

## Blessed Are Those Who Die In the Lord

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Let's pray again. *Ah, Lord, what have you done? What have you done, what have you done? Sending your Son to die for sinners, to redeem, to rescue fallen man. What have you done, Lord, that we're here today to sing your praises, and once we went our own way like sheep, and once we talked our own praises when once, Lord, we didn't care, we didn't know, we didn't pay any attention, we didn't pay any attention to You, we didn't pay any attention to what You did at Calvary. We were ignorant, we were far off. What have You done, Lord, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Yourself? What have You done to bear our own sins in Your body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. What have You done? What have You done, to be a sacrifice for us? We exclaim this morning how blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. How blessed is the man to whom You impute righteousness without works. What have You done, Lord, to go on ahead of us, before us, to make a way into the holiest, and make a way, Lord, that we should be, that we should be with You. These mysteries, Lord, we see, these mysteries we see them dimly, we see them really. Lord, we're glad to be on Your side. We're glad, Lord, to be with your people. I thank you, Heavenly Father, for the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints. I thank you for these dear saints of God, thank you for this testimony you've raised up. Thank you, Lord, for, for the working of the Spirit, of the working of your finger, the working of your hand, of the working of your arm. And thank you, Lord, for your saints of God. Lord, you've called us saints, not sinners. You've called us sheep, not goats. You've called us friends, not enemies. You've called us sons, not cursed but blessed. We wait on you today. Our eyes are upon you today. We can't see enough, we can't tell enough, talk enough, we cannot sing your praises worthily. And so we're thankful, Lord, to be right here, right now, and ask your blessing. Amen.*

Oh you've prayed for me and I feel so unworthy. You've thought about me, I feel so unworthy. I don't know, it's just the love of the Spirit, that's the phrase that Paul uses in Romans 15. Now you've prayed me down here, and I tremble. It's like a dream, my wife and

I never thought or imagined it could be. And, we just long for, I don't know. You know how it is, imagine how it is, we asked God, "Would you give us one more trip together?" And we didn't think there was any way. Not to mention San Antonio. And, we wanted to see James and Bethany and see them married like this and live a little with them. and see their house, and see their hearts. And, we wanted to see you all too.

I am thankful to know some of you. Only the Day can make us really appreciate one another, know one another, enjoy one another. You know more about me and I don't know you. I'm looking for the day when we'll know one another and know God, know the Lord Jesus as we're known. I hope you'll excuse us for not staying around afterwards for the meal. I feel like, at least right now, we ought to climb in the car and head back north, not presume, but be on our way. I know you'll understand.

And, so I'd like to call your attention this morning to a text that God has made so real to me and I'd like to try to underline it, like to magnify it to you. God has given us so much to say, He's given us so much to tell. He's given us so much, and how can we say it? How can we tell it all? What can we say? What little part can be imparted? I believe God has quickened this verse to me, and so I invite you to Revelation Chapter 14. And let's read this paragraph.

Revelation 14 verse 9, "Then another angel, a third one, followed them," the first two that is. "saying with a loud voice." Some things ought to be said with a loud voice, hadn't they? Loud and clear. "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark in his forehead or in his hand, he will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger. And he will be tormented," not might be, but he will be tormented. "with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever ," there's no more clear verse on eternal punishment than this, "and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name." That is, you can sum it up in, those who serve sin. Verse 12, "Here is the perseverance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." And now verse 13 is what we're after, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' Yes,' says the Spirit , so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.'" Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

You all have prayed for me that I might not die but live. And the end's not over yet. But it looks like, it looks like I'm gonna die, not live. It looks like the Lord's prayer is

overriding your prayers. He prayed that those whom the Father had given Him would be where He is and behold His glory. And so what can we do, what can we do as we think about one another, as we think about, what can do but say, "Lord, ultimately, Your will be done. Not mine." And that's where we're at.

