

ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?

HEBREWS 12: 14-17 • TV092A

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Hebrews 2:14-17

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

I want you to take your Bible today and open it to the book of **Hebrews**. I’d like for you to read with me **Hebrews chapter 2:14 and 15**.

Now, while you are finding the Scripture, **Hebrews 2:14 and 15**; I’m going to announce my subject and I believe you are going to be interested in the message. I hope that the Lord is pleased to speak through me for His glory and for your good.

Here is the subject: **“ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?”**

Paul writes in the book of **Hebrews 2:14**: *“For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood; (the children of God are flesh and blood, that’s what we are right now, we are flesh and blood) Jesus Christ himself likewise took part of the same, (that is He became a man).*

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He came down to this earth and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He had flesh and blood just like we have. He is God but He is perfect man. Through death (and our Lord died, He died on the cross, suffering death), *“that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

Do you fear death? Are you afraid to die? Have you been delivered from the fear of death or are you in bondage to the fear of death? If a man fears death he is in bondage all his life because death is sure and death is certain and he knows it.

And this is the subject today: **“ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE?”**

There’s deliverance from that fear. We have it right here in the Scripture; Christ came for that purpose, *“to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

Now listen to me for a little while, will you? Now let me make these statements in opening the message:

First of all: It’s a natural thing for a man to fear death; it’s a natural thing; do you know why? It’s because man was not originally created to die. He wasn’t created to die. God didn’t create Adam to die. *“God breathed into Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul.”*

There was no reason for unfallen man to die. There was no reason for Adam to die. He would have lived on if he had not sinned. But Adam sinned and the seeds of death and the seeds of corruption are in the flesh.

The Scripture says: *“By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, so death, (physical death, spiritual death, separation from God; all that is death) passed upon all men.”* That’s where we got this thing of death.

If man had continued in his unfallen state he would never have died. But because he sinned corruption is planted within his very bones and within his very nature and within his very being. And sin brought death and death passed upon all men. *“Now it’s appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment.”*

But this body seems to sense the fact that it wasn’t created to die. Your body senses that fact. I believe mine does. It senses the fact that it wasn’t made to die and therefore, it’s reluctant to die.

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So, I'm saying a fear of death is natural; it's natural for all men because man was not made to die.

Secondly: The fear of death in the natural sense is not all wrong! Now, for this reason; if men did not fear death, if women did not fear death, many people, (even some listening to my voice today) would take your own life to end your misery and your unhappiness. And you would take your life if you didn't fear death.

And one of the things that keeps you from taking your life is you are afraid to die. I'll tell you another thing that this fear of death serves and that is that it causes men to have a greater regard for human life. They fear to die and therefore they fear to take a life.

And another thing that it serves is this; it gives men and women a greater will to live under any and all circumstances. They fight death, they resist death, and they will to live. Therefore, a fear of death is a natural thing and it serves some good purposes.

But let me address believers, you who are Christians, you who believe on Christ, and you who know the Son of God. The fear of death in the believer produces many evil consequences. It produces many evil affects.

The believer ought not to fear to die for when we fear death:

First of all: Fear of death is dishonoring to God!

It is; it's dishonoring to God. It appears that when we are afraid to die that we can trust God in fair weather but we can't trust Him in the storm. That's what it looks like. It looks like that when we fear death that we can trust God when we are well but we can't trust Him when we are sick.

And we can trust God when we are young but He can't be trusted when we get old and when we near Jordan's shore and when we near the gates of death.

But do you know what Job said? *"Though he slay me I'll trust him."* David said: *"Yea; though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, thou art with me."*

A fear of death in a believer is dishonoring to His God. It is saying; "Yes; I can trust God when everything is going my way and when everything's well and I'm happy, but I can't trust God; He can't be trusted when I'm sick and diseased and near death."

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Secondly: I'll tell you another thing; fear of death dishonors our faith!

It dishonors our faith in the eyes of unbelievers. Now, whatever you say, unbelieving, ungodly men and women are impressed when a believer faces death calmly. I've seen this happen many times.

I've seen many believers die. I've been at their bedside often in their closing hours. And I've looked around at the family and other people and they have been impressed when a believer faces death with joy, certainty, submission, and happiness. It impresses the unbeliever.

But when that believer comes to die and he is afraid and he is reluctant to die, the unbeliever looks at him and says: "Well, you are acting like I would act. Your faith is no stronger than my faith. Your hope is no better than my hope."

And so really, it dishonors our faith in the eyes of unbelievers when we are afraid to die. Do you know what Paul said? He said: "*For me to live is Christ and for me to die is gain.*"

Thirdly: I'll tell you another thing that the fear of death produces and another result that's evil; it robs you of peace and joy!

