

## **Blessed Are the Dead**

Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1993

### **Revelation 14:13**

*“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”*

I have a passage of scripture that I am going to be using for my text today. It is found in Revelation Chapter 14:13. I want you to listen carefully to the reading of the Word of God. *“I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them.”* Now, this is the title of the message: “Blessed Are the Dead.”

There are two remarkable things to notice in the beginning as these Words come to John the Apostle on the Isle of Patmos. It is recorded, *“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”* First, John heard a voice from heaven. If you will go back to verse 1, you will see that John had his eye on the throne of God; he was looking at the throne of God. He said that there was a lamb in the midst of the throne. So, that voice from the throne is the voice of God. This voice is saying to John: “Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.” This is the voice of God. This is the voice of the Son of God, the lamb in the midst of the throne. We have the voice of the Father and the Son, declaring in unison, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

Secondly (watch this), the scripture then says, *“Yea, or (yes) saith the Spirit, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* Yes, the Spirit says; it is the truth; *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* There is the Father, the Lamb and the Holy Spirit, declaring in unison, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

Are any of us afraid to die? “Well, quite frankly, yes!” Do we tremble at the thought of dying? Do you or do I fear death? The answer is, “Quite frankly, yes.” Does death appear to us to be an enemy? “Well, now that you mention it preacher, yes it does.” Well, where should we go for encouragement? To whom shall we look for help? The help does not come from one another. You can’t help me; you have never died and you don’t know anything about it. I know nothing of death.

I read a column in a newspaper just recently written by a man that had been very, very ill; he was almost dead. The Doctor had said that there was not much hope for him. He began to talk about what he experienced. He said that it was very difficult on his loved ones, but he said that he experienced nothing, absolutely nothing for days. He said he

didn't see any lights that people talk about, he said he didn't hear any voices, he said he didn't see any angels, and He said he didn't smell any smoke. He made all of these different comments while he was dying.

That is no help to me because he didn't die. He was just unconscious or in a coma. I have never experienced death. So, to whom shall we look for encouragement, for help and for answers to our many questions? There is only one place to look for the answer and that is to the Lord, the one who did die and rose from the grave. He said, *"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. The Father says, and the lamb who died for sinners and "Yea, even the Spirit says, (yes); "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

I will tell you something else that is encouraging about this. *"The Lord said unto me, "Write; write it down. I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write this down."* What is written by God's commandments is true. What God instructed the prophets to write is called (the Word of God). *"Holy men of God spake, or wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* So, God said, *"Write it!"* This is true. Write it down for all ages and for all people. Write this, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

I will tell you this; what God writes is not subject to change. The scripture says; *"I am the Lord, I change not."* His Word is not subject to correction. *"If anyone adds anything to this Book, He said that I will add to them the plagues that are written in the Book."* If any man alters it; it is not subject to change nor correction nor alteration. *"If any man changes or takes away anything, I will take his name out of the Book of Life."* He said, *"Write it; it's always true."*

He said write it and don't just hear it, say it, repeat it or pass it along, *"Write it!"* Job said, *"Write it in the rock forever; write it. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."* That came from the throne. The orders from the throne are *"Write it."*

This is a golden truth. This is the Word of God. *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."* This is the promise of God. No one else can promise that. No one else has control over death. God said, *"I kill; I make alive; I wound: I heal. It is sweeter than honey and it is more precious than gold; Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

*"Write it in the Book, God said."* Write it on your heart. Write it for all people to read. It is for all races, for all generations and for all nations; *"Write it for all to read."* It will calm your fears, it will gladden your heart, it will soothe the troubled mind, it will help you in time of sorrow, it will comfort you in trouble, it will give you peace in sickness, it will *"Rob death of its sting and rob the grave of its victor;"* write it, believe it, preach it, and rest in it. *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."*

Now, I need for you to consider these words, if you are interested. If you are interested in having me go on and finding out more about this; *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,”* just remember, these are the words of God. These are unchangeable words. Don’t alter them, correct them or change them. Leave them just like they are; *“Write them, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* If you are interested in going on from there, we’ll look at them carefully.

First, *“Blessed are the dead.”* This is not the philosophy of the world, is it? The world says, “Blessed are the living.” God says, *“Blessed are the dead.”* The world says, “Better is a living dog than a dead lion.” Isn’t that what they say? In other words, if he can stay alive at any cost; he can compromise, and even be a coward; “It is better being a living dog than a dead lion, a lion that roars and seeks victory.” It’s better to be a dog or a coward, and go on living. God says, *“To die is gain; to live is Christ,”* to die is gain.”

