

# The Basics of Christianity

## The Biblical Perspective of Death

### Romans 5:12-13, 18-21

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Instead of going directly to the book of Hebrews as I originally intended to do, I decided to do a short topical series entitled "The Basics of Christianity". The intent of this series will be to look at the key features of Christianity and how it affects our lives. This morning we are going to look at what the Bible tells us concerning death. The scriptures mention four different types of death.

- Physical Death
- Spiritual Death
- Eternal Death.
- Death to Sin

#### **All Stand and Read Scripture**

##### **Romans 5:12-13, 18-21 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— <sup>13</sup> for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

<sup>18</sup> So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### **Prayer**

#### **ILLUSTRATION:**

Benjamin Franklin once said, "In this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes." Benjamin Franklin was right. We DO have to pay our taxes and everyone will die!

There is not one person here this morning that has not been touched by death in one way or another. Whether by a family member or friend, we have been affected by this phenomenon called death. It has touched the lives of all who have lived. And as we continue in this world the way it is, it will continue to do so.

No doubt about it, death is a sad topic. Nobody really likes to talk about death. We often try to avoid the subject.

One thing that death does, it leaves us with questions. Why did God take them? Is he or she going to a better place? Too sadly, many don't think about death until it is too late. We have to understand that we all will die.

### **Hebrews 9:27-28 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

The hardest part about death is losing that person that passed away down here on earth. We may think about all they are going to miss out on, about how much we will miss them (and we will) and so on and so on. Yes, death is a sad, and often times a tragic event.

People die lots of ways. From sickness to accidents. Death is not a respecter of persons. When you go to a cemetery you will see different sizes of graves. There are long ones, and there are short ones. The people buried there range in age from infants to well over 100 years. It happens to the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, black and white. We cannot escape it no matter how hard we try.

This morning I would like to look at death from a Biblical perspective. Once we understand the different deaths that God tells us about through His Word, and act upon His commands, we can be at peace with our inevitable physical death.

## **BODY:**

### **I. Physical Death.**

Our scripture this morning from Romans 5 tells us that "**through one man sin entered into the world**". This passage, of course is referring back to Adam and the fall of man.

### **Genesis 2:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; <sup>17</sup> but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

### **Genesis 3:1-7 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" <sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" <sup>4</sup> The serpent said to the woman, "**You surely will not die!**" <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Adam and Eve's first mistake was doubting God! Satan told Eve that she would not die. It was true that they did not die immediately, but it did start the aging process and eventually lead to their physical death.

As our scripture in Romans 5 told us:

### **Romans 5:12 (NASB)**

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned

Because of Adam's sin, we all have an appointment with physical death.

Now we need to understand from our text verse that the sin we're talking about is the sin of Adam. Not his second sin or his third or his fourth. It was his first sin of disobedience which brought death upon all mankind.

### **Romans 5:19 (NASB)**

19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,

We are all sinners. That nature is passed down from the man. Everyone here this morning was born and has or had a father. You could not be born, outside of the miracle of God without a father. It is through the father that we all, man and woman, inherit this nature. That is why the virgin birth is so important in our faith. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. He had to be so that He would not be tainted with the sin nature.

Now, because we all have that nature, according to scripture we will die physically. Once again our text verse says it very plainly. Not only was the sin nature passed upon all men, but what else? Death. There is no escaping death. We can't do it.

The only three exceptions recorded in scripture where physical death was or will be avoided: Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Elijah (II Kings 2:1, 11-12) and those Christians who are alive at Christ's second coming. The only way we can escape death is by the rapture.

### **1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (NASB)**

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

When Christ returns those who are still alive may not physically die like all those who have gone before them, but we will be separated from this physical body and be given a new imperishable body. We do not know exactly how the physical lives of Enoch and Elijah ended. It may be that God desired to save Enoch and Elijah from experiencing death due to their great faithfulness in serving and obeying Him. Whatever the case, God has His purpose, and while we don't always understand God's plans and purposes, we know that "His way is perfect"

### **Psalms 18:30 (NASB)**

30 As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is refined; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

Now to some, physical death is the end of all things. There are people who believe that when you die, that is it. You are buried and your life is over.

