



The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ

in Guinnett

Death and Taxes

By Bill Francis

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Evangelist

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Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
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Sherry Rouse

Teens

John and Marisabel
Becker

Deacons

Peter Berry
Steve Collier
Danny Doble
Danny Emmett
Audie Flowers
Bill Francis
Patrick Freeman
Glenn Hayes
Kendall Knight
Karl Lynn
Russ McGarr
Alvin Modest
Jeff Mueller
Todd Reynolds
Dan Stehr
Ken Watson

Recently, I have been thinking more and more about death. Why shouldn't I; aren't death and taxes the only true certainties in life? Not really, but you get my point.

My focus has not been simply on my personal immortality but of death in general. This is quite a deviation for me because my nature is to focus so much on day to day activities such as the job search, paying bills, reaching the lost, and the spiritual and physical needs of my family. However, recent events have caused me to ponder the concept of death more closely. Take, for instance, the mysterious deaths of 228 people on the Air France flight. Or the children who died in the daycare fire. Maybe it was the car accident that killed the popular football coach who was weeks away from getting married. Could it be the perplexing number of murder-suicides in this country? Most have been committed by men distraught over the economy leading them to kill their entire families and then themselves.

For whatever the reason, whether by man's choosing or God's will, death is a

certainty for all of us. But the thought of death need not be distressing. Death is a normal part of life that should be embraced. Too often it's the ignorant, uninformed and unprepared that fears the sting of death. Let's look at three things that have helped me grasp the significance of death in my life.

Grief and Suffering Are Natural Precursors to Death

In Genesis 3: 17-19 God tells Adam that because of his disobedience he would be given the task of producing food by the sweat of his brow. That would be his lot until he returns to the dust of the Earth. As a result of Adam's sin, we all face certain consequences: Romans 5:12 states, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned." Consequently, our death sentence also means that we experience everything in between; pain, suffering, physical hurt, and mental and emotional anguish.

(continued on next page)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thu. 6/25: Missions Contribution
Sat. 7/18: Mother/Daughter Tea (Middle Schoolers and Teens)
Sun. 7/19: Father/Son Tag Football (Middle Schoolers and Teens)
9/11-13: Marriage Retreat "Always & Forever"
Winshape Retreat in North Georgia – Speakers: Jim and Virginia Lefler (Chicago Church of Christ)

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Death and Taxes

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In the midst of being tested by God Job asks, “Why was I not stillborn? Why didn’t I die as I came from the womb?” No place in scripture chronicles the sufferings of man more than through the life of Job. But Job was not the only person in history to deal with adversity. David said in [Psalm 34:19](#) *that many adversities come through the one who is righteous, fortunately, the Lord delivers him from them all.* We can all relate to this. My set of trials and circumstances may not be yours and yours may not be mine but we all have a cross to bear. It’s how we deal with these challenges that prepare us for death.

The Apostle Paul calls them light and momentary troubles. Easy for him to say! Think of David’s adversities: the deaths of both his baby and his son Absalom and the threats by Saul shaped his character and dependence on God. If he had given up along the way we wouldn’t have the wonderful Psalms to be encouraged by or the hope of seeing him in Heaven. In fact, what we love most about David is that he had a story to tell and it was entitled “My Walk with God”. We should all have a story to tell. But keep in mind that confronting grief and suffering will be a key chapter in that story.

To Understand Death Is to First Appreciate Life and Its True Purpose

I recall a young man some 35 years ago who spent a great deal of his time as a teenager pondering the meaning of life. He knew there had to be more to life than eating, sleeping, and working but could not figure out what it was. That young man was me! My life was void of anything that was truly satisfying, until one day, as I was reading the Bible, I came across [Matthew 4: 18-20](#) where Jesus exhorted Peter and Andrew to come follow him, and that he would make them fishers of men. It was there that I realized that I had been created for the purpose of glorifying God and proclaiming His will to others.

There is nothing more freeing than to know what you’re supposed to be doing with your life. Everything else pales in significance in comparison to the great calling we have in Christ. Whether it’s working on a job or helping a neighbor, all our waking thoughts should center on sharing Jesus, The Bread of Life, with others. Understanding and fulfilling your purpose in life prepares you for what’s to come later.

Just imagine being in Jesus’ place as he unrolled the scroll in [Luke 4:17](#) and proclaimed who he was by saying, “*Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your listening*”. Jesus knew that he had a window of three and one half years to influence as many people as possible and he beamed with excitement over the mission the Father had bestowed upon him. Likewise, if we approach our purpose in the same way, how can we not be excited about hearing God one day say “Well done good and faithful servant”?

