

How to Face Death in Christ Jesus

Fred R. Coulter—November 19, 2011

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. Sometimes you change your sermon and it turns out that God is inspiring that to be done and you don't know anything about it until it's time to give it. Last night we had our granddaughter born and Rachelle named her Jane Claire Alexander. And it sounds like she was born right in the elite of New York, with that name, but she's from Texas. Then I had someone write me a letter and say, 'I'm know I'm going to be facing death soon, what do I do?' Then come into church this afternoon and found out that one of our members died last night.

So last night someone was born and someone died. Let's go to Ecclesiastes 3 because we're going to talk about how do we prepare for death. And really when you do it, other than the great treasures you have left that you better have them properly dispersed—I'm joking, of course—but we're going to see it has all to do with your relationship with God and your understanding of the Word of God.

A lot of people in the world are frightened of death, because when they go to church they hear about you're either going to go to heaven or you're going to go to hell and burn forever. And then you have the Protestants who claim to have so much grace and so much love, they say, 'Well, if you don't accept Jesus now, you're going to burn in hell forever. And that's just the way it is.' We know better than that!

But here when we look at this, we have to approach it from God's point of view. Because God is always causing new people to be born and older people to die. There are some who die premature, because of their actions. There are some who die, not quite so old, because they don't take care of themselves, or have unknown conditions. There are people who die in accidents and floods and tornadoes, and hurricanes, and airplane crashes and sinking ships and automobiles. So, there's this constant going on of birth and death in the world twenty-four/seven.

Here we find the reality of life, which is where we'll begin, right here in Ecclesiastes 3:1: "To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens." *God has a purpose for us!* He says He will complete His purpose for us and He guarantees that He will, likewise with life. When we're kids growing up, we look at all of these older people—and little kids can never picture their moms and dads as being little kids one day unless you have a photo album and you show them—'Is that you, Dad? Is that you, Mom?'

Oh, well, he takes after Uncle So-and-So. Look, she looks just her mother. And that is true.

So Solomon was inspired to write, v 2: "A time to be born, and a time to die..." How that works out is different in everyone's life. And yet, no one wants to die. When you're young, that thought is nowhere around. When little kids go to a funeral and they hear a minister preach, 'Aunt Bessie's up in heaven right now,' and the four-year-old is there saying, 'Mom, I see Aunt Bessie up there in the front, how could she be in heaven?' *Shhhh!*

Some of those things are hard for kids to understand. It's a great shock when you're in middle school or high school that someone dies. Most of that's generally because of accidents or stupidity or car wrecks, or whatever; nowadays even drugs. So the time that you die is also contingent upon some of the choices that you make.

"...a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away" (vs 2-6).

Throwing away is hard for some people. You look at some of these programs they have now, *Hoarders*, you can't even walk into the house. Thankfully Dolores is very neat and she has a place for everything. And she's figured a way how to throw things away and she's trying to convince me with some of my junk. She has this: To decide what to keep or throw away: Is it a friend? *You keep it!* Is it an acquaintance? *Evaluate it!* Is it an enemy? *Get rid of it!* So, that's how she decides to throw away. And she goes through and keeps everything pretty well clean. I have to face that here pretty quick myself with some things that I have to do.

Verse 7: "A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. What profit does he have who works in that in which he labors?" (vs 7-9). In other words, you have your whole life long. All of us work.

I've worked since I was eight years old. Start out milking cows, taking care of two cows, cleaning the barn, taking care of the chickens and horses, things like that. Then when we moved into the city back to Seattle, I got a paper route. Then I worked for a delivery company. I could have volunteered for

the draft and served two years, but I didn't. I joined, so I was RA (regular army) for three years. And one of the guys said, 'Did you know you could have volunteered for the draft?' So I stayed an extra year. There's a time to be in the Army, and so forth.

Whatever your experiences are, you can relate to all of those, and you can see how your life has gone. And it is true, the older you get, the more you think about, 'What's going to happen when I die?' *Don't know, let's see what God has for us here.* Yet, at the same time, no one wants to die.

Verse 11: "He has made everything beautiful in its time; He has also set eternity in their heart..." This is something, it says in the *King James* 'the world,' but really *eternity* is a better translation, because you can't think of a time when you didn't exist, and even though you know there is going to come a time when you will die, you can't think about a time when you won't be here. The reason that He put eternity in our hearts is to help fulfill His plan. We'll see that as we go along.