You see; the world judges everything by outward appearance. The world judges everything by how it appears to be. God Almighty sees things as they really are and as they shall be forever. Therefore, God says, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

The world says, “Blessed are the rich, for theirs are the good things of the earth.” God says, *“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* There is a lot of difference isn’t there? People in the world don’t understand what I am talking about. The philosophy of this world is not the philosophy of God. Do you want me to tell you how the world judges blessings? The world will take you to a person who is youthful, healthy, wealthy, beautiful, popular, and who is successful and rich. The world says, “Now, that is a blessed person.” That person has youth, health, strength, beauty, riches, houses, cars, and popularity; that person has everything! That is a blessed person!

That is not what God says. The Lord God takes you by the hand and leads you into a quiet bedroom and there the family is standing all around the bed. Upon that bed is the body of a believer. He is a believer in Christ Jesus. He is a believer who has been made an object of the grace and mercy of God in Christ Jesus. That believer has just departed from this life; God has called him home. He has been called away to glory. The face is pale, and the eyes are closed. The hands are cold and folded across the chest. Friends stand around the room and they weep. The Lord takes us by the hand and leads us into that room to witness that scene. He whispers in our ears, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

Paul said, *“To be absent from this body, is to be present with the Lord.”* He said one time, *“I’m in a straight betwixt the two; I really can’t make up my mind which I want. I*

*desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, but he said, for me to abide with you is more expedient for you. Blessed are the dead.*”

Now, the world says, “Blessed are the rich, blessed are the young, blessed are the strong, blessed are the wise, blessed are the popular and blessed is this one and that one. God says, *“Blessed are the dead.”* Now, who knows best? I will leave that with you. Is it the world or the Lord? *“Blessed are the dead.”*”

I know this; I know how much we enjoy certain parts of life, here on this earth. I enjoy living; I enjoy my friends; I enjoy our fellowship; I enjoy my family; I enjoy my grandchildren; I enjoy my wife and my children; I enjoy playing golf and I enjoy a lot of things. These things are all temporary. *“These things are all the fashions of this world that fade away.”* They are just slipping away.

His presence and grace are forever. When I leave here, and this old body grows so weary and so tired and so old, feeble and frail that God says it is time to leave here; it’s time to move out of this house and come home; *“I will lay aside this tabernacle of flesh and clay. There is a building reserved for us, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We will lay aside this corruption and put on incorruption. We will lay aside this mortal and put on immortality. We will lay aside our weakness and put on strength. We will lay aside our sin and put on perfect holiness.”* We will be like Christ!

The psalmist said, *“In His presence is fullness of joy at His right hand are pleasures forever more.”* You talk about pleasure! You are talking about joy and happiness. What we enjoy here is just a little taste of heaven. It is just a little foretaste of glory with our fellowship and friends, family and the good things that God has given us. These things are nothing compared to His presence. If you think His smile is wonderful, here, just think how great His presence is. *“For in His presence is fullness of joy. At His right hand are pleasures forever more. Blessed are the dead!”* That’s the reason our Lord when He was going to the cross, and was going to die and was going back to the Father, He said to those who lamented and wept, *“Don’t weep for me; weep for yourselves, and your children.”*

Note the second thing about this passage. It says, “Blessed are the dead, but that is not the end. It says, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* Now, stay with me and listen carefully; don’t leave me. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* It is not a blessing just to die. Oh no, no, no, it’s not a blessing just to die. All of the dead are not blessed. *“Blessed are those who die in the Lord.”* That is very distinct, isn’t it?

When Balaam prayed to die the death of the righteous, he said, *“Let me die the death of the righteous; let my end be like his.”* I don’t want to die the death of the unrighteous and the wicked. Only those are blessed who die in the Lord. Multitudes of people will die every day. Hundreds of people die every minute. Did you know that? The scripture says, *“Thou carryest them away as with a flood.”* Someone said, “That earthly life is like a river; it is a deep, wide and swift moving river.” It is a river made of human beings rushing into eternity. There are hundreds of them every minute and thousands of them every day, dying all over the world. Are they all blessed? Can we stand by that river that is choked with human beings, plunging along, rapidly toward the pefaces of eternity? Can we say that they are all blessed? NO! The Bible doesn’t say that; it says, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

You know what I mean. They are in the Lord by covenant mercies. They are chosen of God and precious. They are His sheep; they are His brethren; they were given Him by the Father, along with covenant mercies and everlasting grace. Christ said, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.”*

This is what David rejoiced in as he lay dying. The last words of King David were: *“Although it be not so with my house, God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation and all my desire.”* God made a covenant.

The Lord said, *“My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish. They are my sheep; my Father gave them me and My Father is greater than all and no man can pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”* They are in Christ by covenant mercies.

