

# Why Many Christians Are Afraid to Die

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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Today we are going to address a very unpopular subject; that is the fear of dying.

Are you afraid to die? I think we all fear death to some degree, on some level.

When we are young, we feel like we are going to live forever. We act like it, too.

We take chances; we do foolish things.

We rarely give thought to facing eternity.

As we age, the inevitability that soon we must face death becomes more and more real to us.

I had a good friend, young, in his thirties; I taught him Bible classes; saw him trust Christ.

He went to his doctor for a checkup; they discovered he had a fast-growing tumor, and in two weeks he was dead.

Thankfully, my friend knew the Lord, he is with Jesus right now.

Another good friend was taken by cancer a few years ago; he was younger than me.

Glenda's young grandson in his twenties, who also was saved in Bible classes here at Lighthouse, was killed on the side of the road while operating his tow truck.

Often when believers pass on, I preach from:

## 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

1 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 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, / say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

(FYI; **believers don't "pass away", they "pass on"**).

Paul said he was confident, willing and had rather be absent from his body and to be present with the Lord.

Paul expressed again in

**Philippians 1:23** his desire to be with Christ. **For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:**

Was this wise old Apostle really unafraid to die? Did he really mean that, given a choice, he would rather go on to be with the Lord?

I know that we all, to some degree, fear death.

If you continue reading in this passage, you may find in verse 10 at least one of the reasons why:

## **2 Corinthians 5:8-11**

8 We are confident, / 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.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every 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.

It is commonly preached and taught that when we stand before the Lord in judgment (and that, we all will surely do) that all our sins and failures and secrets will be put on display for all to see.

### **I. Many Scriptures are used to teach that all your sins will be exposed.**

#### *A. Old Testament Scriptures.*

1. **Numbers 32:23** But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and **be sure your sin will find you out.**

2. **Ecclesiastes 12:14** For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

3. **Psalms 44:20-21** If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

*B. Also many New Testament Scriptures.*

1. **Mark 4:22** For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.
2. **Luke 8:17** For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.
3. **Luke 12:2-3**  
2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.  
3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

*C. This idea has been presented many ways.*

1. I've heard and read it described as a movie of everything bad you've ever done playing on a giant screen in the background as you stand and face the Lord.
2. Others imagine a giant list of sins continually scrolling on a big screen.
3. Or even the Lord simply pointing out all those occasions and instances of sin and failure.
4. Let me ask you, who could possibly want to be absent from the body and present with the Lord knowing they had to face something like that?
5. It is no wonder that many believers are afraid to die.

*D. What about the unsaved? They have every reason to be afraid to die.*

1. **Revelation 20:11-15** records the judgment of the unsaved; those who are dead in sins.  
11 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 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.
2. Many believe and some teach that those books that are opened contain a list of all their sins.

3. If you have never trusted Jesus to save you, you surely ought to be afraid to die for a host of reasons.

## II. Is this idea true, that all your sins will be exposed?

### A. What do the Scriptures really say?

1. Yes, every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, but one might wonder; how could heaven be heaven with the first big piece of eternity being taken up with a giant screen playing sin upon sin that you have committed?

2. I have a hard time believing we are going to heaven to watch eternity's biggest and worse horrible movie about us.

3. I have some really good news. With Jesus as our High Priest, we really don't have to worry about that big dirty movie!

### 4. Hebrews 10:11-17

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

### B. What about all those other Scriptures?

1. You ought always to read more than just individual verses by themselves; for example

#### Luke 8:17:

2. This verse is part of the interpretation of the parable of the sower.

#### Luke 8:11-18

11 Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away **the word** out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive **the word** with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard **the word**, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

3. This Scripture is talking about the Word of God being sent forth into the world so that all truth shall be made manifest, and nothing shall remain hidden.

4. It has nothing to do with publicly displaying your secrets and your sins.

5. Another example is

**Numbers 32:23** But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and **be sure your sin will find you out.**

6. This Scriptures refers to the tribe of Reuben who stayed on the near side of Jordan but promised to cross over and fight to help the other 11 tribes secure their promised land; if they didn't keep their word to go and fight, everyone would know that they did not keep their word!

7. Certainly all sin has consequences and misdeeds seem to have a certain way of coming back around and biting us; but that is not what these Scriptures teach.

8. The law of reaping what you sow teaches this particular principle.

### **III. Believer, God is going to judge your works, not your sin.**

*A. That is what the scriptures state in every case.*

1. **Ecclesiastes 12:14** For God shall bring **every work into judgment**, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

2. At the judgment seat of Christ

**1 Corinthians 3:13-15** teaches us that:

**13 Every man's work** shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

**14 If any man's work** abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

**15 If any man's work** shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

*B. Why will God judge only our works and not our sins? It is very simple.*

1. The reason your works will be judged and not your sins is because your sins have already been judged.
2. In Christ...on the cross!
3. **2 Corinthians 5:21** For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
4. I certainly cannot say this on behalf of those who are lost.
5. Those books to be opened according to which the lost will be judged according to their works are not a list of sins; those books are these 66 books of the Word of God.
6. The Bible really doesn't tell us the degree to which your sins will be exposed before you are cast into the lake of fire;
7. Given where you are headed, I suppose it doesn't much matter.

#### **IV. Would Jesus really hide our sins?**

*A. Some of you would wonder, Pastor, isn't there some way I can hide my sins? There are actually two ways to hide your sins:*

1. Let someone introduce you to Jesus.  
**James 5:20** Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, **and shall hide a multitude of sins.**
2. The second way is for believers to love each other like Jesus told us to.  
**1 Peter 4:7-8**  
7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.  
8 And above all things have fervent charity [love] among yourselves: for charity [love] shall cover the multitude of sins.

*B. Someone is surely going to ask, "But Pastor, isn't that kind of like giving us a license to sin?"*

1. *You could look at it that way, or you could look at it like God sees it.*
2. *If you go back again to our original text you will find the answer to this paradox.*
3. **2 Corinthians 5:14** For the love of Christ constraineth us...
4. God will not have you resisting sin or serving Him or any other thing that brings Him glory...because of fear.

*C. Only what is motivated out of love for Him is of value to Jesus.*

### 1. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing.

2. Thus Jesus has removed all the restrictions of judgment for sin having taken all our punishment for us.

3. You can't lose your salvation.

4. Also you don't have some big exposure of your sin to fear from the Lord.

### **Conclusion**

**1 John 4:19** We love him, because he first loved us.

**I know this still doesn't remove all fear of dying.**

**However, there is still another factor the Bible doesn't say much about; that is something called dying grace.**

**I know that my death means something to Jesus.**

**Psalm 116:15** Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

I've also been around long enough to have seen the death of a number of God's saints...real Christians.

I'm here to tell you today that real Christians don't die like other people; dying grace is real, I've seen it in action many times.

I don't have a written promise in God's Word, but I believe surely that Jesus is going to do that for me. How about you?