But...do you remember **Hebrews 9:27-28** that we read earlier? It reveals the fallacy of that belief. Yes it does say we are appointed once to die, but what does it say will happen after death?...**The judgment!** We will all give an account to God when we pass from this life!

So if we are going to face judgment after death, **Where do Christians go when they die?**

**2 Corinthians 5:8** tells us that when we are absent from the body (or when we die) we are present with the Lord. Our soul and spirit are separated from the body and the Christian goes...to be with the Lord.

**What about those who are not saved?** The answer to that question is found in Luke 16 when it talks about the rich man and Lazarus.

### **Luke 16:22-26 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'

That is why it is so important to understand God's Word. We will experience physical death. We must be prepared for it so we will be "with the Lord" when we die.

## **II. Spiritual Death.**

The second death I would like to show you is spiritual death. At the point in our life when we first realized that we were sinners, we became accountable for our sins and died a spiritual death. If you have reached the point of accountability in your life, you have experienced this death. There are many in this world that are still experiencing this death.

### **James 1:13-15 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Death is a separation. While we are dead spiritually, we are separated from God.

The book of Romans tells us that everyone is accountable for their sins. There is no excuse for not knowing that there is a God.

### **Romans 1:18-20, 25, 32 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

During our lifetime, we either serve God, or we are separated from Him.

So being Dead in Sin is NOT a good thing. If we die while we are dead in sin, the scriptures tell us that we will experience an eternal death.

### **III. Eternal Death.**

#### **Romans 6:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This death is the eternal separation from God. It is also referred to as the "Second Death". Just imagine that for a moment. To be eternally separated from the One who created us.

The second death is mentioned on multiple occasions in the book of Revelation and is synonymous with the lake of fire. It is a "death" in that it is a separation from God, the Giver of life. It is called the "second" one because it follows physical death.

#### **Revelation 21:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> But for the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and sexually immoral persons, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Remember, we said earlier that after we die physically, we will face judgment. All of us will bow before Christ and confess that He is Lord. Either in this life or after we physically die.

#### **Philippians 2:10-11 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let's look at what Jesus said concerning Judgment day.

#### **Matthew 25:31-33, 41-46 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup> "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' <sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

I don't want anyone to be bummed out and say "Wow Wayne what a message! A message on death! That really cheered me up!"

There is GOOD NEWS! There is one more death ALL of us MUST do while we are still alive on this earth in order to avoid the second death that we just talked about. That death is...

### **IV. Death to Sin.**

In order to live, we must first die. Death is not an end for the Christian. Death as the beginning.

The One who made us righteous before God was Christ. God knew that man was in sin and there was nothing we could do to reestablish the relationship that we had lost with Him. We were no longer sinless and righteous before God.

God wants all of us to return to the state mankind was in before Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the tree of Good and Evil. The only way that could be accomplished was to send His Son (Christ) to die on the cross for our sins. THE SON OF God! He was the perfect sinless sacrifice for sin. He DIED so we could LIVE.

Here is how Paul describes Christ's death and what we must do in order to die to our sin.

### **Romans 6:4-11 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.

<sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

In order to receive forgiveness for our sins and be reconciled (or made righteous or sinless) before God, we must obey His commands. We are told that we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We must understand that we are sinners and repent of our sins so that sin can be removed. Then we must be obedient to God and be immersed in water baptism for the forgiveness of that sin. At this point we will have **died to sin** and be made alive in Christ and we will walk in a newness of life. This is the **DEATH** that all of us **MUST** experience in order to have eternal life with God our Creator!

### **CONCLUSION:**

#### **John 12:24-26 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Isn't it wonderful to have God's Word before us so we can understand the purpose of our life and the absolute truth about death! Man could never understand death without the teaching of God.

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and be obedient to Him through immersion in baptism. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

**He is Lord!**