

The Death of the Righteous

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon focuses on the profound impact of the death of a righteous person, highlighting the transition to paradise, the peace, hope, happiness, and gain that come with it. It emphasizes the release from temptation, suffering, and pain, the immediate presence of God, and the pathway to receiving crowns and rewards in eternity.

Scripture: Numbers 23:10, Matthew 11:28, Psalms 37:37, Revelation 21:4, 2 Corinthians 5:8, 2 Timothy 4:7, Revelation 14:13, Philippians 1:21, Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "The Reward of Righteousness"

Description

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Transcript

I want to turn to the word of God here and I want you to find and turn to Numbers chapter 23. I've got two new series. I want to start on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

But I'm going to hold off for about three messages. I've got about three individual or four messages. I want to preach as standalone individual messages.

Then I want to come on to these two new series. One of those series is on the book of Ruth concerning providence. It's ministering to me.

I really believe it's of the Lord and we are going to do that. But here this morning, I want you to go to Numbers chapter 23. We're going to read half a verse this morning and then I'm going to preach to you verse 10.

You know, last Christmas Candice bought me six volumes of an old Puritan called John Flavel. Six solid thick volumes. When Candice died, a lady online dropped me a message concerning one of his messages or books concerning mourning or grieving.

I went on and found that in one of those volumes and began to read that. One of the things, we as a church are going through a time of mourning. I am as an individual.

And you know what, that book, it's remarkable how he begins to deal how you walk through these different things. One of the first things he says is, do not remove yourself quickly from mourning or grief or working through this. He says, let God work within us.

We pray, Lord, deliver me from sadness and grief and heaviness and tears and let me move on with my life. That's what we pray. That's what we're striving for.

Will this ever come to an end? He says, go a bit slower and ask God to work in the midst of it. What do you want to do in my heart? In the midst of it. I pray that this message will be a part of that.

My message title is The Death of the Righteous. I was going to go in a very different direction, but I really believe the Lord brought this to me. It's apt for the situation for me, for you, for us, whether online or here.

And God uses an immense event like this to work in your heart. For you to stop and consider, how are you going to end your days? What is your death going to be like? When will your death come? And I want to turn it in this direction for a moment. Whether you're saved or unsaved, wherever you are spiritually, I want to deal with this.

The death of the righteous. Reading from Numbers 23, verse 10. And I just want to read the last half of the verse.

Let me die the death of the righteous. And let my last end be like his. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for the word of God. That your word speaks into every situation of life, every season of life, every hour of life, every crisis of life. Lord God, whatever our spiritual condition, your word speaks directly into it.

Very clearly, very decisively. Lord God, there's no shadow in the words that you speak. It is absolutely clear.

It's a blinding light shining. And Father, I pray this morning, these words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. I pray as we stop and we consider the death of the righteous.

Lord God, will you help us to stop and to consider it. That the death of the righteous is not the same. It is not similar.

It is not like the death of the wicked. The death of a righteous man or a righteous woman is utterly unique. And oh God, I pray for the opening of the word of God in these moments.

That you show us what the death of the righteous is like. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

The death of the righteous. Several weeks ago, I lost my wife. She wasn't just my wife.

Not just a Christian. She was a righteous woman. And we're going to define that.

We read here in our text. Let me die the death of the righteous. And let my last end be like his.

Although the Bible is inspired by the Holy Ghost. Although these words are a prophecy directly from God. By the Holy Spirit through a human vessel.

To you and I, the church in the 21st century. Let me give you the context of Numbers 23. It was Balaam the prophet that is prophesying.

And if you know anything about Balaam the prophet. In the New Testament and Peter. He is called a false teacher.

And yet when we read Numbers 23 and the surrounding chapters. We see that Balaam was used by God. The real Holy Spirit came upon him.

He gave real prophecies. Every prophecy he made became accurately fulfilled. Not one word fell to the ground.

Everything he prophesied was direct from the Holy Spirit. He was gifted as a prophet. He had unusual experiences.

He had miraculous experiences. And he played the center stage in events with Israel in the Old Testament. He had a great reputation.

He had great notoriety. The Holy Spirit kept him back from committing some sins. The Lord sent an angel to him with a very clear message.

God got him to do certain things. This is a very gifted unusual man. Whose God's hand was upon.

And God used him. And yet we read in the Bible. That Balaam died the death of the wicked.

He died at the sword. At the age of the sword of the righteous. Here is a man who had extraordinary gifting, ministry, ability.

He was used to do unusual things. His prophecies are contained in the Bible. And they are dynamic.

He couldn't curse God's people. He had to bless God's people. And he was given unique prophecies.

That we all read. We all believe. And they played out throughout history.

What an unusual man. In the midst of one of these prophecies. He gives this comment about the nation of Israel.

Or God's people. And he actually says there. Amidst the prophesying.

Let me die the death of the righteous. Here is this gifted man. Unusual man.

Greatly used man. A man who lives in the supernatural. And you know what? In his heart as he looked at God's people.

He said, let me die the death of the righteous. The righteous are a certain kind of people. They are God's people.

They are a separated people. They are a people who walk according to the word of God. You can identify who the righteous are.

And here he is saying, let me die the death of the righteous. If you find a righteous man or woman. Their death is unique.

And that's what Balaam is saying here. He was a Gentile. Later he compromised.

Later he coveted money. Later he allowed sin to come in amongst God's people. And the Bible is very clear.

He died the death of the wicked. A greatly gifted man. A greatly used man.

A man who prophesied. And yet he died the death of the wicked. It's a tragedy that we've got a man who had all the giftings.

All the abilities. All the testimonies. He experienced a miracle no one else in the Bible or world history has ever experienced.

And yet look at this desire within his heart. Looking into his future. When things weren't so bad.

