

Let's talk, about DEATH

It may seem strange to write an article on a subject most do not want to even think about but it is a very important subject for the living.

If you are among the living and reading this article I invite you to listen, as the more we understand death the better we can live.

The Bible has so much to say about this subject for our good. But even if it wasn't it would be important as it is an issue because the Psalmist said: "No one can live forever; all will die.

No one can escape the power of the grave."

Psalms 89:48

Imagine that you live seventy years and it is broke up in one day. That means every twenty minutes is a day and if you are thirty-five years old you are already at eight o'clock in the evening. Your earthly life is coming to an end. Or if you make it to seventy years of age, (which few do), you would have lived only

twenty-five thousand, five hundred and fifty days. They pass quickly don't they? The psalmist said they 'fly away'. If you are thirty-five years old that means you only have twelve thousand and seven hundred and fifty left.

Don't get

nervous I have some edifying things to say also.

Why would we look at it this way? Ps.90: 12 Teach us to make the most of our time, ...or in another version..."Teach us to number our days, so that we may grow in wisdom." Wisdom for what? To live a life that has a purpose... worthy of living before the Lord. Many waste their life living as if they will never die. As the rich man in Lk: 12:18... he said, "I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store everything." This is like most people today who accumulate wealth and feel secure in this life and live for themselves. But death says, "You fool as today you will die." But it doesn't have to be this way.

We live in two phases in our earthly life. The first half we strive to succeed. Our success is always measured by others. In English we say that we have ‘climbed the ladder of success’. But I say to those who have lived for this life that the ladder was leaning on the wrong wall. How many have passed their days and come to the end of their life and seen how they lived for the wrong principles and regret it to despair. But now it is too late to change as our last days are flying away. The moment of truth rears it’s ugly head when we look back and see how totally self-seeking we have been and what we have lived for was all in vain. A tragic reality that doesn’t have to be.

The second half of our life we seek significance. Moses gave up the Palace and comfort of Pharaohs delicacies at forty years of age. He returned to lead his people to freedom. Why? A palace can make you successful but only God can make you significant.

John the Baptist asked, “Jesus are you the one we have been looking for?” Jesus said, “Tell

John, the lonely, the hurting, the sick and the unloved were being ministered to.” Matt. 11: 3 Jesus knew well the secret of living the fleeting moments that He had for what really counted on this earth, and that was simply other people and their needs. In reality dear brethren, what else really matters in this life? Life is as a vapor (James 4:14) here for a brief moment then as quickly as it came it is gone. Only what is done for Christ will last. Ps. 90: 5 (You sweep people away like dreams that disappear or like grass that springs up in the morning). We are like new grass. I remember in Sicily in the very early spring every thing would be green and beautiful as far as the eye could see. It was so beautiful to behold. But after a few weeks in the spring it withers and dies. Every thing turns brown and you ask yourself, “Oh, how so quickly all this beauty is gone. That is the truth of our life! We wake up one day ‘old’ and asking, “Where did our days go?”

Moses found and fulfilled his purpose and so he had a real life that was significant. Jesus

in His brief life had purpose and He fulfilled it and life was meaningful. Do not we seek the same thing? Are you in the second phase? Cry out to God for purpose. Then spend the rest of your life fulfilling it not seeking some fleeting pleasure or earthly security but what lasts for Eternity.

OH, DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?

“When this happens—when our perishable earthly bodies have been transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die—then at last the Scriptures will come true:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.*

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”*

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.” (I Cor. 15: 54-56).

Paul found purpose in life and laughed at what most men fear, DEATH. Why? He knew

what was really important in life. He left nothing in this world that one would say he was a success materially or security wise. But what he left was eternal and each of us can do the same if we live for 'PURPOSE' . We can choose to live for ourselves and what we desire in this life... death will come as a thief taking with it, all we have lived for. We can let our days fly away with little significance to the kingdom of God and see death as a fearful enemy or we can choose a better way. The only real secure way.