Look at the certainty of this blessing. It is a beatitude. You know, it's kinda like the beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, blessed are the poor, blessed are the pure, blessed are the persecuted, and so on. It's Kinda like that. There's some beatitudes that we don't think much about. Like Matthew 11 verse 6, "Blessed is the man who doesn't stumble over Me." We don't think much about that. Here's another one of these beatitudes and it says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." First of all, think of the certainty please, of this blessing. As indicated by these words at the beginning of verse 13, "I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write." It's solid enough, you can write it down. It's certain enough that you can write it down. And it says that this is a voice from heaven. When you come face to face with death, you want that, right? You want a voice from heaven. It doesn't matter what parents tell you. It doesn't matter what pastor tells you. It doesn't matter what wife tells you. It doesn't matter what some pope or president could tell you. You need a word from God. You need a word, a voice from heaven. You need to hear a voice from heaven, that is a realm outside of this earth. From another realm!

Man's words, man's comforts, they will not do as you're thinking about headed out into eternity, being launched out into eternity, being launched out into an area you've never been before. And you know it's gonna last forever and ever. You need a word from God, you need to make sure you heard the word from God, you've heard a voice from heaven. Jesus said, "He who hears my voice," over and over again, "shall not die but live." And, so I am thankful at such a time as this, to have a certain word. You know, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away." They seem so stable, they seem so sure, they seem so solid. What can cancel ? A lot of events on earth can get cancelled, but you wouldn't think heaven and earth could. But it will. It'll pass away, with a great noise and a fervent heat. But, heaven and earth will pass away but the word of God, the word of Jesus. The word of God ,it will not pass away. It says that the Scripture cannot be broken. A lot of things, you buy them, and you think, "This is permanent. This wood's been treated, this car's supposed to last so many miles, and this thing will not break." You know, you get a tool, and here it breaks before ten days are up. And the Scripture cannot be broken.

And so, don't you love the Word of God today? You know, when you come, brethren, when you come to face death, you know you're gonna die. You're all in the same boat that I'm in. There's nothing special about me. Yes, I'm a dying man indeed speaking to dying men. But, I'm telling you, nothing special about me, not at all.

But, there is something special when you're tied to the track and you hear the train coming. And I can tell you, that when you're facing death you're going to be so thankful that you know all the Bible you know. You're going to be so thankful you memorized every promise. You'll be so thankful you know all the Bible you know, you've hidden it all in your heart, and you can say this verse and that verse is my intimate friend. You come down to the end and you cannot believe the way that you're attacked, the way you're assailed, the way fears can creep in. I mean, it's all been casual before. What is your life? It's but a vapor. What is it? A vapor that appears for a little while and then passes away. You know that. And I've known that verse in James, but yet you don't know it the way you ought to know it. You don't feel it the way you ought to feel it. Like one person said, one thing about cancer, you've got a chance to think, you've got a chance to prepare for death and for eternity. And so, you can be thankful for everything you know about the Bible, all the knowledge of God you've got. All the knowledge of Christ you've got, all the appreciation of Calvary you got. And Jesus dying to put away your sins.

When you come to the end, and you ask, "Lord, do I really know you? Do I really know you? Have I really been rescued? Have I really been redeemed? Do I really have a saving knowledge of the Living God? Are my sins really gone?" And I'll tell you what brethren, my dear brothers and sisters, you can be so thankful for all the assurance you got, all the assurance you've accumulated, that God has put in your soul. You can be so thankful when you come to the end. And I'll tell you what brethren, I'm gonna boast in Jesus Christ. I've had very little of that, very little. I remember there was one night when fear set in on me, a great horror of darkness. It wasn't long after I'd been diagnosed. It was a dark night. But I'll tell you, God's consolations are great. And that word in John 17, like I just quoted to you, where Jesus said, "Father I pray that those whom you've given me would be with me where I am." Things like that just come in melting over your soul. And you just, the fears are melted, the demons are chased, and you boast in Christ and go on. Come on, let's go. And, it's the Lord, it's the Lord, I'm telling you. I'm telling you there's certainty here. And that's great.

We as Christians can face the king of terrors with a shout!