But he was greatly gifted. Let me die the death of the righteous. He was looking forward saying, on the day that death comes to me.

I sure hope that I will die the death of the righteous. But he didn't. He didn't.

He died the death of the wicked. And let my last end be like his. And so we see this false prophet compromiser.

This man who went tragically wrong at the end. Had all this unique gifting. But there's one thing he didn't have.

There's one thing he wasn't granted. The death of the righteous. The death of the righteous isn't like a wicked man.

Don't you confuse them. When I see Candace die. Her death was not that of the wicked in this city or this nation.

When a wicked man dies. Or a wicked woman dies. It is very different from the righteous.

And even this man, Balaam. Could look at the death of the righteous. And say, I have gifting.

I have ability. God uses me. I know what it is for the Holy Spirit to come on me.

An angel visited me. I saw a miracle. Where God allowed my donkey to open its mouth and speak to me.

I've experienced these things. Everyone knows about me. I've got great testimonies.

And yet there's one thing he didn't have. The death of the righteous. What is a righteous man? There's two aspects to this.

And we know the Bible teaches. First of all, a righteous man is someone who God has made righteous. To be righteous is to be in right standing with God.

Or right relationship with God. Are you in right relationship with God? To be righteous in that sense means God has taken the righteousness of Christ as a free gift. By faith.

And he has made you righteous. Have you been made righteous? Are you trying to make yourself righteous? Are you trying to be moral? Are you trying to put your relationship with God right? Or has God made you righteous through the blood of Jesus? Have you received salvation by faith alone? In Christ alone? By the blood of Jesus alone? Have you done that? Because you know what? An individual is saved by faith instantly and made righteous instantly. If you've been born again, you have been made righteous by the righteousness of Christ.

In other words, the righteousness of Christ gets put in your bank account. And you're counted as righteous as Jesus. We've taught on this before.

I wish I could preach an entire message on it. That's the first aspect. The second aspect you must never separate.

A righteous person is someone who lives righteously. Does the right thing. Lives uprightly.

Never separate these two. Some say I've been made righteous in Christ, but they don't live righteously. There's others who are living righteously, but they have never been justified by faith alone.

In Christ alone. And received the perfect righteousness of Christ. You've got to hold these both together.

Have you been justified? Have you been made righteous by the free gift of God? And then, have you gone on to live righteously before God? Doing what he would have you to do. So we see here that Balaam talks about the death of the righteous. I'm talking about a certain type of person and how they die.

Or when they die. Or what happens when they die. The righteous person is a peculiar, distinct kind of person.

I'm not talking about the mass of confusion in Christianity. I'm talking about someone who's righteous by the free gift of God. Who lives righteously in this world.

If you're not living righteously in this world. And you're not living right here now. And you know that you're doing that.

You're in trouble at the point of death. No drunkard will go to hell. No fornicator will go to heaven.

No reviler against God's people will go to heaven. No liar will go to heaven. And so we see what the scripture says.

Balaam speaks about two things concerning the righteous. Let me die the death of the righteous. And let my last end be like his.

Two different things. The death of the righteous is the day you die. Your body stops functioning.

Your spirit leaves your body. There's a certain death of a righteous man and woman. The day you die.

The day you breathe your last breath. The righteous, their death is different. The day they die is utterly different than anyone else.

But he also talks about their last end. When he says their last end, that's not their death. The word last end means their last estate or their condition after death.

So here he talks about two things. Let me die the death. On the day they die, breathe their last breath.

I desire their death. I don't desire the death of the wicked. That would be awful.

That's a tragedy. That's scary. But I want the death.

I want to breathe my last breath and be a righteous Christian. Believer in Christ on that day. But then I also desire their inheritance, their last estate.

How they continue beyond death. So I want to die like them. And I want to continue after death like the righteous man and woman.

Balaam desired these two things. And he was denied these two things. His death was the death of the wicked.

And he is still living out the torment of an eternal hell according to the Bible. He has never escaped in over 3,000 years from the consequence of sin. We know that there is a time to die.

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7.17. Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish. In other words, don't carry on in a lot of sin. Listen, why shouldst thou die before thy time? Do you realize that the Bible talks about certain people caught up in sin who die before their time? Look at this city, the young guys who have been getting killed in these car accidents.

With drugs, with suicide. We know that sin can make you die decades earlier than you would naturally die. Sin in your life can get you killed.

And you will have the death of the wicked. Or listen to 1 Corinthians 11.30. For this cause many are weak. Speaking of Christians in a real church born again.

They're going to heaven. And it says many, not few. Many in the Corinthian church are weak.

Sickly. And they sleep or they die. Can a real Christian be taken out early? Yes.

Can a real Christian that should have been here another 30 years actually be taken out? Yes. I want to tell you it can. Then in Psalm 102 verse 24.

It says, I said, Oh my God, take me not away in the midst of my days. Thy years are throughout all generations. So the Psalmist says don't cut me off in the middle of my life when there's so many more years.

So the Bible shows either through wickedness or sin. Someone can be removed early. You're really wondering where I'm going here this morning.

But it's very important what I'm just about to say now. Don't think that everyone who's removed early is out of the will of God or because of sin. It says in Isaiah 57 in verse 1. The righteous.

Notice that it's talking about the righteous man or woman. The righteous perisheth. Meaning they die.

And no man layeth it to heart or takes notice that righteous people are being removed. I mean they're living right. Their relationship with God is right.

And they're being removed. And Isaiah says nobody has taken note of this. They're not taking it serious.

That very Godly. Look at all the sinners who remain behind. Lest you think that God took Candace because of sin.

Look how many wicked people are left in the church. Look how many compromisers are left in the church and live to old age. Look how many vile sinners there are.

