



"The nearness of God, secured by the gospel, is a source of all kinds of comforts and wisdom."

—Ed Welch

04-Aug-23

Comfort One Another With These Words

Back in the summer of 2003, I plugged a few pieces of information into the website Deathclock.com, and it soon spit out that I had 575,122,423 seconds left to live, providing my projected day of death: Thursday, September 9, 2021. The website gave me three options: 1. Delay the date of my death through proper nutrition. 2. Freeze my body for possible future reanimation (to be brought back as a vegetable, no doubt). 3. Pre-plan my funeral arrangements. I must have done something right!

We can rarely predict when death will occur. Many factors affect a person's longevity—some we have control over and some we do not. There are positive effects—God's will, righteousness, and nutrition—and on the flip side, negative ones: [carelessness](#), war, and destructive behaviors like inactivity, smoking, and gluttony.

We experience death on television or in movies as an overwhelming flood that numbs us into emotionless absorption. A second or third death anesthetizes us against sympathy and compassion for the victims. Even the deaths of real individuals on the nightly news can result in a reaction of remote, unreal indifference.

Death at a distance may fascinate us, but we do not like it up close and personal. Upon the death of a close friend or family member, we experience emotions that catch us off guard. It rattles our feelings like nothing else we face. Unprepared for such a shock, uncomfortable feelings settle deep down into the pit of our stomachs, sickening us and making us feel helpless.

During his life, [King David](#) of Israel experienced a great deal of death, and he desired to fly from its terrors. He expressed his emotions with words of despair:

My heart is severely pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest." ([Psalm 55:4-6](#))

Most people experience similar times of despair from time to time, and for the average non-Christian, this empty, helpless feeling receives little or no comfort from the Scriptures and Jesus Christ's reassuring teachings since they have no [faith](#) in these things. Most people view even Jesus' death casually at best.

In contrast, those who obey and truly [love God](#) receive a true understanding of death's function in human existence and Christ's good news of what is to come after it. We know that all who have died are still dead and buried in their graves, awaiting a future resurrection. Jesus asserts, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven" ([John 3:13](#)). Peter affirms that not even David has ascended into the heavens but awaits resurrection from his grave like all the faithful ([Acts 2:29](#), 34; see Hebrews 11:39-40). The apostle Paul explains that the dead in Christ will rise first:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in

the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words ([I Thessalonians 4:15-18](#)).

True Christians live and die as others do, but we are never alone—especially in times of despair. Does God really notice whether those who follow Him live or die? David answers this question with simplicity, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" ([Psalm 116:15](#)). God the Father is forever [merciful](#) in His care for us and in providing comfort:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord [Jesus Christ](#), the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. ([II Corinthians 1:3-5](#)).

Many times, He provides that comfort through members of His church. All Christians have a responsibility to comfort others with words of hope regarding God's promise of resurrection to eternal life and the benefits of overcoming [sin](#).

Death, the end of the human life cycle, is only the beginning of a future joyous time for those who have an intimate relationship with their Creator:

"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." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." ([Revelation 21:4-7](#))

Let us comfort one another with these words.

- Martin G. Collins

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Death: The End of the Beginning](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

It is a perfectly natural human reaction to fear death. We don't have God's mind on this subject as Christ had and the Apostle Paul had to grow into. Looking at death as "gain," Jesus and Paul calmly looked upon death as a natural part of life, as a transition to a better life, after this life, a time death would be "put to death" (Hosea 13:14, I Corinthians 15:54-55) The Great White Throne Judgment depicts a time when billions, resurrected with new bodies of God's manufacture, totally without spot of disease, full of vigor, without the hindrance of Satan the Devil, will be infused with hope and an opportunity to yield to God's purpose for their lives. In the meantime, God's called out ones must also cultivate a different, more hopeful perspective on the subject of death and resurrection.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Eight\): Death](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

It is amazing to consider that, despite the fact that every human being will face death, so very few take the time to contemplate it, much less prepare for it. In covering the comparisons in Ecclesiastes 7:1-4, John Ritenbaugh surveys the Bible's attitude toward death, particularly its insistence that we should allow the reality of death to change our approach to life.

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