The doctor, just the other day, the GI doctor. He said, "Here's your situation." And he said, "You don't have long." And I said to him, "Do I have 3 months?" He said, "No." He shook his head no. And I said, "I'm a Christian, I've been saved, my sins are forgiven," And I said, "Heaven is alright." Immortality is shouting ground, isn't it? I'm looking at the majestic ones. I'm looking at kings. The Lord bless you all. Let's look at a second heading. And, that is the irony of this beatitude.

It says, "Blessed are those, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Blessed are the dead? It's a blessing, you're telling me, to die? It doesn't sound right, does it? It doesn't make sense, does it? I mean, we didn't want to die. My wife didn't want me to die. We don't want one another to die. The saints don't want one another, the loved ones don't want us to die. What do you mean it's a blessing? How can that be? It doesn't seem like it's a blessing. And the Bible says that it's an enemy. You better believe it, it is an enemy. It is. It doesn't fit.

I mean, here we been created in the image of God, right David? And our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made. And it seems we're so special. You all are on the younger side or you wouldn't been able to stand out there like that, in the heat. And all of the strength that you have. All of the skill that you have. I mean, we're fearfully and wonderfully made. And, here all of a sudden, death comes on. And, I mean, comes on so suddenly. Up until just a few years ago I felt like I was still thirty. But now suddenly God, I mean, ultimately shoots His arrows at me. And the health is gone. And it comes and consumes that which is precious to us, like a moth. Our health is gone, things don't coordinate anymore, this doesn't work anymore. I can't lift up my head anymore. I can't sit at the desk anymore, the way I want. I can't sing anymore, the way I want. I can't give it the strength I'd like.

You know, you tend to think, "But that guy is sick. He's gonna be able to read his Bible more, and he's gonna be able to pray more." Forget it! It doesn't work that way. Everything's less. Death is an enemy.

And I'm telling you, I'm telling you, you better use your strength, you better use your youth. Every bit of it while you got it. You better make it count. You better make it count now. If you know it's right, if you know it's right, you better do it now. And get at it, don't postpone. Do not procrastinate. Don't do it! Don't say there's another day. Don't say there's greener grass on the other side. Don't be fooled like that, it's the devil's lie. Death is an enemy, and so we die.

Yeah, men of God go down, women of God go down, the saints of God go down. Why

do they go down? It seems like they have so much to contribute. They got so much to share. You got so much to share. God has built you, Mark! He's building a man of God. He's not troubled to do it. He's not worried about it. He's not anxious about it. He's not weak when it comes to building another man. And so He'll take you down. And it seems like all that accumulated wisdom, all that accumulated knowledge, And it seems to be so wasted. It seems like poured out milk, spilled wine. But I'm telling you, I say again, God, He's not weak, and it doesn't bother Him again to build another man. And He delights in it. It seems like He delights in the process as much as the end.

And so here you are, called to walk with God. Called to walk with God, on the face of the earth, in the midst of the devil's camp, right here to sing the songs of Zion in the enemy's camp. What a privilege is ours! What a privilege to hear the word of God. What a privilege to hold forth the truth of God, in the midst of a world of lies, lies! We have got so much truth, you've got so much truth here brethren, you be good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Good stewards, you take care of it, you cherish it, you memorize it, you preach it. You share it at the filling station, you share it at the grocery store. Get it out, someway, somehow. Live it! You may be the only Bible they read.

Bethany, I remember, she, when she, before she was married, yeah, I mean like what? years ago, when she was working for Taco Bell. She hadn't said much yet about Christ, somebody came up, I mean maybe nothing at the time! Somebody came up and said, "Why are you different?" You know, they recognize that her language and her conduct was different.

And so, how can this be? How can this be, that He pronounces a blessing on those who die? We go to the next phrase. There's a condition, right? It says how blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. The certainty of the blessing; secondly, the irony of the blessing; third, the condition of the blessing. It says, "How blessed are those who die in the Lord." If it didn't add that phrase on, there would be no blessing. It would be a curse indeed, it would be terrible indeed. But there is this phrase on here. "Die in the Lord."

