

The Gospel of John How to Die in Your Sins

John 8:21-25

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing with the Gospel of John series. The message from our text is not in a format that we are used to hearing in sermons. It is negative. I try to avoid negative messages. But sometimes those messages will produce the greatest effect. I plan on countering this message with a positive introduction in order to magnify the negative message.

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever wondered why we can see our breath on a cold winter day?

You probably know that every time you breathe in, you draw oxygen into your lungs, and every time you breathe out, you expel carbon dioxide. Both of these gases are invisible, so the phenomenon of seeing your breath when it's cold outside is a little mysterious. The reason does not have much to do with oxygen or carbon dioxide, but with water vapor, which is both in the human body and the surrounding air.

Water makes up about 70 percent of the human body. People's lungs are consequently very moist, and every breath that you expel is full of water vapor. The temperature in the body is close to 100 degrees Fahrenheit, which is warm enough for the water in the lungs to exist as a gas. But when you exhale into the surrounding cold air the water vapor begins to turn into tiny droplets of water. This process is called **condensation**. It is the same process by which clouds form.

Life can feel endless at times, but the Bible reminds us that, compared to eternity, our individual life on earth is like a vapor evaporating away in the cold air. It is important to recognize the brevity of life so that we don't squander the time we've been given.

James 4:14 (NASB)

¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

A vapor is a fine mist like seeing your breath on a cold day. It quickly disappears. Comparing our lives to a vapor illustrates how fleeting our days on this earth are.

ILLUSTRATION:

A Doctor spoke to his patient, "I have read the results of your tests and I have good news and bad news." "What is the good news?" "The report says you have a week to live." "If

that is GOOD news, then what could possibly be the BAD news?" "I should have told you last week." No matter how we cut it, life is short.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 8:21-25 (NASB)

²¹ Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." ²² So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" ²³ And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. ²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." ²⁵ So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning?"

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

We know that compared to eternity, our life is very short and there is no guarantee that we will be alive tomorrow. I look at my life and realize that I am now 68 years old. It does not seem to be very long at all. In fact, the more you age, the faster time seems to go. Since very few of us live to see 100, it is very likely that I will leave this earth within the next 30 years. At the speed of time these days, that seems like a VERY short time.

God has given man a **short time** here upon **earth**, and yet our **ETERNITY** depends on how we use this time. If we could just fathom the immensity of living for eternity with God; to be in His glory free of all of the sinfulness that exists around us today; to once again have a pure mindset like God; to be in perfect harmony with Him in His love.

And what is the tradeoff for this eternal paradise? Just **believe** and **follow** Christ while we walk this earth! **That is all it is!** Just trade those very few remaining days of your life for eternity. Understand that Jesus has taken our guilt of sin upon Himself and by His grace has filled us with His righteousness. If **only** we could grasp the **significance** of that merciful act! Then we **would** love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength as He demands us to do.

I pray that God will help us all, in some way, to understand what it will be like to spend **eternity** with Him! Help us, in some way, to fully understand what Jesus has done for us! And through that understanding help us to surrender ourselves fully to Him in these remaining short days on earth! Help us to have the urgency that the unbelievers will have after they die and find out that Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When they will find out that it is too late. If only they had listened when they were on earth.

You see, there's a **difference between** religion and a relationship with God. If we choose to reject God here on **earth**, then we, at the same **time**, are choosing to spend **eternity** separated from Him.

I have entitled my message this morning, "**How to Die in Your Sins**". I am hoping that we can see how Satan causes us to be complacent with our relationship with God. How he can cause us to think that we belong to God, when in reality, we are not living a life in

Christ. I pray that you will compare your life to the mindset of those who chose to reject Christ and adjust your life, if necessary, to have a true relationship with God.

The first mindset that I would like to look at is **self-righteousness**.

BODY:

I. BE SELF-RIGHTEOUS.

John 8:21 (NASB)

21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

That is as blunt as you can get with unbelievers, right? To tell them that "You will die in your sin." This is a warning that he told them frequently. His ministry was to talk about the kingdom and talk about salvation, but it was not absent of warnings as well. He is saying that someday you will know that I am the Messiah. It may not be in this life time, it may be after you die, but there will come a time when you WILL SEEK ME! And you will not find Me.

"And where I am going you cannot come." Jesus had told the Jews many times where He was from and where He was going.

In John Chapter 6, Jesus told them **"I am the bread that came down from heaven"** several times. He even told them that He and the Father are One. That He was God in the flesh. It was impossible for them to be separated. He would be returning back to the Father.

Here is where the mindset of **self-righteousness** comes in.

John 8:22 (NASB)

22 So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'"

This entire statement demonstrates the self-righteousness of the Jews. Generally when you see the word **"Jew"** in the Gospel of John, it is referring to the leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees, and all the people who followed them in their religious system.

So they say with scorn and sarcasm, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will he?" And why would they say that? Well, I'll tell you why. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that among the Jews the **worst** sin was suicide. **Suicide**. According to Josephus a person who committed suicide didn't just go to Hades, they went to the lowest, darkest point of Hades.

Why were they mocking Christ? In their self-righteousness, they were sure that they were going to heaven, so if Jesus was going somewhere they could not go, then He must be going to Hades.

So Jesus gives them a warning. "You're going to die in your sins." They are offended because they don't see themselves as sinners. That was always the issue with these religious leaders. They refused to recognize their true condition so they mock Jesus and

say, "Oh, He's going to kill Himself and He's going to go to the farthest, deepest, darkest corner of Hades completely and forever removed from God in Heaven".

