

The Wednesday Word, September 16, 2026: The Gospel and a Good Death - Part 1

D G Miles McKee

"Faith, and faith only, can enable a man to look death in the face, and say, 'I depart in peace.'" JC Ryle

Some years ago, a surgeon at a hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, approached a well known preacher and bluntly said, "In the name of God pastor, would you teach your people how to die." The pastor's church was famous for its emotionally charged, meetings. Revivalists would stop by on their way through town and 'glory' filled meetings would take place. Excitement and blessings were standard fare, but despite this, when it came time to check out, no one knew how to die.

But does anyone really know how to die?

Yes indeed, those who know and love the Gospel understand how to have a good death. They know that death, the final enemy, is like a giant scorpion, but for the believer, its sting has been removed. As William Romaine rightly observed, *'Death stung himself to death when he stung Christ!'*

The Gospel releases us to both live and to die well. However, to both live and die well we need to know that the sin and death problem has really been solved. We need to ask ourselves, therefore, do we believe the Gospel or is it merely a theory for us? Do we, from the depth of our beings, trust that Christ Jesus is the One who has already and finally dealt with our sin? (Hebrews. 1:3; 9:26; 1 Corinthians 15:21).

In the Gospel, the Christ event, we discover that the Lord Jesus utterly defeated, disarmed and destroyed all the demonic powers that were displayed against us. He routed, stripped and expelled them in His awesome, sovereign, conquering act at Calvary (See Colossians 2:15). If you trust this truth, you will die well. If, however, you have spent your life focused on so-called blessings and experiences you may well have to face death with an impending sense of terror. I have seen this! I have been called to deathbed scenes of church folk who have not been bathed in the Gospel. Their church lives had been one of jumping from some new experience to the next.

Having been exposed to a steady diet of believer centered preaching- --- they were ill-prepared to die well.

Death and dying are among the most neglected teachings in our churches. Let's face it, none of us like to be confronted with our mortality. Death is a dark and sinister subject for many of us. We prefer to equip ourselves for life rather than death. We never wave at a passing hearse and say, 'Great stuff, I'm going to be in there one day.' We have, after all, a God given bias towards life. We were not created to die, but because of sin we all will. We have an unbreakable appointment with the last enemy: we can't dodge it; we must face it. Unless the Lord returns, 100% of those reading these words will die.

Many people try to put death out of their minds. One French monarch went so far as to not even allow anything about death to be mentioned in his presence. One day his secretary began to read out the words of a communiqué relating to the recent death of

the King of Spain that began, "The death of the king of Spain," Instantly, the French monarch went ballistic saying, "What is that? What is that?" He was furious that such a word as 'death' should be mentioned in his presence! The secretary, a past Master of Diplomacy, then said, " There has been a circumstance which occasionally happens to Kings of Spain."

Some people are just as absurd as that French monarch; they refuse to face the fact that there is no way out of this life alive! So, let's say it again, unless the Lord returns, 100% of those reading these words will die. Each one of us should, therefore, ask ourselves, are we preparing to die well!

To be continued.

And that's the Gospel Truth!