

Blessed Are The Dead Who Die In The Lord

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- [0 : 0 0] Well now with a view to God's blessing, he'll turn back with me to the portion of scripture which we read in the book of Revelation chapter 14. And we can take your text this evening from verse 13.
- We can perhaps read verses 12 and 13. Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.
- And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Right this, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed says the Spirit that they may rest from their labours for their deeds follow them.
- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Our society today doesn't tend to think of death as a blessed thing.
- On the contrary it sees it as a cursed thing. Death is the end, death is the end of blessing, death is the end of happiness. Death is something to be avoided.
- [1 : 1 0] It's not something that we would choose for ourselves, is it? Death is to be feared, death is an enemy, it's a cause of sadness and of mourning, it's often a cause of regret.
- Death breaks relationships, death splits families, it leaves emptiness in hearts and often rifts and hums. And death is an unhappy thing because death is the result of sin, it's the result of the fall.
- It's the end product of rebellion against God. And that's why there had to be death and that's why there still is death because of sin. It's because of sin that the Son of God himself in order to save his people from sin came into the world to die.
- To embrace death on a cursed cross because of sin. And so everything about death you could say is cursed, it's a cursed thing.
- It's a wholly negative and undecidable thing. And yet here God says to us in his word, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.
- [2 : 1 9] Now this is of course wholly inconsistent with our modern perception of death with what lies beyond the grave. It is but yet here God says that there's blessedness and death, that there is happiness in the grave.
- And he's of course not saying that death itself is a blessed thing, he's not saying that it's a happy process. We've seen that it isn't, it's a cursed thing.
- Death is a fruit of sin in our lives, that's what it is. It is a sort thing, it's an unhappy thing, death itself isn't blessed and that's not what we read here.
- That's not what the word is saying to us. What God is saying to us here is that there are people who die who are blessed. That's the difference you see.
- The mechanism of death is a curse but there are many people who go through that mechanism as it were who are blessed. And so we don't read here the voice from heaven doesn't say blessed is death, rather he says blessed are the dead who die.

[3 : 29] It's the people who are blessed, not the thing. But we have to notice this too that death isn't a blessed thing for everyone. And of course not, that the blessed dead here are qualified.

They are the dead who die in the Lord, in the Lord. That's how they die and that's where they die. They die in the Lord. Now who are these people then? Who are these blessed people who die in the Lord?

What do we know about them? Well you could go throughout the whole of scripture and pick up things that we know about these blessed people, about God's people. But I want us to try and answer this question primarily this evening from some of the context that we have in this chapter.

We see for example that there are those in verse 6 who have heard the eternal or the everlasting gospel. We can read these verses.

Then I saw another angel verse 6 flying directly overhead with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.

[4 : 38] And he said with a loud voice, fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come and worship him who made heaven and earth the sea and the springs of water.

You see these people, the blessed dead as it were. There are people who in the midst of an unconcerned society in a careless world, there are people who've heard the eternal good news.

And they've heard it in the midst of so many voices around about them, speaking to them, so many messages being whispered in their ear. In the first century, the Lord's people there, they are hearing endless philosophies and there are numerous pressures on them.

There are innumerable ideas and values floating about. And in the midst of it all, they've heard this everlasting gospel. They have heard the timeless word of God.

And you too of course have a lot of voices around you, don't you? People pulling you this way and that way. Somebody phoning you wanting to do a certain thing, perhaps which is against the word of God.

[5 : 55] A text from a friend wanting you to go out and do this, perhaps at the time of a church service. Society trying to form you into one of its own.

The state trying to shape you into a politically correct citizen. The world trying to allure you with pleasure and with power, with wealth and with honour.

Saying to you, stolen waters are sweet and bread-eaten and secret is pleasant. And you have all of these messages, you have all of these philosophies in our 21st century.

All of these temptations and all of these enticements around you. And in the midst of it all, you hear God's voice, don't you? You come here and you hear His word preached.

You go home and you've got Bibles and you've got books and in these things you read of and you hear the everlasting gospel. Calling you to worship, calling you to worship your Creator, to give your God His place.

[6 : 58] He who as we read made heaven and earth, he who made the sea and the springs of water. Calling you to fear God, not with a slavish fear but with a familial fear.