"...so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end" (v 11). Well now, that's before the New Testament was written. What happens in life? *and* What happens when we die?

Verse 17: "I said in my heart, 'God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.' I said in my heart, 'Concerning the matter of the sons of men, may God reveal to them that they might see, that they themselves *are* but beasts'" (vs 17-18). That turns out that way too many times.

Verse 19: "For that which happens *to* the sons of men also happens to beasts—even one thing *happens* to them. As the *one* dies, so dies the other... [When you're born, you take your first breath and you keep breathing all your life until you exhale your last breath.] ...yea, they all *have* one breath; so that a man has no advantage over a beast; for all *is* vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again. Who knows the spirit of man whether it goes upward... [yes, it does] ...and the spirit of the beast whether it goes downward to the earth?" (vs 20-21). Well, yes, the spirit of man is different. God has given each one of us the spirit of man, so we can function as human beings and the spirit of man is that which gives us life. When we yield up our last, the spirit returns back to God.

Let's come over here to Ecclesiastes 12:7: "And the dust returns to the earth as it was... [our bodies return to dust] ...and the spirit returns to God who gave it." There's nothing that gives us any indication of what the volume or size of the spirit is. We have no understanding of what that is. But when we die the spirit returns to God. That's why Jesus

said, 'Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit,' and He died.

Let's see what happens to the spirit of those, when they die. Of course, there are other Scriptures we could go to. It talks about the maximum that a person will live, and let's talk about what happens to the spirit when we die. God knows where the spirit goes. God must have three containers, compartments, where the spirit of man goes. He gives it at conception and when we die it goes back to God. You have to have those who die in the faith.

Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and to *the* church of *the* firstborn, registered *in the book of life* in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all; and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected" (vs 22-23).

This sounds like it goes right back to God and He knows where it is. Doesn't tell us exactly where it is. We also know that the spirit of man, for those who have not committed the unpardonable sin, goes back to God for the second resurrection. What happens to those who commit the unpardonable sin? *The spirit must go back to God, because they have to be resurrected to have their second death!* The only thing I can conjecture here is that there must be three categories of the spirit of man that goes back to God.

1. the faithful
2. those who are for the second resurrection for salvation
3. those who have committed the unpardonable sin

Must be those three!

Let's see what else it tells us about human beings here. Let's come to Isaiah 40 and we can see this in life. They even show it in movies, don't they, when they do biographies or they do movies that show the characters over a period of time. They start out young and then they gradually get older and then at the end they die, and so forth. So, they're even able to show it.

Isaiah 40:5: "And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed... [that's talking about the return of Christ] ...and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.... [This tells you what? *There can be no such thing as a secret rapture!*] ...A voice says, 'Cry!' and he said, 'What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever'" (vs 6-8).

This is just a metaphor on how we age and eventually die. And you can see the little babies just born, they're full of life, new life, everything's wonderful. Then you look at someone who's about ready to go, and they're withered, just exactly like it says. That's all a part of God's plan.

There are some people who want to keep themselves as young as possible. I think there are some notorious women who have had innumerable facelifts, but they're still the age that they are, and one day, they will expire. That's all in God's plan. We need to look at death from this point of view: *That having the Holy Spirit of God, God is doing a work in us!*

Regardless if we're getting old, or withering, now if we're confronted with some traumatic disease at the end of our life, that doesn't mean God has abandoned you, it just means that your body has reached a point that it can no longer fight off the various things, and it consumes the body, whatever that may be.

There are some who come to the end of their life, like Jacob did, he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, then he got up in his bed and says, 'Now it's time for me to go.' Closed his eyes, and he was gone. Some people go in their sleep. Some people die a very difficult death. But none of that stops God's plan.

How do we prepare for death? Let's come back here and see: How do we prepare for death? Let's come back to Ephesians 2. Let's understand that God is working in us and with us. We have the Spirit of God. God is doing something special. Reflecting on the sermons that I've given on Transhumanism, in the final analysis God is a transhumanist. Ever thought of it that way? The human being is created and designed to need God, to need His Spirit, so that we can be transformed, as we'll see a little later, from flesh to spirit and be the sons and daughters of God. Satan's imitation is to downgrade human beings by putting in them animal genes and things like that. God's plan is immeasurably better.

