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How To Walk Through The Valley Of Death's Shadow



Part 20 (011111AM)

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One instant after we die, the Valley of Death's shadow will be behind us. And all that lies before us will be Heaven's splendors. And Heaven is splendid. Often in our fast paced lives we have not meditated on all the wonders that God's Word has revealed for us to prepare for this wondrous transition. May I remind you of them?

We start by turning to [Revelation 3:5](#) He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Clothed in white and confessed by Christ !

Just think ^[1] of what a moment that will be!

To be taken by the hand by the Lord Jesus,

To be led up past the marshaled ranks of the angels,

Up along the golden boulevards of glory,

Up past the cherubim and the seraphim,

Up, up to the throne of God Himself and

To hear the Lord Jesus call you by your name and present you in person as His well beloved!

Then to hear the Father say, "Bring the best robe and put it on him."

Just think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light.

What a reward for faithfulness, to have a robe like that draped around the shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways of glory in light transfigured clothes.

The greatest, richest, most powerful of all of history on this planet were not arrayed like one of these. Just think of that!

Last century the great Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan ^[2] also wrote of that moment:

You are to remember with the passion burning within you that you are not the child of today. You are not of the earth, you are more than dust; you are the child of tomorrow, you are of the eternities, you are the offspring of Deity.

The measurements of your lives cannot be circumscribed by the point where blue sky kisses green earth. All the fact of your life cannot be encompassed in the one small sphere upon which you live. You belong to the infinite.

If you only make your fortune on the earth-poor, sorry, silly soul-you have made a fortune, and stored it in a place where you cannot hold it.

Make your fortune, but store it where it will greet you in the dawning of the new morning.

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As Christians, we look forward to an even more exciting event—one that will pale all others. It will happen the second we pass through death's shadow into heaven's splendor and see our Lord face-to-face. What will it be like?

Think ^[3] of- Stepping on shore, and finding it Heaven!

Of taking hold of a hand, and finding it God's hand.

Of breathing a new air, and finding it celestial air.

Of feeling invigorated, and finding it immortality.

Of passing from storm to tempest to an unbroken calm.

Of waking up, and finding it Home.

What a thrilling moment! Thinking about it can make our hearts beat faster. Perhaps though, it has been a long time since you've imagined this glorious future the Lord has prepared for His own.

With these words in mind listen again with me to Christ's words in [John 14: 1-6](#). We continue our study that **JESUS IS ALL I NEED** to get to Heaven..

REMEMBER WE ALREAY LEARNED THAT:

1. **HEAVEN: A REAL PLACE.** In the Bible heaven is emphatically a definite ^[4] locale. To enter it is to enter a definite space. Look back at our text, note what Jesus say, " I go to prepare **a place**" ([Jn 14:2-3](#)). If we ask where this heavenly place is, the answer overwhelmingly is that it is above the earth. Vertical imagery dominates in the placing of it.

2. **HEAVEN: A DWELLING ^[5] PLACE.** But more than anything else, we as believers are going to be where God is. Being invited to live with the Lord FOREVER is the grandest destination and delight of all! Jesus was named Emmanuel God with us, so that we could get to be with God! [Matthew 1:21](#), 23 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

3. **HEAVEN: A PERMANENT PLACE.** Poets have always depended on artistic imagery when portraying heaven. Such images combine hardness of texture and brilliance of light, to suggest a realm of superior permanence, value and splendor when compared with the cyclic, vegetative world in which we live. We saw that Ezekiel's vision is replete with imagery of flashing fire and lightning, burnished bronze that sparkles, gleaming chrysolite, and sapphire. To this we can add the memorable pictures in Revelation of a sea of glass, like crystal, the appearance of God in splendor like that of jasper and carnelian, golden crowns, gates of pearl, a city of pure gold.

4. **HEAVEN: A HOLY PLACE.** The purity of existence in heaven and the spiritual perfection of those who are "enrolled in heaven" ([Heb 12:23](#)) are expressed by imagery of washed robes ([Rev 7:14](#)), white garments ([Rev 3:5](#), 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13), clothing of "fine linen, bright and pure" ([Rev 19:8](#)) and chaste people who are "spotless" ([Rev 14:4-5](#)). Daniel pictures them as shining "like the stars for ever and ever" ([Dan 12:3](#)), symbolic of permanence and glory. The book of Revelation also pictures of the redeemed receiving such things as the morning star ([Rev 2:28](#)), a white stone with a secret name written on it ([Rev 2:17](#)) and water from a fountain of life ([Rev 21:6](#)). Similarly, those who enter heaven will become pillars in the temple of God ([Rev 3:12](#)).