So be very careful what comes into your mind about someone being removed at 51. Isaiah goes on to explain this. And he says, And merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

I want you to see that a righteous, merciful person could be taken away early because of evil that is coming on the nations. And so God as an act of mercy can remove certain people. Don't ask me why certain and others not.

I don't know. You need to ask God. And he shall enter into peace.

So God at certain times. And I saw this. I saw in a particular church once where the Godly old elders.

God took them all out one by one over a period of a year. They were Godly men. Spirit filled men.

Men of fasting and prayer. Holy men. Spiritual men.

And God took that entire older generation out. I grew up in that church. I was a child.

Those older men used to bring me sweeties in their pocket. And every Sunday they'd be giving me little packets of sweeties. I watched them all go.

My granddad was one of them. And all of them were taken out. And you know what? It was actually because of what was just about to happen in that church.

Now I don't think that about Candice. I don't believe she was removed because of what's going to happen in this church. And you don't know any better than me.

But I'm telling you. God removes someone preeminently. You could be removed because you're a vile sinner.

And your sin has caught up on you. Or you could be sinning in the church. Yet a Christian.

Compromising. Lethargic. God may.

You may end up sick because of that. Or maybe you end up sick because of others in the church. That's possible as well.

We read in 2 Kings 22. Concerning King Josiah at the end of his life. It's just preparation.

I'm just laying a foundation here for a moment. And listen to what it says. The prophet speaks to King Josiah.

Behold therefore I will gather thee unto thy fathers. And thou shalt be gathered into the grave in peace. And thine eyes shall not see the evil which I will bring upon this place.

And they brought the king word again. So here's the godly King Josiah. He brought revival.

He was used by God in the nation. And God actually speaks to him through a prophet. I'm going to remove you before all this happens.

I'm going to punish the people. I'm going to bring terrible things in the land. But because I love you.

I am removing you. I'm taking you home. And your eyes.

I won't even allow you to see these heart breaking things. I so love you. I'm going to take you to myself.

So yes other godly people may walk through it. But not you Josiah. I do not want you to behold it.

Because it would so break your heart. And devastate you. What a remarkable thing here.

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 and 1. To everything there is a season. And a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born.

And a time to die. Do you know the Bible actually teaches there's a time to die. You can't escape it.

I believe when you're walking in the will of God. Doing the will of God. Loving God.

There is an appointed time. Just like your birth wasn't in your hands. You couldn't make it.

Some of those babies so kick. You go they're trying to come out early. There's some of them holding on.

They're not coming out on the day they ought to be. But I tell you they come out of that womb on the day of dawn. There's a day to be born.

There's a day to die. Then listen to what it says. A time to plant.

A time to pluck up that which is planted. Do you realize that parallels birth and death? A time to plant. A time to pluck up.

To bring in the harvest. That's what the Lord actually does. Ecclesiastes chapter 7 verse 1 says a good name is better.

Better than what? Precious ointment. And then he goes on to tell you something else that is better. Better.

Listen to what it says. Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth. I know we don't think like this.

But the Bible teaches your death day is better than your birth day. That day when you begin your journey as a child, as an infant. That's not a better day.

Your death day is the best day. It's far better than your birth day. Everyone celebrates the birth of a child.

But I want to tell you the Bible actually says the day of the death of a righteous man is far better than his birth. It is also written in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and 9. Just keep all this for a second. It says, So the Bible is clear.

You don't even have an idea. If you love God. If you're righteous.

If you've given your life to God. You can't even comprehend. You can't even imagine what God has prepared for you.

There is reward for the righteous. There is a good reason to live right in this world. You'd have to be a fool not to.

And yet the Bible says I have not seen. You can't even see what God has prepared for you. If you love Him this morning.

Your eye. You can't even imagine it in your mind's eye. You can't even picture it.

You cannot see the wonderful things. There's nothing in this world you can look at. That's going to be like looking at what God has prepared for you.

It says, Nobody knows it naturally. You could have all the talk. You could listen to everyone.

You don't even know what God has prepared for you. If you love the Lord Jesus Christ. It's beyond comprehension.

Neither has entered into the heart of man. You haven't imagined in your heart. What God has prepared.

This is so glorious. It is so wonderful. It's so beyond words.

So beyond imagination. So beyond predictability. Of what God has actually prepared for you.

Stored up for the future. Not talking about now your present Christian life. Not talking about now as you fight out or enjoy the blessings of God.

Forgiveness and mercy and grace. Oh no. There is so much stored up for you that love God.

That you haven't seen yet. And you haven't experienced yet. And you don't even fully perceive yet.

And yet it's all there. You haven't seen anything. Do you think you're blessed? Do you think you've had joy from the Holy Ghost? Do you think you've seen and heard and felt things in the Christian life.

That are unbelievable blessings? That's nothing. That's barely the down payment. Because his down payment is good.

But your ability to perceive it is very bad. I want to tell you. And so in 1 Corinthians 2 and 9. He's saying these things.

But listen to the next verse. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. So your eye can't perceive it.

Your ear can't perceive it. Your heart can't perceive it. So how are we going to know? Does that mean we don't know? Actually that's not true.

It says God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. Do you know the Holy Spirit wants you to know. Certain things that he has prepared for the righteous man and woman.

How does the Spirit reveal them? In a dream? In a vision? In a word of prophecy? In an open vision of the heavens? The Holy Spirit gave us this book. If you neglect this. Why would he give you a dream, a vision

or a prophecy? In fact it would destroy you.

Those people who are always getting dreams, visions, prophecies. They don't even know where to find basic scriptures in the Bible. And if you find someone who has all these dreams, words, everything.

And they're not in the word of God. It means one of two things. Either they're very young in their faith with no experience.

Or they're very deceived. They're deceived by their own flesh. Because the real Holy Spirit brings you to the written scriptures.