Why has Islam made such an impact on the world? They act as if they have a higher principle in this life to live for than we do. Greater than true Christianity they proclaim. And the young willingly die for this purpose to demonstrate to the world they don't fear death. What a lie! Notice older Muslims don't kill themselves in kamikaze bombings! They love this life and fear death. But, we as believers, have the greatest of all purposes to live and die for, Jesus and eternal life.

We might say, “But I don’t want to die!” Whether we want to or not that ‘guest’ is going to come to visit us. We may live twenty years or eighty years, the fact that faces us daily is that we are going to die. In fact, we are dying every day a little and many do not realize it until it is too late. From the day we are born there is a day marked for our death. No one escapes. I can feel it in my own body. The aches and pains slowly take their toll. My energy is not what it once was and I don’t jump around the tent near as much as I used to. I say I am just getting older but that is only a nice way to say that I am dying a little at a time, daily, and my body is letting me know it.

I was in Aqua Termini in the park evangelizing. Three very, very old men were on a park bench saying obscene remarks about an attractive young girl standing close by. I approached them and asked, “Do you not know that soon you will die and be judged for your lust and

before a Holy God? They mocked and laughed at the statement and gave me an evil sign and said not to worry, as they weren't going to die. I thought, "How deceived we can be and think that there will always be another day to do the acts of Jesus?" To repent and make things right. To change our life and be what we should. But we have no guarantee of tomorrow. Why wait? Today is the day to say no more living for this life and myself and the security of the future that this world offers. But like Moses I am going to leave the pleasures and security that this world has to offer and live to set my people free... with a life of the gospel. So, I ask you again, "What else matters in life?"

For many people the word 'death' means the end. But that is the farthest from the truth. The Greek interpretation from the scriptures of death was "separation". Literally it was the word for when a boat is tied to a port and the rope comes loose and the boat slips away. That is what death truly is, just a separation for a time until judgment.

Hebrews 9: 27

We, being made into the image of God, are not supposed to suffer physical death. We were not created to die but to live forever and glorify God. But sin changed all that and from the beginning the seed of corruption and death has plagued mankind. Dealing with sin and selfishness corrects this principle. We can escape death as those in Christ never die, they just pass into God's wonderful presence.

Psalms 68: 20 'Our God is a God who saves! The Sovereign Lord rescues us from death.' It is a blessing to die and is not a curse, when we are right with God. Just the thought that God is desiring our presence excites my soul. Psalms 116: 15 "The Lord's loved ones are precious to him. Let us not be sad but rejoice when a brother or sister dies or when our days comes on us when we are not expecting it.

Death is a refuge for the righteous. Pr. 14: 32 "...but the godly have a refuge when they die." In these times of evil and with the pressure of sin and lawlessness all around us, we need a refuge. With the threats of terror and

world financial collapse at our doorstep, it is a calming balm to our soul to take refuge in eternity with Christ... Yes! with our departure from this mess! This is not a dream but a reality.

My dearest brethren I am truly looking forward to death in this flesh. Please do not misunderstand me as I am not suicidal or given over to fatalism. I am not really tired of living as it is a great blessing to live in the presence of the Lord, daily. But my heart is not here and this fleshly temple is a cage that holds me back from what I desire. "He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign Lord will wipe away all tears." Isaiah 25:8

Let me encourage all who is reading this that no believer should fear, be saddened or distraught. Walk close to the Lord! Live so that others may know this great truth that death cannot hold us and this life cannot threaten us, as we are free from the fear of death and this world.

A MAN IS NO FOOL WHO GIVES UP THIS LIFE OF NOTHING TO GAIN EVERYTHING IN ETERNITY WITH CHRIST.

The last church will not be a certain denomination or special group but a family of people who love not their life unto DEATH.

“And they have defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die.”

Rev. 12: 11

Go with courage and Christ by our side... face the future with fruitful lives and faith in our Beloved Savior.

Love,

Clark Slone