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved... [That's God's whole plan, right there summed up. Beginning with repentance and baptism, receiving of the Holy Spirit.] ...through faith..." *You believe God!* The thing to do when you are getting down toward the weak years of your life, and you know it's going to wind up pretty quickly,

- you concentrate on *the hope of God*
- you concentrate on *yielding to God*
- you concentrate on the *promises of God*
- you concentrate on the *promises that Jesus said*

—that, 'If you eat My flesh and drink My blood—that is through the New Covenant Passover that we take—you have eternal life.'

You also need to know this: That as we live our lives daily—and, of course, there are things we need to repent of daily—and the longer you have God's Spirit and the older that you become, the more you see the weakness and frailty of human nature, the wickedness of the human mind, the need to have your whole being changed. That's what God is doing. But we're looking to God to do this.

"...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; it *is* the gift of God" (v 8). God is going to give us eternal life. That's what He wants. That's why we're here. That's what we're preparing for.

When we are confronted with these difficulties, it may be the doctor has said, 'Well, you have such-and-such a disease and you only have so long to live.' Don't break down. God knew it. God understood it. The question is your relationship with God. And with God's Spirit, if you have been maintaining your relationship—growing, changing, overcoming all these years, have confidence. *You're going to be in the Kingdom of God!* Look forward to it. We'll cover some Scripture that you can look forward to.

Here's what He's doing, v 9: "Not of works, so that no one may boast." Can't do it yourself. Look at all of the extremes that human beings have gone to, to try and live longer and not die. They've all died. Here we had a very famous man Steve Jobs, supposedly one of the most brilliant men in computer history. He did everything he could to stay alive, even with a liver transplant, but he died, so likewise with us. That's why we need to take each day, day-by-day. That's why the model prayer is: Your kingdom come, your will be done. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'—daily! Those things come about, and with that then here's what God is doing with His Spirit.

Verse 10: "For we are His workmanship... [God is working in our lives to perfect us His way. You may feel totally weak and inadequate. That's part of the perfection that you see the greatness of God; recognize the power of God.] ...For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (v 10).

That's why we keep the Sabbath. That's why we keep the Holy Days. That's why we do the things that we do. That's why Peter said in 2-Peter 1 that here are the things that God has promised. This becomes actually the whole basis of what God is doing. And it's interesting when you go through 2-Pet. 1, all the epistles by the apostles, they all come to the same point. And we will see some other

Scriptures later. Peter wrote this just before he was ready to die. And he said in the last part of the first chapter, he says that ‘I know the time is coming that I’m going to put off this tabernacle, so I’m going to try and get all of this written down for you so you can remember it.’ So much for oral tradition—written down. You’ve got to have it written down.

But notice what Peter is writing here, 2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ...” Remember, here was Peter when he was young. ‘Lord, these things won’t happen to you.’ Jesus said, ‘Get behind Me, Satan.’ Peter said, ‘Lord, I’m ready to go to the death, go to prison with You.’ He said, ‘You’re going to deny Me three times before this night is over.’ Then He also told him, ‘Peter, feed My lambs, feed My sheep, shepherd My sheep,’ (John 21). “...to those who have obtained the same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” (v 1) That is profound! Part of the workmanship that God is doing is giving us of His faith, the same faith that He gave to the apostles.

Verse 2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. According as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life... [Don’t worry about death. He’s given everything that pertains to life. When death comes, everything’s going to be corrupted and you won’t know a thing about it. All the rest of us have to deal with it as it comes.] ...all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness... [That’s what God wants—Godly character.] ...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue” (vs 2-3).

Now, this is what to focus on. If you’re right now in a situation that you’re getting close to death, maybe you’re very weak, maybe you’re even bedridden. There are some people who have been bedridden for a long, long time, but God’s Spirit is not limited by that. Here’s the promise:

Verse 4: “Through which He has **given to us the greatest**... [Think about that! Not just great, *the greatest!*] ...**and most precious promises**, that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature... [Come to have the very same kind of nature as God.] ...having escaped the corruption *that is in the world* through lust.” And the very last escape is your last breath.

So, for all of those of us who have work to do, and everybody does till the last breath, he says, v 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue...” You keep growing all the time. You never quit growing. If you’re sick and weak and lying in bed and you know that the end is coming and you’re crying out to God, ‘Oh, God help me,’ *He is!* Remember the

Spirit of God is in you. He is helping you. And that’s helping you to develop faith to the very last breath.