And so in this book there is revealed Genesis to Revelation. Many glimpses into what is prepared. And you will never experience it until the day of your death.

Do you realize there are thousands of things stored in this book. Which the Holy Spirit reveals little glimpses of. And you cannot see it until the day you die.

You cannot enter into it fully until the day you die. You cannot enjoy it. You cannot receive it.

You won't even imagine it. You won't even fully perceive it. Until that day.

Because you know what. It's not for today. It's not for this life.

It's not for the flesh. But it's for that hour to come. It says in Matthew 25, 34.

Jesus speaking. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand. Come ye blessed of my father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. It was prepared for you. An entire functioning kingdom.

And on that day you better not be on the left side. You go to hell. It's torment.

It's loss. But if you're on the right side. He says come thou blessed.

You're very happy. What a day. Can you imagine our happiness.

As the Lord Jesus says come. Come enter in. Oh I know your life was hard.

I know the trials you fought. But you know what. Enter into a kingdom.

And I was preparing it from the foundations of the earth. The creation of all things. And you know what.

I had you in mind. I had you in my heart. I was preparing this.

You hadn't even been born again. You hadn't even been born yet. You hadn't even been saved yet.

And yet I was preparing it for you very specifically. So I've laid the foundation. Are you ready saints.

I've got ten points. I'm going to be very quick. And I've got ten clear points.

That I want to give you. On the death of the righteous. I'm barely touching on them.

I'm just bringing you in. I want you to think of Candice. Candice has now entered into something you and I have not entered into.

I long for the hour now. I want to tell you over these weeks. I've longed for this.

Do you realise for several weeks. When she died. The thought of heaven didn't bring me comfort.

I couldn't sit down and think. Well she's there with the Lord. Didn't bring me comfort.

And that disturbed me. And when I'm a preacher I believe this. When I've seen friends die.

And my dad die. And my granddad die. It brought me great comfort.

But not this. My loss is too personal. Too great.

Thinking of where she is now. Doesn't bring me comfort. My loss is overwhelming.

I have lost her. I know what she has gained. But it's my loss.

And so even these thoughts of heaven. Brought no comfort to me whatsoever. So I'm just easing into this now.

I'm beginning to look. And I tell you what. She's entered into something.

I long for. And I desire. Let me give you these 10 points.

As we very briefly go through this. And I want you to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. I know we're sorrowing.

And you ought to sorrow. And you ought to grieve. And I ought to weep my tears.

And I ought to carry that burden. But do you know what? We do not sorrow. We do sorrow.

We do not sorrow. As the world sorrows. The sting of death is removed.

But death is an enemy. It's not my friend. It hasn't acted like a friend.

It's broken up my marriage. Death has done that. It stole my wife from our house.

Death is an enemy. It's the last enemy. But what Jesus done was he removed the sting of it.

We still grieve. We still mourn. We're still sad.

We're still heavy in heart. And we ought to be. Unless you're very strange.

But do you know what? There's got to come the encouragement of the Holy Spirit. We've got to be taught by the Holy Spirit. Because see, naturally, with my hearing and my seeing and my heart, I can't perceive these things.

But the Holy Spirit has to teach us from the Word of God and begin opening up. Faith cometh by hearing. We begin to hear the Word of God.

We believe it. Our eyes begin to get illuminated. Our ears begin to open up.

Our heart begins to perceive. And so we begin to look at this. My ten points.

Number one, the death of the righteous, what is it? It is peace. That's the first thing I want you to see. The death of a righteous man or woman, the day of their death is peace.

It says in Psalm 37, verse 37, Mark, the perfect man, or mature godly man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. In other words, their demise, their death, the end is peace. Look at what the Word of God says.

A real righteous upright Christian. Oh, they might have been sick. They could have been in pain.

They might have been martyred for their faith. They might have had terrible trials in life. But the day of their death is peace.

If you study a real Christian, you're going to see there's peace at the end. Not fear, not torment. There's going to be peace at the end of their journey.

The Bible says we ought to look at those who have already died. We ought to study their life. We ought to consider the end of their journey in order to help us.

In Luke, chapter 229, it says, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. This was old Simeon. If you remember, remember when Mary and Joseph, they brought baby Jesus into the temple to be dedicated? And this old priest of God, this old man of God, it says he came in by the Spirit of God.

Can you imagine being an old man in God's house and still every time you enter the door, you never know what day it's going to be. And you're coming by the Spirit of God. It's terrible when we lose that in the house of God.

When I walk to God's house and I'm coming, what are you doing, coming to a meeting? Are you coming to meet with God? Are you being led by the Spirit of God into the house of God? Well, Simeon was. And he said as soon as he looked at this baby, he instantly knew. The Holy Spirit revealed him.

This is the Messiah. This is the child. All these years you've dedicated thousands and thousands and thousands of babies.

Lots of young couples come in that door. You never thought that before. But here for the first time, he says, Now, Lord, let us throw thy servant apart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. God kept him alive. You know on that day he says, Okay, Lord, you can take me now.

You know what, Lord? I knew. You revealed to me. Maybe as a young boy.

Maybe as a teenager. Maybe in his 20s. Lord says, You're not going to die until you see my salvation.

Until you see the Lord's Messiah. Can you imagine sitting with that promise? Lord, you're not going to take me out of here until I see the salvation of the Lord. I actually believe.

He said, Okay, Lord, I'm ready to go. You fulfilled your will. And you know what? What peace? He said, I'm at peace now.

You know all these years, sometimes I prayed and thought, Lord, you haven't answered that prayer. You haven't answered that promise. Lord, I'm still waiting.

I'm getting very old. I don't move as fast. My eyes aren't as good.

I hope my eyes are going to be good enough to see this baby. And on that day he said, Oh, wonderful Lord. I'm ready to go home now.