5. **HEAVEN: AN UNIMAGINEABLE PLACE.** While not a major part of the images of heaven, beings that have never existed in human experience are included in the visions of Ezekiel and Revelation. These include living creatures with four faces, four wings and with soles like those of a calf's foot ([Ezek 1:6-7](#)), that move about in a riot of motion, and something that looks like torches of fire moves among them ([Ezek 1:13](#)), also a celestial chariot replete with gleaming wheels which have rims full of eyes ([Ezek 1:15-18](#)). To mystify us still further we read that "the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels" ([Ezek 1:21](#)). The book of Revelation, with its pictures of creatures with six wings "full of eyes in front and behind" ([Rev 4:6-8](#)), likewise contains the motif of strangeness.

1ST REMEMBER THAT DEATH IS ONLY A TRANSFER TO PERMANENT HOUSING.

- [Genesis 5:24](#) Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because **God took him away.**
- [John 14:2-3](#) In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back **and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**
- [2 Corinthians 5:6-8](#) Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body **we are away from the Lord.** 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would **prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**
- [2 Corinthians 4:17-18](#) For **our light affliction**, which is but for a moment, is working for us a **far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but **the things which are not seen are eternal.**
- Is it hard to live in a tiny two-room apartment if you know soon you will get a country home and gardens? So enduring all of life's struggles is okay awaiting the joys of Heaven.
- There God collects our prayers – so get involved in praying regularly. There God rewards financial sacrifices – so get involved in sacrificial giving regularly. There God illumines with star shining light those who win souls – so get involved in evangelism regularly.

2ND REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN IS A JOYOUSLY SATISFYING PLACE. Let not your hearts be troubled Jesus says. The two dominant human responses to new life in heaven are joy and satisfaction.

- **BECAUSE HEAVEN IS LIFE'S QUEST COMPLETED:** The joy of heaven's inhabitants is pictured by the scenes of praise which spill over on each page of the book of Revelation, along with the white robed conquerors waving palm branches (Rev 7:9) and the joyous guests at a wedding supper (Rev 19:1-9). This adds to the imagery of Christ's parables, where He compares attaining heaven to attending a banquet (Lk 14:15-24) or entering into the joy of one's master (Mt 25:21, 23). The book of Hebrews employs the imagery of quest to express this reality: "These all died in faith, not having received what was promised. . . . For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland" (Heb 11:13-14).
- **BECAUSE HEAVEN IS THE REWARD WON:** In addition to being the goal of a quest, heaven is the reward for earthly toil, as in Paul's picture of himself as having "finished the race" and looking forward to "the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:7-8). So too in Peter's vision of "the chief Shepherd" conferring "the unfading crown of glory" on those who have served faithfully (1 Pet 5:4).
- **BECAUSE HEAVEN IS THE FAMILY REUNITED AT LAST:** There is also the glorious picture believers having come to (Hebrews 12:22) "Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly". We will be home at last and forever, never more to roam.
- **BECAUSE HEAVEN IS THE LONGED FOR SATISFACTION:** Images of satisfaction emerge from the pictures in Revelation of saints being guided by our divine Shepherd to endless springs of living water (Rev 7:17) and having constant access to "the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month" (Rev 22:2). Heaven is also portrayed as a rest after labor: those who die in the Lord "rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them" (Rev 14:13). That is why the confession of the saints has been to pour out their lives rather than waste their days in non-essentials, or rust them in harmful desires.
- Author and Pastor John Piper recently said, "The radical pursuit of joy in God may cost you your life. . . . But it will be worth it. [6] " The world has an inconsolable longing, which it tries to satisfy with anything but God. Scenic vacations. Sexual exploits. Ascetic rigors. Managerial excellence. Sports extravaganzas. **We have turned our back to the breathtaking beauty of God and fallen in love with our shadow.** To delight in the Light is a dangerous duty indeed. It may cost you your friends. It may cost you your reputation. It may cost you your life. But it will be worth it. Because the steadfast love of the Lord is better than life (Psalm 63:3)!