They are also in Christ by divine regeneration; they are born of God and born of the Spirit of God. It says, *“He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He the right, (the privilege) to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name which were born not of blood, (not of natural generation) not of the will of man, not of the will of the flesh. They were born of God.”*

So, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* They are in the Lord by grace. They are in the Lord by His sovereign will. They are in the Lord by His covenant mercies. They are in the Lord by regeneration. They are in the Lord by a new birth. They are in the Lord by an experience of grace. They are in the Lord by faith. *“In whom you trusted after you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and you were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise.”* You were sealed in the Lord. You’re safe in the arms of

Jesus. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; the wrath of God abideth on Him.”*

*“God hath given us eternal life; this is the record; this life is in His Son. If we are in Christ by divine grace, in Christ by covenant mercies and in Christ by regeneration, and in Christ by faith; he that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. Christ is the head and we are the body. We are in Him. Where the head is the body is not too far behind, is it? We're in Christ to continue. These people in Christ continue in Christ. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”* They didn't just walk down the isle and claim to be in Christ; they died in Christ. They didn't just get baptized and join the church and walk with the people of God a little while and then quit; they died in Christ. They came to Christ by faith and they stayed right where they were until they died. They continued until they died. They ran the race until they died. They remained faithful until they died. Just like the Old Testament saints, *“These all died in faith.”* They believed by faith, they came by faith and continued and died in faith.

This is not a fad. Somebody said one time, “Just try Jesus.” That's not the way. It is not a fad, it is not a religious profession; it is a living union with God. The dead who die in the Lord are blessed in the Lord. What He has, they have. What He is, they are. Where He is, they are. They are *“Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”* He is the Heir and they are married to Him. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”*

Now, notice these Words, *“That they may rest from their labors.”* You know, rest is not idleness. That is not rest. Rest is not ceasing from all work and from all activity. Work is a joy; labor is a joy and activity is pleasure. We are going to serve our Lord God in the new Heaven and the new Earth.

When God created Adam, he was perfectly holy; he walked with God and talked with God. He was Holy and without sin. God gave him something to do. He had a beautiful garden, and a beautiful earth. He had dominion over the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, the beast of the forest and over every living thing. He took care of the garden; he had something to do. Work was his pleasure. Labor is a joy and activity is pleasure. What makes work and labor toil, is sin. That is what makes it labor. The scripture says, *“They shall rest from their labors.”* These are those who are laboring and are heavy laden in sin. That is what we'll be resting from.

You see, the old nature of sin makes work and activity to be toil, trouble and labor. This body of death has pain, and corruption makes life on earth a life of weariness, toil and labor. When we wake up in the morning, that old nature is with us to drag us down and depress us. *“When we do good, evil is present with us.”* When we would praise God, He fills our thoughts with self.” And, when we would pray, (that’s a joy isn’t it)? That’s not labor, but He distracts us and makes praying a labor and reading a chore.

When we would love, the old nature interferes. That’s the reason Paul said, *“O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death, who shall deliver me?”* We will be delivered and that is the rest that He is talking about. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest.”*

Oh, they serve God and they have entered into a work that is a joy and an activity that is a pleasure. What has taken the labor out of it is that God has taken the sin out of it. That’s the reason that David said in Psalm 17: *“I’ll be satisfied when I awake with His likeness.”*

I tell you, this new heaven and this new earth; I’m really looking forward to it. I enjoy my garden, but this body gets tired. I enjoy my yard, but this body gets tired. I enjoy studying and preaching, praying, worshipping and fellowshiping, but my flesh still gets weary of sin and it becomes laborious. Much study is the weariness of the flesh, and it is. I’ll tell you why; the reason is because of sin. It drags us down and takes the joy out of it.

We are going to be rid of sin and we’re going to be rid of death. We’re going to be rid of pain and all of that. Our rest from our labor will be an eternal rest that is just full of activity.

All right, the last thing: *“Their works do follow them.”* Their works don’t go before them to prepare a place; Christ does that. I hear people talk about sending your offerings up to heaven to prepare your mansion and sending your good deeds up. He didn’t say that their works go before them; *“He said that their works follow them.”* Their works don’t accompany them to plead their case. That is not what those people did in Matthew 7. They said, *“We preached in your name;”* they took their works with them and God rejected them. He said, *“Depart from me.”* It says their works followed them. In other words, their works follow them to the praise of the Lord who Himself brought them to glory, interceded for them, opened heaven’s doors for them, went in before them and brought them in. Their works followed them and enabled men to praise Him, the Lord, who gave them the gifts and ability and talents to do those works.

You know, when a man brags on a painting, he's not honoring the painting, he's honoring the artist. When a man brags on a beautiful building, he's not honoring the building; he's honoring the builder. Your good works follow you to the praise and the glory and grace of Him who made you and me a trophy of His grace!