“...and to virtue, knowledge” (v 5). When you’re on your death bed, you’re not going to add very much more knowledge, so before you get there you better be adding a whole lot more knowledge, but this is the program that God wants us to go through—step-by-step-by step: day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year—however long that is.

Verse 6: “And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance, and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*.... [Here’s a guarantee if you’re striving for these and if you’re building on these] ...For **if** these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause you to be neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 6-8).

Yes, there are going to be emotions involved in it. Yes, you don’t want to have to leave the people that you love. And those who are living, you don’t like to see your loved ones die and pass on. But it’s going to happen. Think of this for just a minute. Of all the Christians that there have been down through time, those who have succeeded have all died. They’re in the grave. Never thought of it that way. If you look at it the way that the Bible looks at it, then you can understand what’s going to happen.

Do not, because you’re weak and you have difficulties with your bodily processes, because you can’t remember very well—or whatever the difficulty—do not think that God is somehow giving up on you. *He’s not!* That’s just the process of completing the building of the character that God wants you to have.

Notice Philippians 1:6, Paul said: “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you... [We’re His workmanship—right? *Yes, indeed!*] ...will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.” There are two days of Jesus Christ:

1. If you die before He comes, that’s a day of Jesus Christ for you.
2. When He returns and the resurrection takes place.

And those who are alive, we know, that they will be changed in a moment of twinkling of an eye and go up with those who are being resurrected

Now we’re going to talk about the resurrection here in just a little bit. Let’s see how God looks at us when we are in the weakest and physically the most feeble position possible when we are about ready to die.

Psalms 116:15: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Because that’s the whole goal—correct? *Yes!*

Proverbs 14:32: “...the righteous, even when he is brought to death, has hope.” When we were baptized, we were baptized into the death of Jesus Christ so that we can receive the Holy Spirit, but unto the resurrection of the dead.

Revelation 2:10: “...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Keep that in mind.

In this day and age, and I’m sure with the troubles that are coming on in the world, and I’m sure there’s a whole lot more time, and I’ll explain that in some sermons as we go along, and what’s coming is not going to be very pleasant. There are going to be more people die than we thought. That’s just the way it’s going to happen.

Isaiah 57:1: “The righteous perish, and no one lays *it* to heart, and merciful men *are* taken away; none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.... [That’s going to be the place of safety for most. And you can say this: In fact all Christians who have lived and died, are now in their place of safety in the grace waiting the resurrection.] ...He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds... [whatever it is] ...each one who walked in his uprightness” (vs 1-2).

Let’s look and see something that’s very important for us, 1-Corinthians 15, the resurrection chapter. Quite a chapter, very inspiring, very long, but we’ll cover some it, some now and some a little bit later. As we’re turning there, let’s understand this: ***It’s given to everyone once to die!***

Now also, those who are baptized, *our time of judgment is now*. But it’s given to everyone once to die and then the judgment. Jesus already told us what that judgment would be if we’re faithful to the end. And that is, there’s coming a time in which ‘all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good and have been judged in this life to have done so, unto a resurrection of life. Those who have done evil, unto a resurrection of judgment.’

What did Jesus tell John in the vision there in Rev. 1? ‘I am the First and the Last. I was dead, yet, I’m alive evermore into the ages of eternity.’ Christ is the Firstfruit. We are going to follow Christ in that. As we saw in Heb. 12, we are the *church of the firstborn*. So, keep all of these things in the forefront of your mind.

1-Corinthians 15:20: “But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man *came* death... [Yes, death passed into all men

because of the sin of Adam.] ...by man... [That is, through Christ.] ...also *came the* resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so **also in Christ shall all be made alive**.... [that’s what we’re looking for] ...But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then, those who are Christ’s at His coming” (vs 20-23). So that’s what we are to look forward to.

Peter wrote ‘judgment is now upon the house of God. And if the righteous are saved with difficulty,’ and he ought to know, he had enough difficulty. ‘Where will the ungodly and sinner be?’ But here is the attitude that we need to take toward to coming to the end of our lives.

Romans 14:7: “For no one among us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we should live unto the Lord; and if we die, we should die unto the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.... [Having that faith and confidence.] ...*It is* for this very purpose *that* Christ both died and rose and is living again, so that He might be Lord over both *the* dead and *the* living” (vs 7-9). Whatever our lives are.