3RD REMEMBER THAT DEATH IS A VICTORY.

- **1 Corinthians 15:54** So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."
- We all would like to have dying grace long before we need it! But the famous English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon says that death is the last enemy to be destroyed, and we should leave him to the last. He adds: *Brother, you do not want dying grace till dying moments. What would be the good of dying grace while you are yet alive? A boat will only be needful when you reach a river. Ask for living grace, and glorify Christ thereby, and then you shall have dying grace when the time comes. Your enemy is going to be destroyed but not today. . . . Leave the final shock of arms till the last adversary advances, and meanwhile hold your place in the conflict. God will in due time help you to overcome your last enemy, but meanwhile see to it that you overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.*
- **Psalm 17:15** As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; **I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.**
- **Psalm 73:24** You will **guide me** with Your counsel, **And afterward receive me to glory.**

4TH REMEMBER GOD GETS US ALL THE WAY HOME.

- When Corrie ten Boom ^[7] was a girl, her first experience with death came after visiting the home of a neighbor who had just died. When she thought of the fact that her parents would die someday, her father comforted her by asking, "When I go to Amsterdam, when do I give you your ticket?" "Just before we get on the train." "Exactly. Just so your heavenly Father will give you exactly what you need when we die-He'll give it to you just when you need it."
- Back in January ^[8] of 1956, five young missionaries were spared to death in the jungles of Ecuador. The offenders have now become Christians and have told Steve Saint, the son of one of the martyrs, that they heard and saw what they now believe to be angels while the killings were taking place. A woman hiding at a distance also saw these beings above the trees and didn't know what kind of music it was until she heard a Christian choir on records.

5TH REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN EARTH EVER WAS. We are accustomed ^[9] to talk about the differences there will be when we make our transition from earth to heaven. But there are some similarities too. Given the fact that our personalities continue, we can expect continuity. Heaven is the earthly life of the believer glorified and perfected.

1. **WE REMAIN FULLY CONSCIOUS IN HEAVEN.** *Believers go directly into the presence of Christ at death. They are conscious and in command of all of their faculties.*

- **2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-8** For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.** **7** For we walk by faith, not by sight. **8** We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
- **Revelation 6:9-10** When He opened the fifth seal, I saw **under the altar the souls** of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. **10 And they cried with a loud voice,** saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

2. **WE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER IN HEAVEN.** **1 Corinthians 13:12** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. Also remember in Luke 16 with the Rich Man and Lazarus, they could remember the details of their earthly life.

3. **WE CONTINUE TO LOVE IN HEAVEN.** I like what Chet Bitterman said after his

missionary son was killed by guerrillas. "We have eight children. And they all are living; one's in heaven and seven are on earth." **Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

4. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL IN HEAVEN.

- **Psalm 16:11** You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- **Revelation 6:9-10** When He opened the fifth seal, I saw **under the altar the souls** of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. **10 And they cried with a loud voice**, saying, "**How long**, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
- **Revelation 7:17** for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
- **Revelation 21:4** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5. WE CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE IN HEAVEN, becoming what we were really meant to be!

- We ^[10] are but saplings here, but we shall be transported into our heavenly soil to grow in God's light. Here our abilities are in blossom; there they shall burst forth with fruits of greater beauty. Our death is but the passing from one degree of loving service to another; the difference is like that of the unborn child and the one who has entered into the experiences of a new life. Our love for God will continue, but awakened with new purity and purposefulness. The famous Puritan writer Jonathan Edwards believed that the saints in heaven would begin by contemplating God's providential care of the church on earth and then move on to other aspects of the divine plan, and thus "the ideas of the saints shall increase to eternity." The "real you" will be there.
- Just like the fat caterpillar is metamorphosed into beauty and grace, how much **more shall we be!** **1 Corinthians 15:52-54** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

6. BUT OUR EARTHLINESS ENDS WITH OUR RESURRECTION BODY. **1 Corinthians 15:42-44** tells us, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. **43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **44** It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body". What does God's Word explain about this body?