Do you know? I hope you know, I believe you know this morning that there is only two categories, only two categories of humanity, right? Those who are in Christ, and those who are not. Those who have been born twice, and those who have only been born once. Those who have their sins forgiven, and those who are still in their sins. Those who are still natural men, as opposed to those who are spiritual men and women. And so there's two

categories. You need to ask yourself this morning, am I in Christ or not? Have I got a vital union with Him, or not? Have I been hooked up to Christ, or not? Am I in the flesh, or am I in the Spirit? You'd better ask, you'd better make sure of it. Don't leave anything uncovered. Make sure that Christ is in you. Without which you're a reprobate headed for hell.

There's two ways you can die. You can die in the Lord, or you can die in your sins. Jesus said repeatedly in John chapter eight that if you die in your sins, what? I can't remember it either. "Laughter" John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am he, you'll die in your sins." And, verse 21, it says that, "You will die in your sins. And, you will not be able to be where I am." You die in your sins, you perish. And people die, I've heard, and you know, people die in a car, they die in a house. They die in a hospital, they die in a manure pile. Terrible ends. But you do not want to die in your sins. And so you want to be sure that you can die, that you'll be dying in Christ, that your sins are forgiven, your iniquities are pardoned, that you know Christ, and that heaven is your home, your citizenship is in heaven, and glory, glory, glory awaits you, and Immanuel, in Immanuel's land. Do you know that your sins are forgiven? It's possible for that to happen, and it's possible for you to know it beyond a shadow of a doubt! I believe the Bible teaches infallible assurance, don't you?

So this is the condition. Number four, let's look at the explanation and the essence of this blessing. It says here in verse 13, "That they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them." Why is it such a blessing? Well, so much could be said. These two things are said. It says that they will rest from their labor. They will rest. And you can more appreciate that if you put it in light of what was just said about the wicked. It says up here in verse 11 that they have no rest, day and night. You know, sometimes when you're sick, if you don't get any rest at night, you get it at the daytime. But here it says they have no rest, day or night.

One time I was driving home, feeling it, and I thought about this, and I thought, "Forever, and ever and ever, their suffering will not stop." Do we believe it? We hardly do. But it says, we will rest from our labor. There is things that are described about our heavenly future, I mean, it says, the Lord calls it sleep. And that has been no small comfort to me. I've gone to sleep many times, I'm not a stranger to sleep. Sleep is okay. And so it's like the Lord is wanting to tell us, "It's alright!" You know, sleep in the Lord. Asleep in Jesus. It's called home, at home with Christ. Immortality begins. And so here's an explanation. "They shall rest from

their labors." I ask you today, are you doing, are you working, laboring for Christ? It's alright to go to work eight hours, and, as a doctor, as a janitor. That's alright. It's not that that doesn't count. You're doing that work as unto the Lord, right? You're doing the work as unto the Lord. And yet, over and above that, I ask are you specifically laboring to get the truth out? Are you specifically laboring for souls? That when you come to the end, you'll feel some relief?

"I've labored for Christ, I've labored for souls, I've labored to get the truth out, I've sacrificed, I've expended myself. And, therefore I look forward to resting from my labors." It says that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. It says here their deeds will follow with them. Think of it, I mean, the least little thing you do, a cup of cold water. I mean, our idle words are going to be judged. And so every good word, every deed you do, it is not in vain. And therefore, we ought to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing your labor is not in vain in Him. Get at it, brethren, keep at it, brethren. Your labor is not in vain, your deeds will follow, think of it! The Lord Jesus Christ not only saves us, He saves us totally apart from our works, but then He gives us a work to do, graciously gives us a work to do, and says that I'll reward you for it. And He says that "The sufferings of this present time is not even worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us."

It says our momentary light affliction, it works for us, it works for us. I like things that work, that produce, that are effective. And the Lord said it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Put your finger on it, put your soul on it. Count on it, that it's true. And we have to be about the Lord's work. Night is coming when man can work no more. You better do it now.

Finally, and last, we come to an encouragement, that is given us in this beatitude, in this blessing It says right before verse 12, let's not miss it, it says, "Here is the perseverance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." Where is the perseverance of the saints? Sometimes these words are put in there to where you don't know if it refers to the verse preceding or the verse following. I think it refers to both. And so, what is it that'll keep you persevering and steadfast and immovable and abounding and pressing on and staying true?