You've been so good that before I die, I have seen redemption in this little baby. And so in this proverb, you see the wicked's death and the righteous death. The wicked gets driven away.

Look what the wicked man's death is talked about. He's getting driven away. Driven away from what he enjoys.

Driven away from holding on to this life. Driven away from any blessing and any goodness. You know what? God drives him away.

There is a day appointed for a wicked man to die. And what the Bible says, it is like being driven away from all you enjoy. All you have.

All you've ever done. You lose it all. You're driven away by God's hand.

But what's the righteous man? It says, but the righteous has hope in his death. You're not being driven away. The death of a righteous man is filled with hope.

Hope is expectation. Hope is a future. Hope has joy in it.

And you know what? The death of a righteous man, within it there is real hope. There's a future. There's an expectation.

There's more. Aren't you glad it's better than here? Maybe some of you, your life is so wonderful here that you just want to abide in this flesh. I want to tell you, I'm getting very tired of this world.

Over the past two or three years, many Christians worldwide, for the first time in my lifetime, they're beginning to say, I'm tired of this world. This world is not my own. Why weren't you saying that before? You know what? The heat is going up.

Things are getting tighter. You're getting pushed out. You're seeing real Christians going, this is not my home.

Praise God. Look up your redemption drawth now. But do you know what? The death of the righteous has real hope.

It has peace. It has hope. Thirdly, it is precious in the sight of the Lord.

It says in Psalm 116.15, The wicked aren't like that. God doesn't desire the death of any wicked. He doesn't desire it.

He actually pleads with the sinner. You know what? If you're wicked and you're going to die, that's a terrible death. But the Lord says of a righteous man and woman, it is precious.

The word precious means very valuable, of great worth, to be noted, of great importance. When a real Christian reaches their death day, God looks down on that person and says, this death, not just the person, but the hour of their death, is very precious. In other words, it is very valuable.

You know why? He is gaining one of the saints, who is just about to look in his face, for the very first time. They've lived by faith. They've fought against sin.

They come out from the world. They believed his word, and yet had never seen his face. Now he says, they are about to be presented to me.

And so the Bible says, the death of a righteous man is precious, or very valuable. Fourth of all, it is happy for the individual. Not happy for the husband left behind, not at all.

It's the worst day of my life. But it's happy for the individual, who dies righteous. Revelation 14, 13, it says, blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord.

The word blessed there means, happy, or exceedingly happy. You're so happy, you can clap your hands. You're so happy, you feel like you want to dance.

And so we see, it's happy for a real righteous man. When you reach the day of your death, the Bible clearly says, blessed, happy, are those who die in the Lord. On the day you die in the Lord, you're going to be a very happy man, and woman.

I don't care how you leave this life. You could be sad. You could be grieving.

You could be upset. You could be tempted on every hand. But if you're righteous, the day you die, you're going to be exceedingly happy, like you've never been in your entire lifetime.

I believe Candice entered into this. It doesn't help me. I was exceedingly sad.

I'm still exceedingly sad. Her happiness does not help me at this point. Maybe it will come as the days go by.

But at this point, I'm sad. I have lost. But I know according to the word, she entered immediately.

I watched her depart this life, and immediately she was exceedingly happy in the very presence of God. It also says in Revelation 20 and 6, blessed, that same word, happy. Blessed and happy is he that has part in the first resurrection.

On such, the second death has no power. Do you realize that person enters and goes, the second death, hell, judgment, the fear of being lost, will never have power on me. Someone who dies in Christ is exceedingly happy.

The Psalm says in 16 verse 11, thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand, there are pleasures forevermore.

We think this is just a spiritual thing for you on a Sunday morning. Oh, I'm rejoicing in the Lord. Therefore, I can be exceedingly glad.

Oh, no. This is literally for a person who departs into the presence of God. In thy presence is fullness of joy.

You know, I saw kind of happy, rejoicing, praising God. So did you. That's nothing.

Do you realize in the presence of God is fullness of joy? I mean fullness, complete, perfect, unhindered, no shadows, no intervention. It is fullness of joy that never diminishes. And at the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are pleasures forevermore that never diminish.

They don't ebb and flow. You never become blind to them. Pleasure, spiritual pleasure in the presence of God.

And so your death day becomes your happiest day that you've ever had. You don't know what happiness is in this church. You don't know what real joy is.

You don't know what exceeding, rejoicing in the presence of God is. We get little taste of it, thank God. We feel it at times and go, isn't this wonderful how we're praising God.

Number five, it is gain. The death of a righteous person is gain. Philippians 1.21 For to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Do you think of death as gaining something? You know what we think of death? We feel like we've lost. I feel like I've lost. But you're seeing it from your perspective.

I have lost, Candice. I have lost the fellowship, the communion, the time being together, laughing together, talking together, the wisdom. I've lost.

But not the person who dies. To die for a Christian is gain. Candice gained.

I lost. She gained. She gained everything.

For her to live was Christ. That's what her life was. But to actually die, she gained something by that.

What does it mean to gain? You receive something you've never had before. Do you realize how much she's gained? I've lost an awful lot. But my loss is small compared to what she has gained.

She gained things on the 7th of August that her entire Christian life wouldn't compare with. I can't even number to you or preach to you all of the things she gained on that day. She actually gained much.

It also says in Philippians 1.23 For I am in a straight This is Paul talking. I'm in a straight that twist two things. I'm caught between two desires.

A desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better or to stay with you bunch. That's a hard choice. Paul was a very sound Christian.

And as he looked at all the churches and he waited up and went Preaching's important. Evangelism's important. Helping you's important.

Starting the Son's service is important. But to be with Christ I've got to weigh these two things up and decide do I want to be with you bunch or do I want to be with Christ? Boy, you're in danger of losing this. I want to tell you.

