

WHY DO WE FEAR DEATH?

DEATH IS REAL. We can't deny death. It is universal, the lot for us all. There is no escaping the reality. I suppose, there are three primary reasons for our fear of death.

We May Not Understand What Death Is

When we comprehend what death is, we do not fear it. Death wears a double face, like the mythical god, Janus. From one side death appears to be destruction. We are cut off from the living, and it is tragic. It is inglorious. But from the other side death is viewed not as destruction, but as a departure; it is, our going home, for the believer, to be forever with the Lord (1Thess. 4:17). And that is glorious!

Faced in the power of the Lord, death is merely the portal leading into eternity. Death does away with the earthly bodies of believers and ushers them into the presence of the Lord (2Cor. 5:8). Paul wrote, *"We know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens"* (2Cor. 5:1).

When we understand death the way Paul did, we are not afraid, we do not *"sorrow as others who have no hope, "and we "comfort one another"* (1Thess. 4:13, 18).

We May Be Afraid To Meet God

We may be afraid to stand before Him in judgment. It is a legitimate fear. For Heb. 9:27 lets us know us, *"It is appointed for men to die once, and then face judgment."* This fear is the Holy Spirit's way of telling sinners they need the Savior.

Christ Jesus paid the price for our sins to make us righteous before the Father. We need not be afraid to meet our Father if we know we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ's sinless perfection.

Paul's word to his young protégé Timothy, in 2 Timothy 1:7 is, *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*

We May Be Ashamed To Meet God

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28).

Some Christians are afraid to die because they have not lived a life worthy of the calling they have received (Eph. 4:1). They had received Christ Jesus as their personal Savior, but they have

not lived beneath His Lordship. By quenching the Holy Spirit, their love for Christ has become stone cold over the years. In their indifference, they have lived selfishly, prideful and rebelliously.

Tragically, they have cultured themselves to make peace with their sins, and because of their near-sightedness and blindness have forgotten that they have been cleansed from past sins (2 Peter 1:9). If they stood before God today, they would hang their heads low with much shame. They would want more time so they could set things right.

Those who have been ungodly need to turn to Him and ask forgiveness. Like the centurion of Matthew 8:8, we are all unworthy for the Lord to come under our roofs, but He is always willing to forgive us and to restore us to fellowship (1 John 1:9).

If we are ashamed to meet God, we need to put our life in order. We need to repent and obey.

We do not need be afraid of death. We can walk in the assurance that God will bring us through death to Himself. Jesus has triumphed over death with His resurrection from the dead. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?

Jesus rightly claims, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies"* (John 11:25).

Positionally, as believers we have already passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14), but one day, in the day of God's choosing, we will experientially pass over. Thanks be to God, for everlasting life!

"Death Be Not Proud, Thou Too Shalt Die"

John Donne