

Death and Dying

Introduction

- My earthly father was silent with me on the subject of **Sex** and **Sexuality**. He was also silent on the subject of **Death** and **Dying**.
- When I was a young boy I would tidy mum and dad's bedroom. Two particular photos in Mum and Dad's bedroom left me sad about ageing.
- Ignorance about death had me growing up with a fear of dying ...
 - I didn't like the thought of death one bit...
 - At the time, it didn't make sense to me!
- The reality of life on earth is that death does not discriminate ... but constantly stalks every person of all ages--here, there, and everywhere!
- Early in life, I asked myself, why bother being born—why bother working hard and striving to hold on to life if death is an appointment none of us can avoid—life is meaningless--life is hopeless!
- Here are some questions people **think** about concerning death, but **don't talk about**:
 - What is death?
 - Can we avoid death?
 - When will it happen?
 - What happens after we die?
 - Is there something or nothing?
 - If there is something—is it good or is it bad?
 - Is there hope for our state of hopelessness?

Friends, while **my earthly father** was silent with me concerning these questions... **my Heavenly Father**, the Author and Finisher of life was not/is not!

From the Bible we can know everything we need to know about death and dying... the what, when, who, why and how. I have twelve things to share with you about death and dying...

1. God **first** created a perfect home for us to live in (Gen. 1:1-25), then
2. God created us... in his own image (Gen. 1:27)

The Book of Genesis says: “Then the *LORD* God **formed** the man from the dust of the ground. He **breathed** the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.” (2:7).

Friends, we were created to live... and never die!

So, what changed this arrangement?

3. After God created Adam... Genesis tells us... “the *LORD* God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden, he placed **the tree of life** and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**” (2:8-9).

4. Then... “The *LORD* God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the *LORD* God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, **you are sure to die.**” (2:15-17).

After God had created Eve...

5. Satan popped his head into this idyllic garden setting and tempted Eve to taste the fruit of the forbidden tree that looked beautiful.

Genesis says... “So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. **At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness.** So, they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.” (3:6b-7).

Friends, death and dying came through just one simple act of disobedience to God!

6. What does the NT say about this one act of disobedience?

Romans says... “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard... and **the wages of sin is death.**” (3:23; 6:23a).

**Death is what each of us deserves... however, there is hope...
Jesus is our hope!**

7. Hebrews, Romans, and First Peter instruct believers...

○ “Remain confident in your **hope** in Christ.” (Rom. 3:6).

- *“When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and **died for us sinners.**” (Rom. 5:6).*
- *“The free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23).*
- *“Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.” (1 Pet. 3:18).*

8. Friends, we can trust Jesus with our lives! Two reasons why...

Firstly, Jesus has **authority** over death!

Mark recorded this incident concerning a man named Jairus... Mark said *“...messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, “Your daughter is dead. There’s no use troubling the Teacher now.”*

*But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, “**Don’t be afraid. Just have faith.**”*

*Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn’t let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. He went inside and asked, “Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn’t **dead**; she’s only **asleep**.”*

The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl’s father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. Holding her hand, he said to her, “Talitha kum,” which means “Little girl, get up!” And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed.” (5:35-42).

NOTE 1: The girl was *resuscitated*, not resurrected!

NOTE 2: There are two other recorded cases... Lazarus had been dead for four days!

Secondly, Jesus **conquered** death!

The Apostle Paul said... *“For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:56-57).*

*“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. **Neither death** nor life, **neither** angels nor demons, **neither** our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.” (Rom. 8:38).*

9. The Book of First John reveals the antidote to death

The apostle John says, “*And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.*” (5:11-13).

10. A message from the grave

In 1992, I walked through an Anglican Church cemetery in a small country town in NSW to process in my mind some things that were troubling me. I noticed a particular tombstone of a young boy, named, Alexander John Moffat. He died on January 31, 1893 at the age of 4 ½. The following words were etched in stone above his grave ...

*Above the lonely grave we kneel;
With hearts all crushed and sore;
While through the gloom those sweet words steal;
NOT LOST BUT GONE BEFORE!*

11. Summary

First Thessalonians, Ch 4 emphasises “Victory and Hope in the face of death.” Verses 16 and 17 contain four ‘sorrow defeating’ facts:

- 1) Our **Hope** and **Saviour** Jesus Christ will **RETURN** (v. 16a)
- 2) All believers who are **asleep** will be **RESURRECTED** (v. 16b)
- 3) All believers who are **alive** will be **RAPTURED** (v. 17a)
- 4) All believers, **asleep** and **alive**, will be **REUNITED...forever!** (v. 17b)

Now, that’s what we need to take hold of at this time... truth that gives us confidence and strengthens our walk through death’s door.

12. Conclusion - A word of wisdom from Solomon...

“... the day you die is better than the day you are born. Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties. After all, everyone dies—so the living should take this to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us. A wise person thinks a lot about death, while a fool thinks only about having a good time.” (Ecc. 7:1b-4).

Through Jesus, death is not the end, but the beginning of eternal life!