans 1:18-19 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."
 κατέχω – literally, “hold down.” The picture of a man forcefully holding down the truth = “suppress”
4. Total depravity does not mean that all men are equally bad
 God has chosen to restrain the corruption in men – to different degrees.
Proverbs 21:1 NAU - "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes."

B. What is the result of spiritual death upon human beings

1. The lost man, the spiritually dead man is incapable of pleasing God
Romans 8:8 NAU - "and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
Romans 8:7 NAU - "because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,"
 (doesn't submit to the law of God, neither can he")
2. The lost man is incapable of doing anything to merit salvation
Romans 3:10-12 NAU - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

3. Man is incapable of understanding God properly

1 Corinthians 2:14 – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

John 3:3 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Ephesians 4:18 NAU - "being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart"
4. Man is incapable of generating love in his heart towards God. He hates God and hates his Law.

1 John 5:3 NAU - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." He hates God’s law demonstrating his hatred of God

 - a. A person’s true love is demonstrated by their actions.

Matthew 15:19 NAU - "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."

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 - b. Fallen man sees nothing desirable in the Savior

II. The Nature of Physical Death

- A. Like spiritual death, mortality was also the immediate result of sin. Man passed from immortality to mortality.
 1. Death is a penalty, a curse – God’s judgment upon sin.
 2. The body is subject to disease – it is all around us
 - a. New diseases continue to attack – COVID-19 was largely unknown 3 years ago. It has become a defining disease in our day. But history has known endless diseases and plagues.
 - b. Old infirmities continue to plague us – cancer, heart attacks, stroke, Alzheimer’s.
 3. We are ever aging – and nothing can prevent it.
 - a. The existence of death upon the earth is testimony to our guilt. Universal death shows universal guilt.
 - b. The fact that even babies die tells us that we are suffering under a universal guilt. They die because they too are under the guilt of Adam’s sin.
 4. Death stalks us like an invisible beast that prowls and hides around every corner. It is an enemy that cannot be escaped. I often say all men have an expiration date.

- B. Sin has made death a mortal enemy
1 Corinthians 15:56 NAU - "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;"
1. Death separates us from our true loves – the things which satisfy the flesh.
 2. Death brings us face to face with the law that we despised and the demands of Divine justice.
- III. What does the Bible mean by second death?
Revelation 2:11 NAU - "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."
- A. Death is a separation
1. Spiritual death is the separation of man from his intended fellowship with God. He is alienated from God—separated from his Creator.
Ephesians 4:18 NAU - "being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;"
 2. Physical death is a separation of the spiritual soul from the physical body. This is testified vividly at a funeral as we gaze upon the deceased in the coffin. It is the man void of his spirit or soul.
 3. The second death is the eternal separation of the whole man from God
Revelation 21:8 NAU - "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
- B. The second death is the ultimate consequence of sin
1. The second death is eternal death, an eternal and final separation from God.
 2. It is to be forever shut off from every blessing, every mercy – it is the man forsaken and void of hope.
 3. It is the ultimate consequence of sin. Paul refers to it: "The wages of sin is death."
 4. The second death is also a place. A place of torment, a place of separation.
- IV. How is it that Jesus Christ has abolished death. Jesus has delivered His people from all three manifestations of death.
- A. The word for "abolished" is καταργέω – it literally means
 To render idle, to inactivate, to render inoperative.
 It isn't that death no longer exists – it just simply no longer has power over us.
 We look forward to the end when death will once and for all be annihilated.
1 Corinthians 15:25-26 NAU - "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death."
- B. Spiritual death is abolished through regeneration
2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
1. The full effect of spiritual death will not be annihilated until the resurrection and glorification
 2. In regeneration the old man dies. We are made spiritually alive.

3. We need to understand, for the Christian, the old man IS dead. Sometimes well-meaning Christians refer to the Christian life as a battle between the old man and the new man, the old nature and the new nature.
 - a. This is wrong. We cannot say that the “Old man” or the “Old nature” survives because these are terms used to describe the unregenerate man.
 - b. **John Murray** (Former professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary): “The old man is the unregenerate man; the new man is the regenerate man created after in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no more feasible to call the believer a new man and an old man, than it is to call him a regenerate man and an unregenerate. And neither is it warranted to speak of the believer as having in him the old man and the new man. This kind of terminology is without warrant and it is but another method of doing prejudice to the doctrine which Paul was so jealous to establish when he said, ‘Our old man has been crucified.’”¹
 - c. Yet, we still have remaining infirmities of the flesh
Some call it the remnants of the old nature
 - d. Paul explained it as a law or operating principle.
Romans 7:21-23 NAU - "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."
 - d. **John Calvin:** “Sin, though it ceases to reign, ceases not to dwell in them. Accordingly, though we may say that the old man is crucified, and the law of sin abolished in the children of God, the remains of sin survive, not to have dominion, but to humble them under a consciousness of their infirmity.”
 2. Although we are not delivered from all of the effects of spiritual death in this life we are delivered from the bondage of sin and are raised to live in holiness.
Romans 6:22 NAU - "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."
- B. Physical death is conquered by removing its sting. The dread of death is removed by the promise of the resurrection.
1 Corinthians 15:55-57 NAU - "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1. Regeneration has changed the object of our love – we no longer fear to leave this world behind because we have already left it

¹ Murray, John, *Principles of Conduct*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957).

2. In the resurrection mortality shall be swallowed up by immortality.
We have assurance that we shall not experience the second death
1 Corinthians 15:21-22 NAU - "For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."
1 Corinthians 15:54 NAU - "But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."
3. The second death has been defeated
Revelation 2:11 NAU - "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."
John 3:16

IV. How has the total defeat of death been accomplished?

- A. Divine justice was satisfied through the atonement of Christ.
 1. Justification is accomplished
Titus 3:7 NAU - "so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life."
 2. Jesus removed the curse of sin by taking the curse upon Himself
- B. The Resurrection of Christ is the basis of our own hope of resurrection
1 Corinthians 15:54 NAU - "But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."
Colossians 3:4 NAU - "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Conclusion:

1. It's as if Paul is reminding Timothy of this great gospel and the power of God who has accomplished it. This is worth fighting for. The gospel is worth dying for. The gospel is worth spending our life laboring to see its spread.
2. Paul adds in **Verse 11** – "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher."
For Paul, the life he found in Christ had seized his entire life. As a preacher and apostle Paul would spend his life carrying out this great calling.

Are you spending your life fulfilling the call of the gospel?