If you are afraid to die and you realize that especially you who are older and you who are sick, if you are afraid to die; you are depriving yourself of the peace that Christ gives and the joy and the rest.

Fear of death will plunge you into despair and depression. Why should we fear to die? What trembling worms we mortals are. Death is the gate to endless joy and yet we dread to enter there, the pains, the groans, and the dying strife frightens our souls away and we hold to this frail, sinful, life. I wonder; are we fond of our prison? Are we fond of our clay?

Simeon held the child Jesus in his arms when Mary and Joseph brought Christ to the temple when he was just a baby. And Simeon, the old man, having come to the end of his journey lifted his eyes to heaven and he said: "*Lord, now let me depart in peace; I've seen thy salvation.*"

I want to depart in peace don't you? And fear of death will rob me of that peace and rob me of that joy. Let me die the death of the righteous and let my latter end be like his.

How do we get rid of the fear of death? Well, I'll tell you one thing; this fear of death that keeps us in bondage all our lives cannot be gotten rid of; it cannot be erased by ignoring it, now that won't do it.

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You can't just ignore death. I know a lot of people that try to do that; they try to ignore death. They try to pretend that it's not there. But that is not going to help us because it is there and we know it's there.

Fourthly: And another way; we will not get rid of this fear of death by joking about it!

Now death is not a joking matter. It is not a laughing matter. We need to get serious about this thing: *"It's appointed unto men once to die."* And all about us people are dying. Everybody has died with exception of Enoch and Elijah; they didn't die. But those are the only two men out of the millions that have lived on this earth who haven't died.

And we are not going to get rid of this fear of death by refusing to face it. And faultlessness; God has declared some things that we need to hear. And it can be done; you can be delivered from the fear of death.

And I will tell you by God's grace and led of His Spirit how this can be done if you are a believer:

First of all: We receive deliverance from the fear of death just like we receive every other spiritual blessing, by looking to Christ; that's right, by looking to Christ!

Everything is in Christ. He's the fountain-head of every blessing. He's the source of every mercy. He is the giver of every grace. He is the author of every faith.

And we will receive deliverance from the fear of death by looking to the source of mercy, grace, and faith, and that's to Christ our Lord. It says, *"He took flesh and blood that through death he might deliver us from the fear of death."*

How does Christ deliver us from the fear of death? How does looking to Christ deliver us from the fear of death? Well, here's the way, listen; here are two or three things:

First of all: He removes sin which is the sting of death! What is the sting of death? What makes death fearful? What makes death terrible? What makes death to be feared and be avoided? Sin; *"the sting of death is sin."* Sin is the cause of death and sin is the cause of fear that grips men's hearts because Christ said, "If you die in your sins you will forever be separated from God. If you die in your sins you will be brought to judgment to face those sins. If you die in your sins the wrath of God will be forever upon you."

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But, if sin be pardoned, if sin be removed, if sin be taken away; I'm secure and death hath no sting. The law gives sin its damning power but Christ my ransom died.

So, the way that Christ removes the fear of death is He removes the sin which is the sting of death. He removes the sin which is the cause of death. He removes the sin which makes death a horrible experience. I have no sin; therefore I need not fear to die.

Secondly: How does Christ remove the fear of death; by removing the sin?

Our sins are blotted out. Our sins are paid for. Our sins are forgiven. Our sins are no more.

**“With his spotless garments on
I'm as holy as God' Son.**

**Nearer so nearer to God
Nearer I cannot be
For in the person of His Son
I'm as near as He.”**

“Unreproveable, unblameable; I know my sins are blotted out,” the song writer said.

Secondly: Christ changes the character of death for the believer!

He changes the character of death. He said to Martha: *“Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”*

Now, believers do not die in the same sense that unbeliever's die. Now you need to listen here; believers, Christians, do not die in the same sense that other people die. Ungodly men die in order to endure the penalty of sin: *“The wages of sin is death.”*

The penalty of sin is death but Christ has borne our penalty. Christ has paid our debt. So, we have no penalty. And death for the believer is not a penalty; it is a privilege; it's a promotion.

Death for the believer is not an execution; it's deliverance. Death for the believer is not the end; it's the beginning. To die is to be with Christ. To die is to be like Christ. To die is to live forever.

So, the very character of death has been changed. It's no longer a penalty; it's a promotion. It's no longer an execution; it's deliverance. Death is no longer the end; it's the beginning.