And yet Paul was saying there is a desire. He says I want to be here for your good not my good. I'm not staying here for my good.

Since I want to join Candice I want to join my Lord. I mean it. I've never been suicidal.

I've never had a death wish. Not for one day in my entire life. But over these weeks I said Lord take me.

Lord take me soon. But it's more profitable for you. Not for me.

Don't think I'm benefiting by being around you bunch rather than being with the Lord. You're not that great I want to tell you. But for your sakes I want to be here if I can help you.

And so the day of death is a game. It is peace. It is hope.

It is precious. It is happy. It is gain.

Number six. It is a rest from labors. Says in Revelation 14 13 again.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me. Right. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.

Yea saith the Spirit. So the Holy Spirit comes in and he adds something to this. What does he add? That they may rest.

Why is it so happy? Why is the day of your death as a righteous person why is it so happy? Because you rest from your labors and their works do follow them. What are your labors? You know the word labor there means to labor and serve God to the point of tiredness and exhaustion. You know at times when I'm doing the will of God I'm up late and I'm up early and I'm tired.

There's times when I'm studying and my eyes are going and my body's drooping and I maybe feel a bit sickish and I go I could just spend a day in bed on a Saturday and yet I go stay with the word of God pray through labor. I want to tell you there's a labor that's only a small part. Maybe it's praying.

If you don't know what it is to labor for the Lord you need to learn it. I want to tell you when you give your best I can't be bothered standing. I can't be bothered clapping.

I can't be bothered preparing for a service. I can't be bothered. That's a tragedy.

You know what the Bible says is that our death day is an end to our labors. Do you know a day is coming when you'll not pray anymore. You won't have the privilege to pray.

Prayers for this life not for the day to come not for heaven. You don't go to heaven and carry on your priestly prayer ministry. It stops.

All the praying you're going to do is now. And you go that's not fair. I've got the flesh and the world and busyness and problems and maybe my wife or my husband or this person.

It's the hardest time. Yes I know. You couldn't pray before and you won't pray after.

It's right now. That's when you're going to pray. But do you know what your death day is a rest from your labors.

The word means to labor to the point of exhaustion. In Revelation 2 and 2 Jesus says to the church I know thy works things you're doing and thy labor how you do it to the point of tiredness and exhaustion and thy

patience. So notice the Lord looks down on a church and he's looking I know all your works I know your labor I know your patience I'm actually watching it.

God takes note of Christians who labor who serve well who run hard who work hard for the kingdom of God. Do you know you lose this and you're not working hard for God. Why not? You'll work hard for maybe a marriage.

You'll work hard for your house. You'll work hard for your job. Don't you know there's a working hard in the kingdom of God? What are you doing? Being lazy? Being slack? Leaving it to everyone else? You know when we used to in the army we'd carry things and you got guys carrying.

You know it was very hard to see someone not carry something. I went and inserted the eight men carrying Candice's coffin. I didn't judge it well.

I put Jason just in front of me on my side. And he was the only one that was just shorter than the others. And I went he's not carrying this burden on that coffin.

There was nothing against him. I chose wrong. I should have had someone with shoulders like his.

But do you know what in the church everyone else feels it. If you have most of the church not laboring others feel it. You know what Candice labored over this church.

I watched her labor to the point of tiredness. I watched how many things she'd done. She'd done things behind the scenes that left her in tears.

I'd walk in the room go what's wrong? And she'd begin to share something for this church. I've seen her heartbreaks her prayers her wrestling for you. For you sitting in this room.

I saw the times she was wrestling to get a word from the Lord. Or to find the scripture. Or to get wisdom.

I saw her praying for a breakthrough in your life. I saw the times she cried because of disappointments. And this is only one small sphere.

I watched that ministry in many different environments. There is a labor to the point of exhaustion. And you know what? It's meant to be like that in the Christian life.

There's labor that aren't very joyous. There's serving God that doesn't necessarily make you happy. It's for your blessing.

It's for someone else's blessing. But do you know what the Lord says? Arrest from labor. When Candice died you're not going to be encouraging people anymore.

You're not going to be in this piano anymore. You're not going to be in the prayer meeting anymore. You're not going to be at home wrestling over things anymore.

You're not going to wake up at two in the morning thinking about people anymore. Candice your labor is over. I watched it the 16 years.

Her labor her service. Aren't you glad she ran well and served God well? Imagine if she thought I'm going to live to 80. I'm going to live to 70.

I've got all these decades ahead of me. I mean man I've got 20 years ahead of me at least. Oh no.

You went home at 51 years old. And you know what? Your labor's come to an end. Don't waste your days.

You don't know how long you've got. What if God gave you one more year and none of us know. One more year you've got one more year to labor for God.

What would you do? If you knew you've only got one more year and then you enter into an eternal reward and rest from all of your labors. What would you do? I think a lot of people would say I would do this but they would never do it. You know at Candice's funeral there was a lady come in here with tight ears apologizing to me saying Candice wrote to me and spoke to me and was good to me and I should have been here in the maintenance and I wasn't.

But she said from Sunday I'll be in this church. I haven't seen her the past seven weeks. Good intentions and it says in their works do follow them.

Do you realize Candice's works everything she does follows her into eternity. The reward the blessing the result. Number seven it is a release from temptation suffering and pain.

The day of death listen Revelation 21 and 4 and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there should be no more death. Aren't you glad? Neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away. On the day of death you're released from you'll never get tempted again.

Who likes being tempted? I don't. It's a burden it's a pain it's a grievance. When I failed him it breaks my heart.

I've wept tears. I've said oh God forgive me for grieving your Holy Spirit. When I sinned against you it grieves me that I've ever sinned against this Holy God.

But there's a day coming I'll never sin again. There's a day coming I'll never suffer again. I won't be hurt again.