And to give glory to God who is worthy of that glory. Calling you to prepare for death and for judgment. Calling you as we read in verse 4 and 5 not to be defiled in this world, but to follow the Lamb, to follow Jesus, to be redeemed through the redemption that is available through faith in His blood.

You hear that. You hear many things throughout the week, but you hear this too, don't you? The call of the gospel, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. And friends, that's a blessing in itself whether you know it or not.

It's a manifestation of the grace of God that you hear this. That you hear the gospel, that you hear it clearly. That you sit under ministries who preach it to you, who make it simple for you.

You hear it, but I hope that you know that it's not enough to hear the gospel. It's not enough to hear it. It's not enough to sit under preaching. You know, if that was all that was involved in preparing for death, it would be no bother.

[8 : 18] If that was all that there was too, to come here and to sit in church on a Sunday to heaven, this place would be full. No bother. You would have all of these pews filled. They'd be taking the box. That's the way to glory.

But no, the gospel demands more than a hearing. The gospel demands a doing. It demands more than a sitting. It demands a response.

And we have that response summarized for us in verse 12, don't we? Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. I think the old version has, hear us the patience of the saints.

Hear us the patience of the saints. The dead who die in the Lord according to our chapter this evening are those who keep the commandments of God and who keep the faith of Jesus.

They're the people who've sought to live God's way. They're the people who've taken the 10 commandments seriously. They're the people who've studied Jesus's servant on the Mount and indeed all of Jesus's teaching in order to see how the Christian ought to live.

[9 : 29] These people, the saints, the holy ones, they are the people who've examined the epistles of Paul and the little letters of John to see what the Christian life entails.

They're the people who've searched the scriptures of the whole because they want to learn through obedience. They want to know how to live before God. They want to do right by God. They see that as their duty. They see it as their delight. Do you?

Do I? That's a question, isn't it? Do we keep the commandments of God? Do we seek to? Well, this leads such a people to keeping the faith of Jesus.

Surely this study of the commandments of God and scripture will lead us to the faith of Jesus. The word faith here, I don't think it comes through perhaps as clearly here in this translation.

It may be used as a verb, but I think it's maybe better understood if we take the word holistically for the doctrine of the gospel, for the teachings of the gospel.

[10 : 46] You often have the word faith used in that way. Jude, you remember, uses it when he speaks about contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. You need faith to do that, of course. You need the verbal action of faith to contend for the faith.

But I think that what the angel is saying here is just this. He's saying that the blessed dead, they're the ones who've kept the faith.

They're the ones who've kept the truths of the faith, who've lived by the message of the faith. They're the ones who haven't compromised on the faith. They're the ones who've cherished the doctrines of the faith.

They've defended the faith against heresy. They've stayed partially faithful to the faith in the face of ridicule. They're the ones who fell to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in Christ alone, through grace alone.

In the midst of every effort to change that doctrine and to shape it and to conform it into something else. They're the ones who have kept the faith. They're the ones who haven't been tossed to and throw by every wind of doctrine and by the slight of men.

[11 : 59] No with Paul they can say, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. This is how the dead who die in the Lord respond to the everlasting gospel.

They follow it. They keep the commandments of it. They keep the faith of Jesus. That's what leaves them as they are. In this state of blessedness, in life and blessedness and death. That's what leaves them as they are.

They keep the commandments. They keep the faith of Jesus. We have to place it in its context. It's relatively easy to come here and to preach but keeping the commandments of God and keeping the faith of Jesus.

Do you think it was easy for them to do this in the first century? Do you think it was easy? Do you think that obedience was a walk in the park for these people at the end of the first century?

Do you think their faith is encouraged by other people? Do you think their Christianity is commended in the schools? Do you think it has state support? No, of course not.

[13 : 15] The whole context of the book of Revelation is that of Christian persecution, isn't it? Rome is in the ascendancy. It's all powerful and it's all conquering and it's fiercely anti-Christian with it.

To be a Christian in this day is to be reviled and to be persecuted and to have all manner of evil said against you falsely. It's to be mistreated. It's to be cast aside. These Christian people in the first century can't get on in society.

They can't progress in their work. They can't move up the political ladder, not if they want to be faithful to God. Their families are being harassed. They're being harassed themselves.