Now let’s come back here to the book of Job and let’s see something. Even Job knew this. Job 14:14: “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service... [or that is, all the days I’m living. Another rendition would be: all my days in the grave.] ...I will wait, until my change comes.... [Going to be changed. We’ll see that.] ...You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall have the desire for the work of Your hands” (vs 14-15). Look how that ties right in with Eph. 2. ***We are His workmanship!*** God is doing a work in us. That’s what’s important.

(go to the next track)

Let’s come to the resurrection chapter, 1-Corinthians 15, Paul answers the question: How are the dead raised? *and* With what body do they come?

1-Corinthians 15:37: “And what you sow *is* not the body that shall be; rather, *it is* bare grain—it may be of wheat, or one of the other *grains*... [he’s giving an analogy here.] ...and God gives it a body according to His will, and to each of the seeds its own body. *Likewise*, not all flesh *is* the same flesh. Rather, *there is* one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of fish, and another of birds. And *there are* heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly *is* different, and the *glory* of the earthly *is* different. *There is* one glory of *the* sun, and another glory of *the* moon, and another glory of *the* stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory” (vs 37-41).

Jesus said in the resurrection ‘we’ll shine like the sun.’ Daniel also said that ‘those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars of heaven.’

Verse 42: “So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption... [It does! It’s wasted away! It’s weak! It’s not very pretty! It’s not desirable! It’s corruption!] ...it is raised in incorruption.... [***That’s the power of God!***] ...It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.” (vs 42-43).

It’s going to be a whole different situation. This is what we need to keep our eyes on, not just the physical maladies that we’re going through, or the weakness, or the process of aging. That’s going to happen to all. And the same thoughts that you have in aging, everybody’s had the same thoughts when they were aging.

Verse 44: “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.... [that’s the greatest transhumanism that you ever want to know] ...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body; accordingly, it is written, **‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam became an every-living Spirit’**” (vs 44-45).

It’s two completely different things. That’s why the building of character, and growing in grace and knowledge, building of faith and hope and love, building the character that we read there in 2-Pet. 1 is so important. Because what God is going to do is develop the character now and then give us the spiritual body at the resurrection.

Verse 46: “However, the spiritual *was* not first, but the natural—then the spiritual. The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As is the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *one*... [Christ] ..so also *are all* those who are heavenly” (vs 46-48). Christ, the Father, the angels, all made of spirit.

Now here’s a promise right here, 49: “And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust... [We all have a body, yeah we do. We’re bearing that image.] ...we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *one*.” That is *be as Christ*. Now this is going to be something!

Philippians 3:20: “But for us, the commonwealth *of God*... [the Kingdom of God] ...exists in *the* heavens, from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Who will transform our vile bodies... [and they are; when we come to the end of our lives, our bodies are old and vile and wearing down, and breaking down, and all of that] ...that they may be conformed to His glorious body... [transform it from what we are to what He is] ...according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 20-21).

1-Corinthians 15:50: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery... [It’s the *secret of God*. God alone has the power, the ability, to do what we’re reading about here.] ...we shall not all fall asleep... [that’s how God looks upon death, just sleep] ...but we shall all be changed. In an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**” (vs 50-52). So, all the worries about growing old, all the worries about the physical flesh will be all gone.

Verse 53: “For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality.... [only God can give that to us] ...Now, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” (vs 53-55). Not there; it will cease! That’s what God is going to do with us.

Now, let’s see what we need to look to and how we need to look to it. Here’s what God is going to do, and this is going to be great, this is going to be fantastic. This is what we need to keep our minds on when we’re facing the eventuality of death.

- you *look beyond for the hope* of God
- you *trust* God for what He has said
- you *believe* God
- you *know* the resurrection is going to happen

If there’s the slightest doubt, then all you have to do is just slap yourself. Are you here? Do you exist now? *Yes!* Having the Holy Spirit of God and the fact that you exist now, if you’re faithful to the end is a guarantee you’re going to have a spiritual body when you’re resurrected. A spiritual body; a spiritual mind.

As spirit beings, there’s going to be so much that we’re going to learn and grow in knowledge and understanding. It’s going to be a tremendous thing that’s going to take place. You get discouraged, you come to Eph. 3, and you read this, because this tells us that ***God loves us!*** Does He love us when we’re weak? Does He love us when we are hardly able to lift ourselves up? *Yes, He does!* Here Paul was in prison when he wrote this. Look what he was looking to.

