

The Daily Funeral

By

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"I die every day- I mean that, brothers." 1 Corinthians 15:31

The older I get, I seem to get more and more opportunities to attend funerals. I'm sure you, too, have been to your share of them. Although these are surely sad occasions, if you look at them with spiritual eyes, you will see a beauty which you can apply to your own life. I even heard a pastor a few weeks ago say that he would rather preach a thousand funerals to one wedding. He said weddings have too much drama.

At a funeral, people from far and wide gather in one place to honor the life of someone whom they hold dear and at the same time, they have an opportunity to contemplate death. It is unavoidable. We all must die. It is that last fleshly battle we all will face, and most of us try not to think about it. No matter how spiritual we are, something in our fiber resists death. We have life within us, breathed into us by our Lord, so it is very natural to desire to preserve our lives.

We believers, however, have been given a great secret. The key to conquering death is death. Yes, the real life Christ intended for us, the life which is eternal, can only be found in death. Of course, I'm not talking about an earthly death, for that death will surely come in our appointed time. But while we are still breathing, we have an opportunity to die unto the Lord. Colossians 3:5 says, *"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."* Romans 8:13 says, *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."*

Christ died for us, that He might make a way for us to join Him in Heaven. He also died so He could send His Spirit to live in us. The Spirit gives us a foretaste of heavenly things, and He gives us power to live victorious lives. As we put to death our earthly desires, which because of our sinful nature lead us astray, we find the fruitful life of living in the Spirit. Paul was so in tune with this truth. He says, *"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."* Philippians 3:10-11

At most every funeral I've attended, I've sensed a sweetness and tenderness as a community of people share grief together. The worship, if present, strikes a unique chord. Scriptures, if read, speak with unusual power. Forgiveness and acceptance come much more easily and readily at this time. We find these gifts in the midst of death, and they are from the Lord. As we abide in Christ, taking time to be with Him, meditating on His Word, talking to Him and His Spirit, it is as if we are sharing in our own private funeral service with the Lord. We honor Him, and He honors us, and it becomes a blessing which takes us beyond the bounds of this earth into the spiritual realm where there is no death. The earthly chains of life, whether caused by the stain of sin or the pressures of expectations or the quest for love, are broken and freedom is found.

However, just as Jesus gives us a resurrection into His life, the enemy seeks to resurrect our old life. He wants us to believe the real life is our old life. He will use discontentment, trials, discouragement, or disease to cast a dark shadow on our new life in Christ. He will even try to convince us that our spiritual death was a hoax. I've heard it said that the problem with being a "Living Sacrifice" is that we have the ability to crawl off the altar.

This is why we, like Paul, must die daily. We must go to our own funerals every day to help us remember who we are and to whom we belong. This will give us the perspective we need to make it through each day. This will help us to find a joy and lightness in the midst of darkness. Most of us take this life so seriously that it truly becomes a yoke of burden. That is why Jesus says, ***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*** Matthew 11:28-29

Lord Jesus, you have given us an incredible gift in Eternal Life. Thank you that we can taste that life right now! We can start living by dying. Lord, by Your Spirit, help us put to death the bounds of this earth which are keeping us from You. Help us to trust You and walk with You. Help us put to death all our expectations in life and start looking to You for direction. Lord, thank you that by dying, we find You. We love you! In Your name I pray. Amen