What do I mean by self-righteous? The idea that you're good enough for heaven. That you are trusting in your own religion, your own rituals, your own ceremonies, your own morality, and goodness. But the scriptures makes it clear that nobody will be saved by works. The religions of the world state that your works contribute to your salvation, to your heaven, to your relationship to God. And that is the devil's lie.

Ephesians 2:8 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*;

ILLUSTRATION:

There was a very sad letter written to the editor from a Melbourne, Australia newspaper some years ago. This is someone who wrote the newspaper after Billy Graham had preached in Melbourne. And this is what a letter to the editor said. This is quoting the man who wrote it, "After hearing Billy Graham and viewing him on television and seeing reports and letters concerning his mission here, I am heartily sick of the type of religion that insists my soul and everyone else's need saving, whatever that means. I have never felt that I was lost nor do I feel that I daily wallow in the mire of sin although repetitious preaching insists that I do. Give me a practical religion that teaches gentleness and tolerance that acknowledges no barriers of color or creed, that remembers the aged and teaches children goodness and not sin. If in order to save my soul, I must accept such a philosophy as I have recently heard preach, I prefer to remain forever damned." And he signed his name. And, I am sure he got his wish.

Apart from Christ, you are from below. That's the origin of your worldview and religion. So if you want to die in your sin, just trust yourself. Trust your good works, your morality, your religion. Be self-righteous.

The second mindset that you can have to guarantee that you will die in you sin is...

II. BE WORLDLY.

John 8:23 (NASB)

²³ And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

If we are consumed by the world, loving the world, embracing the world, and drawing satisfaction out of the world then we are considered "**worldly**".

It is not talking about the planet physically, geographically, or geologically. It's talking about the world system, the ideologies, the thought patterns, and attitudes. It is the invisible intelligent system that runs the fallen human race. It is an invisible, spiritual system of evil that is opposed to God.

It is hostile to godliness and it promotes materialism, humanism, illicit sex, carnal ambition, pride, greed, self-pleasure, and self-desires. Its opinions are wrong, its aims are

selfish, its pleasures are sinful, its influence is demoralizing, its politics corrupt, its honor's empty, its smiles fake, and its love fickle. That is the system.

1 John 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

So want to die in your sins? Be worldly. Cling with all your might to the system with all its evil. Run your life by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Be dominated by your corrupt desires.

Consider this: **Jesus said that we must fully surrender ourselves to Him. Is there a part of you that is still holding on?**

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

There is a third mindset that guarantees you will die in your sin. **Be faithless.**

III. BE FAITHLESS.

John 8:24 (NASB)

²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

Isn't that amazing? There is only **one thing, ONE THING**, that prevents you from dying and going to hell forever in an unforgiven condition. That is faith in Jesus Christ. It is not an accumulation of good works, morality, or practicing religion.

Eternal destiny comes down to a decision about one person. Isn't that amazing? **Why do we preach Christ crucified?** Because he is that one person. No man comes to the Father but by me. There's no salvation in any other. "**I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me**".

So if you want to guarantee that you will die in your sins, just do not believe. Just like the man in Australia who would rather be damned forever than believe. Refuse to believe in Jesus Christ.

The fourth mindset that will guarantee that you will die in your sin is to be obstinate.

IV. BE OBSTINATE.

John 8:25 (NASB)

²⁵ So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from the beginning?*"

So they say, "Who are you?" And Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? Are you deaf? What have I been saying to you from the beginning? Haven't you been listening? I've been telling you again and again and again who I am." Remember the conversation in **John 5** where he claims to work the way the Father works, to be one in nature with the Father, one in work with the Father, one in will with the

Father, one in truth with the Father, one in honor with the Father? “What have I been saying to you from the beginning?”

So what are we dealing with here? Stubbornness? Being obstinate? Just plain hardhearted. This is a very dangerous mindset. They had already made up their minds concerning Christ and were unwilling to hear. They allowed their preconceived ideas and manmade religion to override the truth of scripture.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB)

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

CONCLUSION:

ILLUSTRATION:

Imagine, if you will, that you have worked for a very wealthy man. You gave everything you had within you to please him. You did everything he ever asked of you and more. Your wealthy friend is now aged and you are ready for retirement. He appreciates what you have done for him so much over the years that he decides to give you a very large retirement. He offers you a BILLION dollars! Billion with a "B". There is only one catch. Since you have spent nearly your whole life serving him, he requests that you can only spend the money on yourself. You cannot give any money away to family, friends, charities, or the church. Any money left over when you die, goes back to his estate.

A Billion dollars! You can buy any house you want anywhere you choose. You can hire maids and servants to maintain the property and keep the house clean. You can drive any car or cars that you choose. You can travel anywhere in the world whenever you want and for as long as you want. You can own your own personal jet and have your own personal pilot. You can attend and throw parties anytime you want.

What a retirement! Would this appeal to you?

None of us are ever likely to experience a billion dollar retirement, but I wonder if we are prone to take the same type of actions according to our financial ability. Are we still in love with material things? Do we spend too much time on ourselves and fail to dedicate enough time to the Lord?

Luke 12:16-21 (NASB)

16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” 20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

One final thought. "Working for God on earth is hard...but His retirement plan is out of this world!"

God Be With You.