- First, *we are sown a perishable body, but we will be raised imperishable*. Like a seed sown in the ground, there is continuity between the acorn and the tree, between the kernel and the stalk. Not every particle that ever was a part of you has to be raised, and God just might add additional material to make up the deficiencies. In heaven, no one will comment on your age or notice that the years are beginning to take their toll. You will look as young a billion years from now as you will a thousand years from now. As Dr. Hinson wrote: *I The stars shall give for a million years, A million years and a day. But God and I will live and love when the stars have passed away.*
- Second, *we are sown in dishonor; but raised in power*. When a body is transported to a funeral home it is always covered by a sheet to shield gaping eyes from the ignominy of looking upon the corpse. Every dead body is a reminder of our dishonor, a reminder that we are but frail. But we shall be raised in power.
- Third, *we are sown in weakness, but raised in strength*. The resurrection body is not subject to material forces. Remember how Christ came through closed doors after the resurrection. Keep in mind that the reason the angel rolled the stone from the tomb was not to let Christ out, but to let the disciples in!
- Finally, *we are sown a natural body, but we are raised a spiritual body*. To say that we will have a "spiritual body" does not mean that we will just be spirits. Christ's glorified body was so human that He invited the disciples to touch Him and affirmed, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (**Luke 24:39**). There will be continuity with a difference. Our future body will be like Christ's resurrection body. "We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (**1 John 3:2**). Just think of the implications. **Revelation 19:7** Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

6th REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN IS THE END OF ALL THAT IS BAD

- Heaven is the canceling out of fallen earthly experience. There will be no more hunger or thirst, no more scorching heat (**Rev 7:16**). God will wipe tears away (**Rev 7:17**; **21:4**), and death, mourning and pain will vanish, "for the former things have passed away" (**Rev 21:4**). No More Sea (**21:1**); No More Death (**21:4**); No More Sorrow (**21:4**); No More Crying (**7:17**; **21:4**); No More Pain (**21:4**), No Temple (**21:22**); No More Sun or Moon (**7:16**; **21:23**; **22:5**); No Abominations (**21:27**); No More Hunger, Thirst, or Heat (**7:16**).
- As part of this exclusion of evil, heaven is a protected place: "Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood" (**Rev 21:27**). The sheer freedom from fallen experience is pictured by city gates that "shall never be shut by day and there shall be no night there" (**Rev 21:25**).

7th REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN IS HUGE.

- The dimensions ^[11] of Heaven or as John describes it – the Heavenly New Jerusalem are given as a cube, fifteen hundred miles square. "And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal" (**Revelation 21:16**).
- Just to picture this amazing city of New Jerusalem, if we laid this city on top of Tulsa as the center, it would stretch westward to Phoenix, eastward to Charlotte, northward to Minneapolis, and southward to Brownsville – upwards for 1500 miles.
- So if we believe what Jesus promised, heaven will be composed of 396,000 stories (at twenty feet per story) each having an area as big as one half the size of the United States! Divide that into separate condominiums, and you have plenty of room for all who have been redeemed by God since the beginning of time. The Old Testament saints-Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-they will be there. Then we think of the New

Testament apostles and all the redeemed throughout two thousand years of church history-heaven will be the home for all of them. Unfortunately, however, the majority of the world's population will likely not be there. Heaven, as Christ explained, is a **special place for special people.**

- Just for comparison, there is enough room in the Heavenly New Jerusalem for all 6 billion humans alive to have a space equivalent to 1000 twin tower WTCs! Yes God has made a wonderful place full of rooms, but so few want to go there and stay with Him! Instead most are heading away from the Palace of God and are surging toward the garbage dump of the Universe Jesus called Gehenna.

FINALLY REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE HOPE OF THE REDEEMED. No purgatory, no limbo, no soul sleeping. How Jesus, the thief on the cross, Enoch, Elijah and Lazarus went instantly to Heaven at death; Paul's testimony.

1. D. L. Moody at death caught a glimpse ^[12] of heaven. Awakening from sleep he said, "Earth recedes, Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me and I must go!"

2. Just before John Bunyan died, he said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves. I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will through the mediation of His blessed Son receive me though a sinner; there we shall meet to sing the new song and remain everlastingly happy, world without end."

3. Matthew Henry the wonderful English Bible scholar (1662-1714) wrote out his own funeral message. These words should also reflect our hope. Would you like to know where I am? I am at home in my father's house, in the mansion prepared for me here. I am where I want to be -- no longer on the stormy sea, but in god's safe, quiet harbor. My sowing time is done and I am reaping; my joy is the joy of the harvest. Would you like to know how it is with me? I am made perfect in holiness.

