

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”

PSALMS 116

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
 3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
 4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.
 6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
 7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
 8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
 9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
 10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
 11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.
 12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
 14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
 15 **Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.**
 16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.
 17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.
 18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,
 19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

This lesson is not intended to be maudlin or depressing in any way. Death is our last enemy and those that experience the power of God through the gospel and are sealed by the Holy Spirit because of the electing love of the Father and because of the Son's inestimable sacrifice so well pleasing to God that all was accomplished so that now the enemy is obviated and powerless. What is needed is to see yourself as God sees you at this very minute..."Precious". Even here we can see that your death is precious in His view.

Spurgeon in his remarking on this passage (verse 15) says, "It is no ordinary thing for a saint to die; it is a spectacle which the eyes of God are delighted with. As king's delight in their pearls and diamonds, and count them precious, so the death-beds of the saints are God's precious things."

Spurgeon goes on to say concerning verse 15:

Verse 15. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints*, and therefore he did not suffer the Psalmist to die, but delivered his soul from death. This seems to indicate that the song was meant to remind Jewish families of the mercies received by any one of the household, supposing him to have been sore sick and to have been restored to health, for the Lord values the lives of his saints, and often spares them where others perish. They shall not die prematurely; they shall be immortal till their work is done; and when their time shall come to die, then their deaths shall be precious. The Lord watches over their dying beds, smooths their pillows, sustains their hearts, and receives their souls. Those who are redeemed with precious blood are so dear to God that even their deaths are precious to him. The deathbeds of saints are very precious to the church, she often learns much from them; they are very precious to all believers, who delight to treasure up the last words of the departed; but they are most of all precious to the Lord Jehovah himself, who views the triumphant deaths of his gracious ones with sacred delight. If we have walked before him in the land of the living, we need not fear to die before him when the hour of our departure is at hand.

Let's see what Hebrews says of this preciousness meted out:

Hebrews 2:9-14

9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

10 *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

11 *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

12 *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*

13 *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

*14 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;
(KJV)*

If we are not in Christ, then this life is what would capture our imagination. If this is all we have then the thrust of our life is accumulation of every sort and then it would be true as our soul would then encourage us:

Luke 12:19

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But our Savior is more in mercy and grace towards those of His choice. Death is to be faced because He also faced death and triumphed to overcome death.

What are some of those things that we see in death?

1. corruption in the physical:

John 11:39

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

2. absent in the physical.

Genesis 42:13

13 And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

3. absent when one has not been quickened.

Matthew 7:22-23

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

But brethren, we are not absent from Him who has set His love upon us forever. We are in something of a quandary and we are to be keenly aware of our unfittedness for this world and our preciousness as seen by God and this leaves us yearning or groaning for another world and a more proximate relationship that will be by sight and not by faith, though that is what we do now...walk by faith. Here is Paul explaining to us what is going on in us and our look to the future:

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

*6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:
(For we walk by faith, not by sight :)*

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Jim Elliot's testimony and his ability to face death was exemplified in his quote:

"He is no fool that gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Last comments:

1. God does not view death as precious, for death came as a result of the Fall. However, it is true as stated that God sees or holds or values the death of His saints as precious. The distinction is great, for it is the value of the saint that is in view and the sacrifice that was made that accomplished this and therefore, that death, as a summation of sanctification, is now open to unfettered communion and relationship.
2. The glory that awaits those that enter Glory far exceed any suffering that might have been experienced in this life. (Romans 8:18)
2. If this preciousness is a reality and the backdrop is the psalm itself; then as The psalmist expresses gratitude for Jehovah's attentiveness in relationship, His ongoing protection, and continual mercy not herewith described but assumed; then what would be our response? Twice repeated concerning the "offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the LORD". This is a sacrifice like unto the sacrifice in Romans 12:1,2. It is self, for that is the response of the saint when it comes to God.

President William McKinley's last words were:

"It is God's way; His will be done, not ours". Immediately after he was shot in Buffalo, New York, during the confusion and vengefulness of those that attacked the assassin, the President pleaded thus: *"Boys! Don't let them hurt him!"* Even in this desperate hour, this Christian could call for mercy for the life of his assassin while knowing his own was bound up and dependent upon Christ.

President McKinley's favorite hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee" says much about this dependence:

Propior Deo

1. Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
still all my song shall be,
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
2. Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
yet in my dreams I'd be
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
3. There let the way appear, steps unto heaven;
all that thou sendest me, in mercy given;
angels to beckon me
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
4. Then, with my waking thoughts bright with thy praise,
out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
so by my woes to be
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
5. Or if, on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I fly,
still all my song shall be,
nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!