

7. FACING OUR OWN DEATH

The worst thing that can happen to you is not the death of a loved one, a prolonged illness, or a painful accident. The worst thing that could happen to you would be to suffer for nothing, die, and be lost forever. God's people suffer for something—for Someone—and when they die, they enter into heaven where all their investment of suffering is transformed into glory. – Warren W. Wiersbe, Why Us?

1. In the face of death we can take comfort in knowing that the grave is not the end of our existence.

** I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken for he is right beside me. No wonder my heart is filled with joy, and my mouth shouts his praises! My body rests in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your godly one to rot in the grave. You will show me the way of life granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psa. 16:8-11 NLT)*

** Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?' (Jn. 11:25-26 NASB)*

2. The length of our lives and timing of our deaths are in the hands of our sovereign Lord.

** Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (Rev. 1:17-18 NIV)*

3. As our bodies weaken and deteriorate, we can experience inner renewal as we focus on the unseen and eternal realities which are ours in Christ.

** Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 4:16-5:1 NKJV)*

** Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die. Our bodies now disappoint us, but when they are raised, they will be full of glory. They are weak now, but when they are raised, they will be full of power. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies. (1 Cor. 15:42-44 NLT)*

** We expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves, but on God who can raise the dead. (2 Cor. 1:9 NLT)*

4. Physical death ushers believers into the presence of Christ, which is a far better state.

** For to me, living is for Christ, and dying is even better. Yet if I live, that means fruitful service for Christ. I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires. Sometimes I want to live, and sometimes I long to go and be with Christ. That would be far better for me. (Phil. 1:21-23 (NLT))*

5. Christ's death on our behalf enables us to overcome the fear of dying.

** Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. (Heb. 2:14-15 NLT)*

6. When facing death we can take comfort in the knowledge that nothing, including death itself, can separate us from the love of Christ.

** Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (Psa. 23:4)*

** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35, 38-39 NIV)*

** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. (Psa. 116::15 NIV)*

7. We can face death with the assurance that Christ has prepared a special dwelling place in the heavenly dimension into which he will welcome us.

** Do not let your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn. 14:1-3 NASB)*

8. At the end of our lives we can joyfully anticipate an eternity in Christ's presence, where we will no longer experience suffering, tears, or pain.

** I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will remove*

all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever. (Rev. 21:3-4 NLT)

PRAYER

Lord, I have just been dealt a crushing blow. The words 'terminal illness' were words I had hoped never to hear. I have never felt so close to you and so far away at the same time. The prospect of entering a new incredible world where tears and pain do not exist is welcome, but the thought of leaving behind those I hold dear envelops me in sorrow. I need your grace to bear what lies ahead and to prepare myself for heaven. My loved ones need your comfort desperately. Give me an accepting, expectant heart, Lord. Help me to trust you like a child and to realize that when I see my Savior face to face, it will be the happiest day of my life.

PROMISE

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35, 38-39 NIV)