

## **The Wednesday Word, Mar. 11, 2009: The Gospel and a Good Death: Part 2**

“Look by faith to your dying, buried, risen, ascended, glorified Lord. Nothing will more powerfully overcome both the poison and the fears of death, than the believing thoughts of him that has triumphed over it.

Richard Baxter: Directions for a Peaceful Death

In last week’s Wednesday Word, we discussed how that, because of the lack of gospel driven ministry, countless numbers of Christians do not know how to die well. When a man is on his deathbed, he’s not going to thank his pastor for having taught him how to be an emotional success in life. All the self-help and self-improvement techniques will be useless at that stage. On our deathbeds we will have a different set of priorities. Spurgeon says,

“— go and see some of our dying friends; go and talk to them about politics and they will look you in the face and say, “Oh, I am going from this time-state: it is a very small matter to me what political change will be carried out.” You will not find them much interested in that matter. Well, then, sit down and talk to them about the weather, and how the crops are getting on-”Well, it is a good prospect for wheat this year.” They will say, “Ah, my harvest is ripening in glory.” Introduce the most interesting topic you can, and a believer, who is lying on the verge of eternity, will find nothing precious in it; but sit down by the bedside of this man, and he may be very near gone, almost unconscious, and begin to talk about Jesus-mention that precious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening name Jesus, and you will see his eye glisten, and the blanched cheek will be flushed once more-”Ah,” he will say, “Precious Jesus, that is the name which calms my fears, and bids my sorrows cease.” You will see that you have given the man a strong tonic, and that his whole frame is braced up for the moment. Even when he dies, the thought of Jesus Christ and the prospect of seeing him shall make him living in the midst of death, strong in the midst of weakness, and fearless in the midst of trembling. And this proves, by the experience of God’s people, that with those who believe in him, Christ is and ever must be a precious Christ.

CHS: Christ Precious to Believers: Sermon No. 242

Sin introduced death to the human race: however, according to the book of Hebrews, Christ purged our sins before He sat down at God’s right hand (Hebrews 1:3). We need to let this sink in! At the cross, Christ did away with our sins and uncleanness. At the cross, our sins were judged, punished and paid for before we had even committed them! If you believe this you will have a good death.

So how did Christ purge our sins? By his teaching? By his kind words? By his miracles? No “By Himself.” He Himself purged our sins—He is the Lamb who has taken away our sins, He is the one, “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” He is the One who “By his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” He is the one who “offered himself without spot to God” He is the One who gave himself for us; He Himself is our ransom! Believe this and you will have a good death.

So where are your sins? He has purged them! That means they are gone! Our sins and their filth have been effectively taken away, once for all! Look around you, where are your sins? —They don't exist—they are purged—they have been, not merely forgiven, they have been paid for by blood, the blood of the God/Man. Because of the cross we have been rendered clean! We sometimes forget that in the Old Testament the atonement, left the believers clean, Leviticus 16:30 says "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." How much more then does the true priest, the Lord Jesus by His atonement declare us clean before God. Believe this and you will have a good death!

So where are your sins? I'll tell you where; God said, "I will cast all their sins behind my back." Where is that? Spurgeon tells us, "It is nowhere, for God is everywhere present, seeing everything. So that is where my sins have gone; I speak with the utmost reverence when I say that they have gone where Jehovah himself can never see them. Christ has so purged them that they have ceased to be." Our sins are now done away with in Him. Believe this and you will have a good death.

Although we were guilty, vile, helpless and judged worthy of death (Romans 1:18-3:20), in the gospel, God Himself came along side us in the Person of the Son and stood up for us. This is unspeakable mercy and immeasurable love. Christ Jesus, because of His great love for us, became our representative and bore our sins on the terrible cross. And He was glad to do it; He was willingly judged and found worthy of death, not for his own sins, but for ours. Believe this and you will have a good death.

When God publicly placarded Christ as a wrath offering (Romans. 3:25; 1 John 2:2), He really dealt with our sins. Our sins were really punished in Christ, really paid for and really put away. If you embrace this you will have a good death.

Being justified, we are now accounted as innocent and free from our sins in the eyes of the Judge. Our sins have already been punished and it is, therefore, not possible for God to find any sin in His people. In God's courtroom there is no double jeopardy. A penalty cannot be legally demanded twice. No believer can be charged, therefore, for a debt that has already been fully paid on his behalf. Rest in this and you will have a good death.

Christ has gone on to prepare a place for us that where He is we may be also. He is already in Heaven, His work is finished, His salvation is perfect, complete and all-sufficient. Do you, from your heart, believe this? The Lord Jesus Himself has personally removed every barrier that blocked our access to Glory. We will not perish, we have and will have eternal life—this is a guaranteed gift to all believers (John 3:16). All that remains to happen is for the unveiling of the fullness of everything that has already been accomplished in Christ. Rest on these things and you will have a good death!

The Christ who was crucified is risen and you are reckoned in Him as perfect and righteous before God. That's the way God sees it and who are we to argue with Him? We are free from sin, already judged righteous, pure, perfect, and are sitting at His own right hand in heavenly places. The believer who, by faith, rests in these gospel truths can face death in quiet confidence.

And that's the Gospel Truth!

PS - One of the ways to prepare for a good death is to fill ourselves with gospel truths found in the Word. To help you to do this, you may want to look up these scriptures, study and memorize them, Romans 8:33, Romans 8:34, Rom 8:35-37, Romans 8:38-39, John 5:24; John 10:27-30; Isaiah 44:22; Romans 4:4-8; Hebrews 8:12; Isaiah. 40:11; John 6:37; 1 Corinthians 15:55; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, 6-8, John 11:25; 2 Timothy 1:9-10.

Blessings

Miles