Death Is Not the End But the Beginning of True Life

It has been said that a man is not free to live until he is free to die. Once we understand that death is a reward and not a punishment we are truly free to impact the world. As the Apostle Paul describes our bodies as tents in [II Corinthians 5](#), he also makes note of the fact that one day that tent will be replaced with something immortal. Now that’s an upgrade! I want the model with all the bells and whistles. He further expounds on this concept in [I Corinthians 15:52-55](#): *We will not all fall asleep but we will all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will be sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. Because this corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal will be clothed with immortality. Now when this corruptible is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place: Death has been swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? Where O Death, is your sting?*

Christians will not experience the Second Death mentioned in [Revelation 20:13-15](#), which Satan and his followers will experience. Let us be encouraged because death for us represents a cessation of pain, suffering, disappointment and anguish and the beginning of everything that God has prepared for those who have the determination to persevere to the end. Some people may be able to avoid paying taxes but not death. What a blessing it is to approach death with confidence knowing that God has prepared a life that far exceeds the life we live on this Earth.

Move Your Mountain

By Russ McGarr

Recently I climbed Stone Mountain with the Church middle-schoolers & teens. As I stood at the base preparing for the climb, I began to reflect on one of the mountains that was an obstacle in my life, spiritually, for some time.

In life, each of us has our mountains to overcome or conquer. In Matthew 17:20, Jesus said, "*I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*" I remember being a newly baptized Christian reading these words, and I was struck by the enormity of this statement. I was amazed at the power our faith can have, and I began to wonder what mountain God would move out of my life.

It did not take long to figure out which mountain needed to be moved first. Up to that point in my life I had dealt with my disappointments and challenges with anger. As men, I think anger is something that many of us use to cope when things do not turn out our way. I was pretty good at using my anger to settle disagreements between my wife and me and to discipline my children when they did not behave the way I expected.

Because I became a Christian at age thirty, I had to re-learn many of the ways I do things. And right after my baptism, I began to get help from our discipleship partners. I am forever in their debt for all the time and effort they gave to help me become the man God wants me to be. As God worked on my heart, I learned to be a more patient and loving husband and father. I eventually began to see changes in my character that I never dreamed were possible. As I stood before Stone Mountain and looked up, I clearly saw how God's hand has guided me through my faith in Him. I do have occasional set backs, but nowhere near how I used to react to these types of situations.

My wife and I have a stronger and more loving marriage now than when we first wed twenty-six years ago. Also, through the years I have seen my children grow up before my eyes to be young adults that I am very proud of. Instead of the fear I saw in their eyes when they were young, I see love. We still enjoy spending time together doing things or just talking, and I consider each of my three children to be friends also.

I share this to encourage each one of you – whether you're a newly baptized Christian or have been around for a while – that God's miracles happen every day. But to see mountains being moved in our life, I think the first step for us is to identify the mountains that need to be moved. The second would be to put it before God with prayer and fasting (Proverbs 16:3). The third step would be getting plenty of advice and help from other brothers and sisters who know you (Proverbs 15:22). The last is to be steadfast in your faith, because many changes do not happen overnight. And remember that all things are possible with God (Mark 10:27).

As I thank God for this mountain being moved out of my life, I also eagerly await Him to move the next one.

The Most...

The most destructive habit...

Worry

The greatest joy...

Giving

The greatest loss...

Self-respect

The most satisfying work...

Helping others

The ugliest personality trait...

Selfishness

The most endangered species...

Dedicated leaders

Our greatest natural resource...

Our youth

The greatest "shot in the arm"...

Encouragement

The greatest problem to overcome...

Fear

The most effective sleeping pill...

Peace of mind

The most crippling failure disease...

Excuses

The most powerful force in life...

Love

The most dangerous pariah...

A gossip

The world's most incredible computer...

The brain

The worst thing to be without...

Hope

The deadliest weapon...

The tongue

The most power-filled words...

I can!

The greatest asset...

Faith

The most worthless emotion...

Self-pity

The most beautiful attire...

A smile!

The most prized possession...

Integrity

The most powerful channel of communication...

Prayer

The greatest gift of all...

Jesus

The greatest Father of all...

God

Author unknown

Contributed by Anne Williams and edited by Sherry Rouse

Deacon's Directory

Karl Lynn	New Members	770-979-4292
Ken Watson	Benevolence	678-376-2677
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Danny Doble	Spanish Translation	770-931-0601
Audie Flowers	Visitation	770-277-5749
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	High School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Alvin Modest	Worship	678-344-0061
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Jeff Mueller	Benevolence	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

Contribution

5/17 - \$9,915

5/24 - \$6,661

5/31 - \$10,002

6/07 - \$7,372

6/14 - \$8,238

Family Group Leaders

Peter & Nancy Berry	Suwanee	678-376-1878
Steve & Barbara Collier	Lilburn	770-717-5784
Jim & Chandra Dew	Lilburn	770-330-3479
Danny & Cynthia Doble	Lilburn	770-931-0601
Audie & Jackie Flowers	Snellville	770-277-5749
James & Quiana Martinez	L'ville	678-985-5511
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Ricky & Bridgett Roberson	Snellville	770-879-0868
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