There'll be no physical pain no emotional pain no mental pain. You know in this life you may have to wrestle against pain in some dimension. You're not excluded from pain.

My heart has hurt badly not physically. I've had toothache that hurt badly. But I want to tell you my soul has been in terrible pain because the situations I've walked through.

You know what? Christ is going to wipe away all the tears. He is going to say no more death no more pain no more sorrow. What a day! Revelation 7, 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Number 8 It is the path to paradise. What is the death of the righteous? The pathway to paradise. You fear death.

You don't want to think about your death. You see it as a tragedy. You see it as a crisis.

You know what? Your death if you're righteous is the pathway the only way. You've got to go through that way to get to paradise. Unless the Lord comes.

So far all but two men had to go the way of death. One went off in a fiery chariot. The one just walked with the Lord all the way home.

The Lord said You know what? We've been out walking late tonight. It's closer to my place than your place. Just come on home with me.

And Enoch said Yes sir. Just kept on walking with the Lord. Elijah went in that fiery chariot.

But do you know what? Death for most believers apart from the last generation Death is the means to paradise. It opens the door. It is the pathway.

You can't avoid death. I know it's an enemy. I know it's terrible.

A good friend of this church he once said He says I don't fear death. I just fear how I get there. Or what brings me to the day of death.

That's what I fear. That's a wise man. It says in Luke 23, 43 And Jesus said unto the dying thief Verily, verily, I say unto thee Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Immediately. This dying thief who had repented on the cross He can't put anything right. He's never going to get off that cross.

Jesus assures him Today you're going to enter into paradise. Do you know we always picture the Garden of Eden as paradise in the Old Testament. That was paradise on earth.

All the blessings. No sin. No sickness.

No death. All the trees. All the animals.

No animals that will bite you. No snakes that will rear their heads. That was paradise in a physical sense.

But the Christian is looking for paradise. You know what? This is not paradise for me. It never has been.

I have not seen paradise on this earth. I've seen beautiful gardens. I've been blessed.

I've enjoyed food. I've enjoyed friends. This is not paradise.

I'm at war in this world. We are in a ferocious battle and warfare. But do you know what? There's only one way I'm going to see paradise.

You know Candace entered into paradise. Her luxurious I tell you our place, our little house, our little shed doesn't look like anything compared to that. When you enter into the presence of God you enter into paradise.

Everything without limitation for you on that day. The paradise of God is real. Paul writing in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 and 4 he says how that he had been caught up into paradise.

And he also calls it the third heaven. The first heaven is our atmosphere. The second heaven is where all the planets are.

The third heaven is God's heaven where his throne dwells. And Paul says I was caught up into paradise. That's where the third heaven is.

Heaven is where paradise is. You can't even find paradise. If you look for it in this world you're an absolute fool.

Paradise is not here on this earth. It's not here. You cannot go to it.

There's no address. It can only be accessed by death. If you die today and you're righteous you go right into paradise.

Paul hadn't been caught up into paradise. Listen to what he says. And this is a man who wrote 14 books of the New Testament.

And he says I heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. You know when Paul got caught up to the third heaven you know all these guys on charisma media and say I've been in heaven and I played with Jesus in the river and Jesus played with me and took me on his knee. Crackpots.

Do you know what Paul the apostle the greatest apostle actually says here. I was not allowed to even tell you things I seen and heard. I literally got caught up in the third heaven.

And you know what I'm not going to tell you. But all these guys say his hair was pink and all the rest. I tell you it's so dangerous.

Paul puts a restriction over it and yet he was there in paradise. He says I can't even begin to tell you what paradise is like. Do you realize what's awaiting you that you do not have.

You may have fears about the end of your life. You may have fears about loss. You may have fears about death.

I understand that. We're all the same. You know in Pilgrim's Progress I'm glad John Bunyan such a great man of God.

And as he wrote that story remember Pilgrim with his armor and he gets to the very last battle. It's the river of death. And he starts wading across and all of a sudden right at the end of his journey right after all his life's battles and reaching the end and he can see celestial city paradise in the distance.

And as he's going across he loses his grip and he begins to drown and he begins to go under. His last fight. You know you could get to your last fight and it'd be a sore battle.

Thomas Walsh had a thing. Thomas Walsh the great preacher Methodist preacher from this city. Eight years a Christian nine years a Christian died 28 years old.

Don't read the end of his life unless you're ready for it. He ruined his body with labors persecution being beaten up. He was the greatest soul winner in Ireland.

But you know what when he got to his end it was a bed of affliction. And he's crying out to God I will tell you here now what he went through in his last days as people had a lesson to him crying out as he went through terrible days before he seen the Lord. Number nine it is the door to the immediate presence of God.

2 Corinthians 5 and 6 Therefore we always are confident knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. Do you realize that's your Christian life? You go the Lord's with me his spirit

indwells me I have fellowship with Christ. Do you know you're absent from the Lord? The Bible says so.