Ephesians 3:14: “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (vs 14-15). You’ve got a new name coming and you’re going to be in the family of God. You

have the greatest hope in the world. We are going to escape the physical nature, the corrupt human nature and we are going to be given the Divine nature. We are going to be the sons and daughters of God.

Verse 16: “That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man.”

- to have that *faith*
- to have that *strength*
- to have that *belief*
- to have that *love*

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [that’s what we look forward to when we’re coming toward the end of our lives] ...and that being rooted and grounded in love... [God loves you, Christ loves you, the brethren love you] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height” (vs 17-18). *The whole plan of God!*

Think about it for a minute. God has not made the universe in vain. All of that out there exists for a great plan and purpose that God has, which includes all of us. Keep your mind focused on that.

Verse 19: “And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.... [That’s what’s going to happen when our bodies are transformed. That’s going to be an amazing thing.] (here’s a promise): ...Now, to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us” (vs 19-20). This is going to be fantastic, brethren! This is going to be amazing!

That’s why when you read there in the book of Revelation about all the saints on the Sea of Glass, there’s a shout of joy of a multitude of people saying, ‘Hallelujah!’ Just think what it’s going to be like. Everybody raised from the dead who are in the first resurrection. We don’t know how they may have died. We don’t know what their last thoughts would be, but just imagine what it’s going to be like when the angels are taking us up to the Sea of Glass.

I don’t know what conversation we’re going to have. *Oh, you’re my angel.* ‘Yeah, I’ve had a difficult time with you from time-to-time. But I’m here and we’re going to go up and meet Christ and God the Father and all the saints.’ *Is that the Sea of Glass?* ‘Yup, that’s where you’re going.’ *Oooh, that is huge!* Yes, indeed!

“...above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, even into the ages of eternity” (vs 20-21).

Here’s what it’s going to be when we get to the end of our lives: there is pain, there is suffering, there are many breakdowns of the flesh and the systems of the body. Don’t worry about it. You’re going to have a new body.

Revelation 21:3: “And I heard a great voice from heaven say, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men... [men and women *made perfect*] ...and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be any more death... [all the things we experience and go through] ...or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away” (vs 3-4). That’s tremendous! That’s why we need to focus on this.

- Don’t focus on your circumstances. *God is going to change them!*
- Don’t worry. *God loves you!*
- Don’t fret about it, even if you’re weak. *Christ is still in you!*
- Even if you’re unsightly and unmanageable physically, *God still loves you!*

The human body is corruptible and it’s coming to an end. We need to keep this hope in mind.

Verse 5: “And He Who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ Then He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (vs 5-7).

Let’s come back to Romans 8, and let’s see how we need to set our minds all the time. And especially as we’re coming down to the time when we’re getting weak, when we’re getting old and you can’t do the things you used to do when you were younger. You can’t run up and down the steps. You can barely walk up and down. You can’t fit into those clothes you did when you were younger. It just ‘ain’t’ gonna happen! Don’t worry about those things. You need a little more sleep. That’s fine, enjoy it! But here is the whole mindset that we need.

Don’t look at the circumstances, because those are going to change, regardless of what you’re going through. And we all go through some terrible things.

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God...”

- Do you love God?
- Are you striving to serve God?
- Have you been yielded to God?

- Have you been overcoming?
- Have you been repenting?
- Have you been doing the things that God wants you to do?
- *YES! You love God!*

“...to those who are called according to His purpose... [He’s going to complete that purpose in you. God has a specific plan for each one of us. Now, by faith we know it’s going to be, but by still being in the flesh we don’t know what it’s going to be.] ...because those whom He did foreknow...” (vs 28-29). That’s us now, and all the saints.

And remember, as I’ve said, all the saints who have qualified for the Kingdom of God are in the grave. They all died! Remember Peter, strong and powerful? What did Jesus say? He said, ‘Peter, when you’re old, you’re going to be led about where you don’t want to go.’ Old, feeble, hardly able to walk, having to have someone hold onto him and lead him around. Maybe he had a staff that he leaned on. But did God still love him? *Yes!* Had God neglected him? *No!* It’s just all a part of becoming old. It’s all a part of coming to the finish line. We all ‘gotta’ make the finish line.