Grace is swallowed up in glory. Would you like to know what I am doing? I see god, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face. I am engaged in the sweet enjoyment of my Precious Redeemer. I am singing hallelujahs to Him who sits upon the throne and I am constantly praising him. Would you like to know what blessed company I keep? It is better than the best of earth. Here are the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. I am with many of my old acquaintances with whom I worked and prayed and have come here before me. Lastly, would you like to know how long this will continue? It is a dawn that never fades. After millions and millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now. Therefore, weep not for me!

4. The death of John Wesley, the father of Methodism, occurred in his room on City Road, London. The end was very beautiful. No pain, only a growing sense of weakness, and a tranquil acceptance of the inevitable. He slept much and spoke little, but sometimes the dying flame flickered up, and the inner light that had changed the face of England glowed with its old intensity. One afternoon before he died, he surprised his friends by bursting into song: I'll praise my Maker while I've breath; And when my voice is lost in death. Praise shall employ my nobler powers; My days of praise shall ne'er be past, While immortality endures. He sang two verses and then sank back exhausted. Later in the day, when weakness overcame him, by a supreme effort he marshaled his ebbing strength and gave the message that was to become the watchword of Methodism, "The best of all is, God is with us." How beautiful to be with God! When earth is fading like a dream, And from this mist-circled shore, We launch upon the unknown stream. No doubt, no fear, no anxious care, But comforted by staff and rod, In the faith-brightened hour of death, How beautiful to be with God! I will not fear to launch my bark Upon the darkly rolling flood, 'Tis but to pierce the mist-and then, How beautiful to be with God!

REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN IS FOR THOSE SAVED BY FAITH ^[13]. What is saving faith? Turn to one of the final books of God's Word, **1 John 5:9-13** If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for **this is the witness of God** which He has testified of His Son. **10 He who believes in the Son of God** has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. **11 And this is the testimony:** that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.** **13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

- Saving Faith is Directed towards Christ Alone (**Romans 10:9-10**). Always remember this: *If you are persuaded that Christ did all that is necessary and all that ever will be necessary to bring you to God, and you have called out to Him to save you-- not only will be saved – but you will know it!* **Romans 10:17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. **2 Timothy 1:12** For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.
- Saving Faith is Confirmed by the Holy Spirit. **Romans 8:16-17** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.
- Saving Faith is Bearing Spiritual Fruit. **Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- Saving Faith is Faith That Grows. **2 Peter 3:18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

HEAVEN IS THE PLACE TO BE. Somewhere ^[14] in Indiana there is a cemetery that has an old tombstone bearing this epitaph: Pause, stranger, when you pass me by As you are now, so once was I As I am now, so you will be So prepare for death and follow me An unknown passerby read those words and underneath scratched this reply: *To follow you I'm not content Until I know which way you went.*

REMEMBER HEAVEN HAS BECOME OUR JOYFUL JOURNEY. Death in the New Testament is transformed from a monster to a minister. What at first seems to box us in, frees us to go to God. Here are some words of comfort that will help us soften the blow.

- A DEPARTURE (**Luke 9:31**) That word *departure* in Greek is *exodus*, from which we get our word exit. **John 13:36**;

- A RESTFUL SLEEP. Luke 8:52; John 11:11; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Acts 7:59; Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 14:11; Psalm 17:15.
- A COLLAPSING TENT 2 Corinthians 5:1;
- A SAILING SHIP: Philippians 1:23; That word *depart* was used for the loosing of an anchor. A.T. Robertson translates it "To weigh anchor and put out to sea." 2 Timothy 4:6, Hebrews 6:19-20; Philip Mauro suggests that the picture here is that of the forerunner used in ancient times to help a vessel enter the harbor safely. He would jump from the ship, wade to the harbor, and fasten the strong rope of the ship to a rock along the shore. Then, by means of a winch, the vessel was brought in. Just so, our forerunner has gone to heaven, where He stands ready to guide us safely into the Holy of Holies. We are fastened to a rock that cannot be moved. Let the storms tear our sails to shreds; let the floors creak; let the gusts of wind attempt to blow us off course; let the tides overwhelm us; we shall arrive safely into the port. Each day we are pulled a notch closer to the harbor by the One who proved He is more powerful than death. *We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

THE DEATH OF INFANTS, (Romans 5:12, 2 Samuel 12:23, Revelation 1:17-18) Bob Neudorf wrote "To ^[15] My Baby":

