

The Shadow of Death!

February 19, 2012

Scripture Readings: Psalm 39; Revelation 21:1-8

I. Introduction: Death is common to all men regardless of station in life. All will die (Job 14:1) Its appointment is known only to God. (James 4:13-15; Proverbs 27:1) All of us will face our own death and the death of loved ones. (Hebrews 9:27) Grieving necessitates comfort and God can provide it. (II Cor. 1:3, 4)

II. What is Death?

Biblical Expressions of death:

- a) Returning to the dust or to the earth (Gen. 2:7; 3:19)
- b) Going the way of all the earth (Joshua 23:14)
- c) Being gathered to ones fathers or people (Judges 2:10 Deut. 32:50)
- d) Giving up the ghost/Breathing her last (Acts 5:10)
- e) Being absent from the body/Being present with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8)
- f) Personification: Tyrannical Ruler (Job 18:14) and a hunter (Psalm 18:5)

Definition: Death is an end of the union between the body and the soul. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

Separation from God (Gen 3:17)

Inherited from Adam (Rom. 5:12)

Condition at birth (Psalm 51:5)

Overtured at Conversion (II Cor. 5:21)

Summary: Inevitable (Heb. 9:27); Consequence of sin & Universal in scope (Rom. 5:12-14); Uncertain as to time (James 4:13-15); Display of God's Justice & Justice and Desirable to the righteous (Phil. 1:23) Warning to the unrighteous (Lk.16:23)

III. Comfort in Grieving - Part I

- a) Begins with a correct understanding of those benefits that we partake of in this life: Justification /Adoption & Sanctification
- b) Fellowship with Christ through the Word of God and with each other
- c) Growth in Grace
- d) Resulting in: Assurance of God's love / Peace of conscience / Hope of glory / Joy in the Holy Spirit / Increase in grace / Perseverance (Heb. 3:13)

IV. Comfort in Grieving - Part II

- a) The nature of assurance: not of the essence of faith (Eph.1:13); believers may wait long to obtain it (Psalm 88); subject to change as a result of various providences (Psalm 72:1-12)
- b) The blessing of believers at the moment of death
 - i. Pass immediately into heaven (II Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23)
 - ii. Are fully conscious of where they are (I Jn. 3:2) (Lazarus & the Rich Man Lk.16:23)
 - iii. Minds are active (I Cor. 13:12)
 - iv. Made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23)
 - v. Bodies remain united to Christ in the grave (I Thess. 4:14; a seed - I Cor. 15:35-49)
 - vi. Supplemented by the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26, 27)

V. Summary:

- a) Begin now to understand the benefits that are yours, in Christ, that you partake of in this life so that you can grow in grace and be strengthened
- b) Do not be afraid or ashamed of grieving; it is God's means of healing
- c) While grieving be comforted in the knowledge that Your loved ones are in presence of God, perfected, contented and patiently awaiting the resurrection of their bodies, which are still united to Christ, though in the grave.
- d) In the case of unbelievers and those of whose state we are uncertain, be assured that God is perfect in His wisdom and justice and does all things well
- e) Allow yourself time to recover, before resuming normal duties
- f) As you have opportunity and relationship with those who are grieving, remind them of God's promises, especially when they are in too much pain to do it for themselves.