What is it that'll keep you from being swayed by the world, swayed by sin? It's the previous verse. It says they'll be tormented for their sins day and night. Yeah, there is a judgment coming, there is a great day of God, in which everything is going to be brought to light. God's gonna judge us, the deeds we did in our body, whether good or bad. We're gonna



have to given an account to God, and we don't want to be standing, we don't want to be there. And so, not only that, you see the unbeliever. And you see him prospering, you see him fat in the thigh. His eye is bulging, he doesn't have any problems, he's getting along quite well. He's handling life quite well. He's happy in the morning, he's happy at night, he's got his food to the full. His belly is fat, and he's not being chastened every morning, he's not being scolded, and it looks like he's getting along alright. And he's got his treasure alright. But, it's here on earth. And you see the latter end of the wicked. And you realize that God put their feet in slippery places. You realize that judgment is coming for that man. And you say, "No sir, sin is not worth it. I'm not gonna bend, I'm not gonna go that way. I'm not gonna side off with him. I'm not gonna envy the sinner! I'm gonna keep on with Christ. I'm gonna stay away from sin. I'm gonna abhor the world. My citizenship is in heaven. I'm not gonna be earthly minded. I'm gonna live for Christ, live for eternity. My home's not here, it's there! And I'm putting all my eggs in one basket. And so, that'll keep you persevering.

And then the other side of it is verse 13. Yeah, you'll rest from your labor and your deeds will follow with you. The Lord's not gonna pass you by. It's worth it, it is worth it! It is possible to do things for Christ and you suffer loss for it. If I wouldn't have done that, it wouldn't have happened. If I hadn't sacrificed for Christ, it wouldn't have happened. It looks like I'm disadvantaged because I did that or the other for the Lord. And don't believe it. Do not believe it ! Jesus did the will of God, and it killed Him. It got Him dead.

And, look at His example. Look at His example, now highly exalted with a name that is above every name. And for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, He despised the shame. Remember brethren, God is not going to be ashamed to call you His people if you're living for the heavenly city, if you're living for the heavenly country. He's not going to be ashamed to be called your God, to identify with you, to own you, and to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And to say, "I know you. Peter I know you. And Mark I know you, Tim I know you." And, instead of saying, "Depart from me, I never knew you." And so, Lord, Lord Jesus, He's able to reward us. He's able to make up, He's able to make up for anything, everything we've ever done. And say, "Come, enter into the joy of your Lord."

Brethren, here we are. Here we are, this morning. We had a little taste of the powers of the age to come. We sang those songs, and didn't you feel it, didn't you feel it? I can hardly go on singing, there's such glory there. Christ! Christ! He is everything for Him, all for Him, He deserves it all, He gets it all, I want to do all for Him. I want to be all for Him, I want to

finish well, I wanna be on the stretch for God. And you come to the end, and I'm telling you, brethren, one thing you don't want to have around your house, one thing you don't want to have around your heart, is sin! One sin is contraband! Especially at the end, you want a pure heart, you want a clear conscience. You don't wanna have sin dabbling around, hanging around your head. You don't wanna be messing with it. You don't wanna be struggling with sin. You wanna come to the end with victory over sin, where you've got dominion, where you've got victory. You know, you're not being defeated, you're not fiddling around with it. And that's where you're gonna boast, that's where you're gonna find your joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We've been given a taste of the powers of the age to come. It says taste, in Hebrews chapter six. You better believe it. Just a taste, and if we've just been given a taste, how much more there is. The streams of earth I've tasted. Far deep, more deep I'll drink above. And so, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. That's it, that's the ultimate, unless the Lord comes first, and we go without dying. What has the Lord done for us, that we will conquer the grave? Amen.

The Lord bless you. It's a privilege to share the word of God with you. Thank you for praying for me, I pray for you, that the Lord bless you and make you all burning and shining lights in this great and exceeding wicked city called San Antonio. You don't need to worry about going to the jungle somewhere, here's your jungle. Press on. My love to you, my love to you. Farewell. Goodbye, there's no goodbye. We'll see you in a little while, you won't be far behind me.