Is it proper to cry For a baby too small For a coffin? Yes, I think it is. Does Jesus have My too-small baby In His tender arms? Yes, I think He does. There is so much I do not know About you-my child- He, she? quiet or restless? Will I recognize Someone I knew so little about, Yet loved so much? Yes, I think I will. Ah, sweet, small child Can I say That loving you is like loving God? Loving-yet not seeing, Holding-yet not touching, Caressing-yet separated by the chasm of time. No tombstone marks your sojourn, And only God recorded your name. The banquet was not canceled, Just moved. Just moved. Yet a tear remains Where baby should have been.

REMEMBER THAT HEAVEN MAKES OUR ENEMY DEATH TO BECOME OUR FRIEND .

- 1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Death rescues us from the endlessness of this existence; it is the means by which those who love God finally are brought to Him. Paul had no illusions as to whether heaven was better than earth. He was itching to depart and to be with Christ, which "is far better."
- Even our heroic attempts to live one day longer with respirators and other high-tech equipment would seem unnecessary if we could see what awaits us. Only on this side of the curtain is death our enemy. Just beyond the curtain the monster turns out to be our friend. The label "Death" is still on the bottle, but the contents are "Life Eternal. "
- Death is our friend because it reminds us that heaven is near. How near? As near as a heartbeat; as near as an auto accident; as near as a stray bullet; as near as a plane crash. Death is not the end of the road; it is only a bend in the road. The road winds only through those paths through which Christ Himself has gone. This Travel Agent does not expect us to discover the trail for ourselves. Often we say that Christ will meet us on the other side. That is true, of course, but misleading. Let us never forget that He walks with us on this side of the curtain and then guides us through the opening. We will meet Him there, because we have met Him here.
- The tomb is not an entrance to death, but to life. The sepulcher is not an empty vault, but the doorway to heaven. When we die, nothing in God dies, and His faithfulness endures. Little wonder the pagans said of the early church that they carried their dead as if in triumph! Aristides, a first-century Greek, marveled at the extraordinary success of Christianity and wrote to a friend, "If any righteous man among the Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby ." And so it is. At death believers set out from one place to another. There is reason for sorrowing but "not as those who have no hope." Such confidence makes the unbelievers take notice that Christians die differently. Christ assures us, "Where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

[1] John Phillips, Revelation, p.

[2] Morgan in *The Gospel According to Matthew* [New York: Revell, 1929], pp. 64-65).

[3] Heaven," author unknown, in *Poems That Live Forever*, comp. Hazel Felleman (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 331. A version of this poem has also appeared under the title "The Homeland," attributed to Myrtle Erickson in *Knight's Master Book of New Illustrations*, comp. Walter B. Knight (1956; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987). p. 279.

[4] Adapted, drawn, and quoted from Ryken, Leland; Wilhoit, James C.; Longman III, Tremper, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press) 2000, c1998.

[5] The epithet "God of heaven" is recurrent in the OT (e.g., Gen 24:7; 2 Chron 36:23; Neh 2:4). In Isaiah's vision of heaven the train of God fills the space (Is 6:1). In the parallel passage in Ezekiel the vision of what the prophet sees "above the firmament" is likewise dominated by the figure of God (Ezek 1:26-28). Throughout the heavenly visions of Revelation the presence of God and Christ is a constant reference point for what happens in heaven. Heaven is nothing less than the "holy and glorious habitation" of God (Is 63:15 RSV; cf. Deut 26:15). At the top of the ladder joining heaven and earth in Jacob's vision stands God (Gen 28:13). When the dying Stephen gazes into heaven, he sees God and Christ (Acts 7:55-56).

[6] Drawn from John Piper, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight: The Glorified God and the Satisfied Soul*.

[7] Paraphrased from portions of Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 46-60.

[8] Steve Saint, "Did They Have to Die" *Christianity Today*, 16 September 1996, 26.

[9] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 62-67.

[10] Alexander Maclaren quote.

[11] Paraphrased from portions of Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 81-95.

[12] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 141-143.

[13] Erwin W. Lutzer, *How You Can Be Sure That You Will Spend Eternity With God*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1996, p. 112-121.

[14] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, p. 46-60.

[15] The Alliance Witness, 16 September 1987, 14.Used by Permission.

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