I know he's with you I know he indwells you but I'm talking about literally in the presence of God. Do you know where Jesus Christ is right now? Oh yes he lives in your heart by faith he dwells in you by faith he walks in the isle of the churches but he's not literally here he's not physically here he does have a resurrection body he is in heaven and you know what you're absent from him he speaks to you he helps you he answers your prayers he dwells in your heart but you're absent all of you are absent from the Lord you're separated from the Lord you can never enjoy direct access to the Lord while you're in this body only death will bring that the death of the righteous removes you from this absence it's the end of absence and what does he go on to say he says whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord and then he says in verse 8 we are confident I say and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present from the Lord when you're absent from the body you're immediately present with the Lord you're absent right now from the Lord I'm sorry to tell you that let me tell you of something you do not have that Candice has right now I know she has it oh yes abundant joy she has paradise but she also has the Lord she lost me and gained the Lord oh she had the Lord in her heart she had the Lord in her life she had the Lord in her focus she lived for Christ but she now has the Lord direct access to him do you realise that she's gazing on the Lord she's speaking to the Lord she's here in the Lord she's in the presence of the Lord what she lost here what I've lost she also lost her absence from the Lord and gained direct access into the presence of the Lord the apostle says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord Paul also says for I am in a straight betwixt two to depart I desire to depart and to be with Christ which is better you know being with Christ is better than being here you've got to be here don't be suicidal don't have a death wish you've got to live your Christian life the better you live this Christian life the better you are to face your death but there is a desire in my heart I long to depart I long to be with the Lord Jesus Christ and on the day I see my saviour I'm going to see my beloved Candice again tenth and finally you've been very good just bearing with me here this morning but number ten as we close this message my message this morning the death of the righteous tenth and finally the death of the righteous leads to crowns and rewards Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4 and 6 he says for I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand certain Christians know when the hour is near not all Christians not all good Christians but there are certain Christians somehow God reveals to them this is it either by circumstances he's in a prison cell he's going to be martyred the church is being persecuted there's no way unless an angel comes and obviously he didn't think an angel was coming he's going I'm about to die and I'm pretty glad all my preaching's over all my ministry's over I'm very shortly within days I'm going to see the king I'm going to see the king find myself the other day singing that song I'm going to see the king do we sing it here? we ought to sing it soaps going to learn it when I start singing it round the house we need to be singing this song I just walk through my house back and forth doing things and I'm singing I'm going to see the king saints of God there is a time of departure Peter was the same he also knew his end was near and 2 Peter's last letter he's going I'm getting out of here as well Peter's going Paul's going come back Peter come back Paul no way we're out of here never to return again we're gone listen to what he says I have fought a good fight I have finished my course I have kept the faith I stood with a sinner the other day a week ago and they teared up and said who chose that scripture for Candace I said which scripture the one about fighting oh this one I have fought a good fight I have finished my course I have kept the faith yes that one she says I never heard a scripture said there's that in the bible I never heard a scripture more applicable or appropriate for anyone than Candace she says that was her wasn't it I said yes that's why we wrote that scripture then Paul says I have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to me at that day and not to me only but unto all them that love is appearing do you realise that death is the means of entering our reward

Paul said there's a crown laid up I don't get it here it's for my neighbours here I fought hard battles it's been a long battle heart breaking I've had many sorrows but I can see that crown just over the horizon and you know what I'm about to face my death but I'm not sad about that death I'm not crying for my own loss because I'm going to gain everything I'm going to gain the Lord and joy and happiness and paradise I'm going to gain being with all the saints of all the ages can you imagine entering in and you go there's Abraham there's Moses there's my grandad and you go do you know what everyone has asked me through the years do you think we know people in heaven of course we do say how is that possible remember when Moses and Elijah came down in the mouth of transfiguration with Jesus and Peter and the other two are there and they see him Peter says look Moses and Elijah had he seen Moses how did he know it was Moses had he ever seen a picture of Elijah no so how can he look and say with Jesus is Moses and Elijah this is a man who hasn't died yet and he can look at this and say that's Moses that's Elijah do you know what in the glorified state you know everyone you're going to know all the great Christians all the obscure ones you never know you'll be going up and got up to something no you're Sandra aren't you you lived in the 6th century you lived for God you raised 5 children Godly and protected them how do you know me I don't know we just all know this saints of God when we enter into this it is glorious and you know what death is an enemy and we've got sore trials but maybe the Holy Spirit would open this up you know what I really believe over these few weeks the Lord is using this in my life for me to get ready now I've ran a long journey I've fought so many battles when we started this church I said my back is covered in scars boy it's been constant warfare in the trenches on the front line and do you know what with watching my wife die breathe her last breath hardest thing in all my life to see I now go Lord use this in my life because for some reason you've left me here she couldn't have handled this without me I wouldn't want her to be here without me I'm glad the Lord took her first I don't know how long I've got neither do you but I want to run well finish well and she finished well I'm in awe of how she ran this race the person I knew three years ago was not the person who I watched in that last week in a three year period during this trial she got the victory overcame, matured become more spiritual more clear, more confident more faith filled than I'd ever watched her in the previous 14 years she began to shine amidst her greatest hardest trial that tested her to the core and now I go you and I don't know what beholds us in these days left between now and going to be with the Lord or the Lord coming for us whichever it may be this is our last race the last 100 metres when I was in the army we'd do a 7 mile run or a 3 mile run and then you get to them and that last 100 metres it's going to be your fastest that's what you save all of your energy for and go I can see the finish line let's run this well church we've lost someone and maybe amidst your sorrow for losing her maybe you've got to be careful just careful than going why Lord, why did this happen look what I've lost maybe the Lord's being merciful and saying you know what you now have to get ready because you're going to have one hour to run this race and finish and I've made you face death and wake up and it's not about why Lord you know what it is it's about what are you going to do now and how are you going to live your final days out and when you run like Candice and when you finish like Candice please stand with me Lord Jesus thank you we praise you we love you father it's only by your grace that we stand and run and have our being we know how frail we are, how weak we are how prone to think we are how tired, how weary we get Lord God we know all of these things and Lord God we need your sovereign mighty grace Lord God we need your power to be able to stand and father I pray Lord God use this death of our precious sister Candice Lord God use it in all of our lives Lord God to consider to number our days to consider our own end Lord God to study the end of her life to look at her faith and her love and her courage and Lord God to be stirred Father she has gained everything by this we have lost so much I pray that we gain an awareness of eternity of the shortness of time the brevity of life and the importance of living well for the Lord Jesus Christ help us by your grace in Jesus mighty name

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