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I read a newspaper article one time talking about a certain criminal that had been executed. It said, “The end comes to so-and-so.” Well, that’s not true; that’s not the end, it’s the beginning of sorrows. And for the believer death is not the end; it’s the beginning of happiness in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly: Christ removes the fear of death by assuring us that our souls upon death go immediately unto His presence!

What did he say to the thief on the cross? He didn’t say: “Now you’ll go to Purgatory and spend 200 years until somebody pays you out or prays you out.” That’s not what He said; He said, “*Today; thou shalt be with me in paradise, today.*” Wherever Christ is that’s where the believer is. His soul immediately goes to be with Christ.

You know, the apostle Paul didn’t say “To be absent from the body is to be in a soul sleep or a state of Purgatory or a state of punishment until God thinks maybe we paid the price and then takes us to heaven.”

Paul said, “*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*” That’s what he said. And the wise man in Ecclesiastes wrote: “*The body returns to the dust from whence it came and the soul to God who gave it.*” That’s what happens at death.

So, our Lord removes the fear of death. Don’t be afraid of going into some twilight zone when you die. “*If these bodies, (theses tabernacles), be dissolved; we have a building eternal in the heavens, not made with hands.*”

We have an abode. Our Lord said: “*I go to prepare a place for you.*” And He prepared that place where He is.

Fourthly: Our Lord removes the fear of death by assuring us of the resurrection of our bodies!

Christ not only redeemed our souls; He redeemed our bodies. He redeemed the whole man. He redeemed all of us. Christ said, “*Thy brother shall rise again.*” “*The dead in Christ shall rise,*” the Scripture says.

Oh yes, we will be sown or buried a natural body and we’ll be raised a spiritual body. We will be sown in corruption and raised in holiness and righteousness. We will be sown in weakness and raised in power.

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We will be buried wrinkled, old, gray, diseased, and sickly, but we will be raised in honor and power and glory. That's the promise of the Redeemer. He's going to raise us.

So, if you want to have the fear of death removed; look to Christ, look to Christ. He's the source of every mercy, every blessing, every benefit, and every gift from God. It's Christ Jesus. You look to Him.

He came down here to die, to deliver us from the fear of death which keeps us in bondage. The way He does it is removing sin and just blotting it out. It doesn't exist anymore.

And changing the character of death; it's not death to die, it's to go to be with the Lord. And assuring us that immediately upon death we are going to be with Christ. And some of these days he'll come back and raise our bodies.

All right, something else:

First of all: Look is the first thing. If you want to be rid of this fear of death, look!

Secondly: Think and meditate, well think about what preacher?

Well meditate on the promises of God and that will remove the fear of death. Now, here's what I am going to meditate about.

First of all: When I come to die I will do no more than my Lord's already done!

Our Lord died, our Lord died and rose again. "*Shall not the servant be as his master?*" If Christ died why shouldn't I die? If I profess to follow Christ shall I not follow him also to the grave and out again? Think about that!

Secondly: Death cannot separate me from Christ!

It may separate me temporarily from my friends and my loved ones but Paul wrote in **Romans 8:** "*Neither death nor life can separate me from the love of God.*" Christ said, "*I'll never leave you nor forsake you. Lo I'm with you always, even to the end of the world.*" Think about that!

Death cannot separate you. If He loves me today He'll love me tomorrow. He loves me if I'm well and alive. He loves me if my body is buried and my souls with Him. He loves me: "*He loves me with an everlasting love.*"

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Thirdly: Death will usher me directly into the presence of my Lord and into everlasting fellowship with my friends who have preceded me in death!

You think about that. Think what death is going to do; it's going to take you into the very presence of the Lord. It's going to take you into the presence of those to whom you've said good bye.

**“Friends will be there I've loved long ago
Joy like a river around me shall flow
Yet just a smile from my Saviour I know
Will through the ages be glory for me.”**

Death's going to usher me personally into the presence of my Lord. Rather than fearing death that would make us covet death.

And listen to this, death will bring an answer to all my prayers.

That's exactly right! Why should we fear to die? Death's going to bring an answer to all my prayers.

How often we pray to be rid of our troubles. We will be rid of them then. How often we pray to be rid of sin. We will be rid of it then. How often we pray to be rid of temptation. There's no temptation in death.

How often we pray for a full vision of sight, oh that I might see Him. I'll see him; I'll see him when I die. How often we pray to be like Christ, oh that I might be perfect and perfectly holy and just be just like my Lord. I will be then.