“...did foreknow, He also predestinated... [here is the end result]: ...to be conformed to the image of His own Son... [be made like Christ] ...that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren. Now, whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (vs 29-30).

The very fact that you have the Holy Spirit is you have part of the glory of God. But when you’re resurrected from the dead, you will have the full measure of the Spirit. And there’s the promise. He looks at us as how we’re going to be when we’re resurrected—glorified, shine as the sun, shine as the stars. You look around life and everything that’s going on. You look at your physical circumstances. You look at the difficulties you’ve gone through. Think about all the lessons and character you’ve learned of those things.

Verse 31: “What then shall we say to these things?... [remember this]: ...If God is for us, who can be against us?” There’s nothing against us. That’s why God wants us to come to Him everyday.

Notice how important are we individually and collectively, v 32: “He Who did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also grant us all things together with Him?” What are all those things going to be? *We don’t know!* We know part of it is, we’re going to be in New Jerusalem. What’s that going to be like to be in New Jerusalem? Isn’t that something? Because Jesus said, ‘If I go, I’ll come again and I’m preparing a

place for you so that where I am you may also be.’ That’s a fantastic thing—isn’t it?

“...grant us all things together with Him? Who shall bring an accusation against *the* elect of God?... [Satan can’t. He tries to bring it every day. Doesn’t it say he accuses us day and night before the throne of God? That’s why we repent every day so that all of those things are wiped away.] ...God *is the one* Who justified. Who *is* the one that condemns? *It is* Christ Who died, but rather, Who is raised again, Who is even *now* at *the* right hand of God, *and* Who is also making intercession for us” (vs 32-34).

So, if you’re getting weak and feeble, maybe you’re even in bed and you can hardly raise your hand,

- Christ is making intercession for you.
- He is in you.
- He loves you.
- The very purpose of your life is being fulfilled.

Because of that, v 35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?” For those of us who are not facing death in the near future, we need to think about these things. There’s a lot that’s going to happen between now and the return of Christ, and a lot of things that we have never supposed that are going to take place. We don’t know what it’s going to be like, but nevertheless we need to set our minds.

Verse 35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation... [We’ll have that, but Christ is with us.] ...or distress... [and trouble, but He’s with us in that, too—isn’t He?] ...or persecution... [Christ was persecuted. The apostles were persecuted. Look at all of those who were persecuted and martyred.] ...or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

This is going to happen again, v 36: “Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter’... [That’s going to be for the final martyrdom that’s coming. But for them in those days that was right imminent. They were being chased from city to city, thrown in jail, martyred, killed! But notice how God looks at it.] ...But in all these things we are more than conquerors... [That is victors, because that’s what it means.] ...through Him Who loved us” (vs 36-37).

And here’s the attitude that we need to have to continue, v 38: “For I am persuaded... [We’re not to be like the king that Paul was talking to and he said, ‘Paul, you almost persuaded me to be a Christian.’ *No!*] (*This we have to have in a very fiber of our being*): ...that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**” (vs 38-39).

This is the attitude that we need to have. Yes, every day someone is born and someone dies. That’s just the cycle of life that God has given. But He’s reached down

- to call us
- to give us His Spirit
- to give us His love
- to show us His way

—so that we can be in *His* Family. So that none of these things in this life, though we have to go through them, though they may be difficult, they are not going to keep us from fulfilling the purpose and calling that God has given to us.

So let’s keep this in mind and as we come closer and closer to the final days of our lives, ***let’s make sure that we’re drawing close to God so we can fulfill what God wants us to and He can fulfill in us what He desires to.***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 3:1-9, 11, 17-21
- 2) Ecclesiastes 12:7
- 3) Hebrews 12:22-23
- 4) Isaiah 40:5-8
- 5) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 6) 2-Peter 1:1-8
- 7) Philippians 1:6
- 8) Psalm 116:15
- 9) Proverbs 14:32
- 10) Revelation 2:10
- 11) Isaiah 57:1-2
- 12) 1-Corinthians 15:20-23
- 13) Romans 14:7-9
- 14) Job 14:14-15
- 15) 1-Corinthians 15:37-49
- 16) Philippians 3:20-21
- 17) 1-Corinthians 15:50-55
- 18) Ephesians 3:14-21
- 19) Revelation 21:3-7
- 20) Romans 8:28-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 21
- Revelation 1

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Transhumanism #1 and #2*

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