You see, death is going to bring an answer to all my prayers. One old hymn writer put it this way:

**“Father; I long, I faint to see
The place of thine abode
I'll leave these earthly courts
And flee up to thy throne.”**

A grain of wheat will abide alone unless it falls into the ground and dies. It's got to die. It's got to be buried to rise again. We've got to pass through Jordan to get to Canaan.

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That's the only way. There's no way around it except unless Christ comes. *"And then we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. Flesh and blood is not going to inherit the kingdom of God."*

We are going to be changed. There's a natural body and there is a spiritual body: *"In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye we shall be changed,"* but death's going to bring that change for most of us.

I'll tell you something else; we need to consider the glory, the glory which shall follow death.

That will help us remove the fear. One moment in heaven will be worth it all. Just think about it. There will be no more sin. There will be no more sorrow. There will be no more tears. There will be no more death and there will be no more night. That will be wonderful won't it? Well, now you think about that.

"And God shall be there God and dwell with them and God is going to wipe all tears from their eyes." The more you think about that and the more you contemplate the glory and joys which shall be yours and mine when we die, rather than fearing death; I think we will be like Paul and say: *"I have a desire to part and be with Christ which is far better, far better."*

Well, I told you if you want the fear of death removed to look, to look to Christ. And I told you to think, think upon the promises of God.

Now, I will give you something to do. There is something that you can do.

First of all: If I want the fear of death to be removed; here is something for me to do: Let me die daily, let me die daily.

Now, the man who has a daily rehearsal of death; that's what Paul said: *"I die daily."* And the man who has a daily rehearsal of death will not fear when the reality comes, when he thinks about it, when he weighs everything in the light of death, judgment, and meeting God.

Then, when the real thing comes; if he's thought upon it enough, and committed himself to God enough and been submissive enough; when the real thing comes he won't be afraid.

It's like dress rehearsal for a play. Years ago I use to be in a lot of plays. We would have rehearsals, rehearsals, rehearsals, and then two or three dress rehearsals. And then, when the curtain opened up for the main play we weren't afraid. We'd been this route before. We'd gone over these lines before. We'd gone through these motions before.

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So, if I can die daily, then, when the reality comes; it won't be such a shock, it won't be such a shock. David said, *"Teach me, to number my days that I may apply my heart to wisdom."*

Secondly: I'll tell you something else to do, hold loosely to the things of this earth, the material and physical things.

Now all these things shall pass away. Most of us have children and we have parents and we have grandchildren and we have friends and we have homes and all of these things. All of these things shall fade away: *"The fashion of this world passeth away."*

These are all temporary. You've got to remember that. You've got to get that; we've got to get that through our heads that all of these things; we've got to turn loose of them, someday. Well, why not do it now? Why not commit them to God? Why not surrender them to God?

I read a story one time of a man who was sitting in his den. His wife was fixing supper. His children were there visiting. They had their children, his grandchildren, his pastor was there visiting, and he was in good health.

They were sitting in front of the fire and they were talking. The man was quiet for a moment and then he looked at his pastor and he said; "Pastor, (as he pointed to his grandchildren and his children, his wife, and his home), these are the things that make it hard to die; these are the things."

Is that true? Well, not if we'll hold loosely to them; commit them to God. *"The Lord gave and the Lord will take away"* in His own time and in His own way." Now, if you will commit them to Him now it won't be such a shock when He comes to take them.

When the angel says, "The master's come and He calls for you or He calls for your son or He calls for your daughter or He calls for your wife" you'll say: "Well, I've already given her to the Lord and it won't be as difficult now because she belongs to you."

We are like a traveling man who stops at a motel. I stay in a lot of motels and hold a lot of Bible Conferences and meetings. And you know; the condition of that motel doesn't matter a whole lot to me if the room is not decorated like I'd like for it to be decorated. I don't say anything because I'm just passing through and I'll be going home soon.

If a picture is on the wall that I don't like that doesn't bother me too much. If the personal are not very nice to me I don't care too much because I've got my bags packed; I'm leaving. That's the way we are so journeying through this earth.

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Don't be too alarmed about the condition of the government or the world or the décor, nature, and all of these things. We've got our bags packed and we are just passing through.

Thirdly: I'll tell you another thing to do, walk with God.

You won't fear death if you walk with him who is the life. There was a man who walked with God and he walked right on into heaven. That was Enoch. He walked with God and he just walked right on into heaven.

If you will learn to walk with God; quit walking with the world, walk with God. And when it comes time to walk on into heaven it won't be such a shock.

Fourthly: I'll tell you something else; live each day as if it were your last day on earth because someday it will be, someday it will be.

Walk with God. Hold loosely to the things of this world. Die daily, daily!