What's happening is just this, that many Christians in this day, as in every day, are compromising. They're not remaining faithful to Jesus Christ. The Jewish Christians also have been converted who were Jews.

They're resorting to the synagogues because the Jewish religion is not yet persecuted. It's still tolerated at this time. They're going in there into the synagogue and they're quite safe and quite comfortable there.

[14 : 29] The Gentile Christians, of course, don't have that luxury. Not that the luxury is a good thing, of course it wasn't. But the Gentile Christians, many of them who are not remaining faithful, who are not facing the persecution as they ought to, they're bowing their knee to Caesar as a God and they're burning incense to them as to a deity.

And yes, they're doing it perhaps with their fingers crossed behind their back. They're doing it not believing the thing that they're doing, but they're doing it. They're doing it. They're compromising just to get by because the persecution is too severe for them.

They feel that they can't live with such reproach, that they can't go on in life with such humiliation with every door closing before them. The Christian life is just too difficult for them. Obedience is too difficult for them. Faithfulness is too difficult for them.

It's far easier to compromise. But you know, friends, the message of Revelation is just this. There are many ways to the message of all of Scripture that the saints need to be patient.

Here's a call for the endurance of the saints. The word can mean endurance, patience, steadfastness. It's translated in different ways. But these people, this is life for them.

[15 : 56] This is how the saints live. They persevere through toil and through trouble. They endure through slander and persecution. But patience and perseverance and endurance and longsuffering and all of these things, they all look to the future, don't they? If you're patient, you're looking ahead. That's what patience does.

It looks forward. And in this case, it's looking forward to the end of suffering. And so the message of this book really is just this. Be faithful to God as your King, despite all the opportunities for compromise, despite all of the fiery persecutions that might come your way. Be faithful to God as your King because your suffering is soon going to come to an end.

How do we know this? Well, we know it because God is sovereign. God is sovereign over our sufferings. God is sovereign over our trials. God is sovereign over our oppressors. God is sovereign.

He rules over all things. And the day is coming. And this is what really comes out in this chapter, especially in the first half of it. The day is coming when the tables are going to be turned and when the saints are going to be delivered, when the rich shall be made poor, and when the laughter of the ungodly persecutor shall be turned into mourning. The day of God's vengeance is drawing near, when he shall avenge his people, when the wine of his wrath, as we read here, will be poured out upon them, and those who worship the beast and who bear the image of the beast will be tormented in fire and in brimstone, even as they have tormented the people of God in this world, and even as they have made the lives of God's people amissary, so their own lives will be made amissary. And so God says to his people in Revelation, as he says to us tonight, you be patient. You persevere through these things, whatever you have in your own experience. Don't, as it were, bow the knee to Caesar.

Don't worship this image and the image of this world. Don't be conformed to this evil generation, but rather keep the commandments of God. You keep the faith of Jesus. You hold on to these precious truths and don't surrender them. Don't give them up for anything.

[18 : 26] No matter what you've got going on in your life, no matter what you're facing tomorrow morning in your workplace, no matter what you're facing tonight when you go home, in the midst of all persecution and all trial and all temptation, you persevere, God says to you this evening, though men make your life miserable, you rejoice in the Lord, and though they take your very life from you, as was happening in this day, you go there singing with the psalmist of old, die shall not die, but live, and shall the works of God discover.

These are the dead who die in the Lord. They're dead to the world while yet living. They're dead to sin, the power of it, the rule of it, the authority of it, the guilt of it, the penalty of it, while they're still living.

While they're still living, they have died with Jesus Christ and they have been raised to a newness of life in His resurrection. And then when they do die, when the body, when the lungs breathe their last, when the pulse beats its last, they go on to eternal blessedness and we'll come to see that in a moment. But let me ask you now in the midst of all that, is that speaking of you? Are you a Christian? Are you blessed in the Lord?

Are you blessed in life and are you blessed and will you be blessed in death? Do you find yourself at all in these scriptural descriptions of the Christian?

Do you find those patients, those endurance, those desire to be the Lords, those desire to stand for His cause no matter what? Do you find that in yourself? Do you find our willingness to be one of the Lord's people, to be numbered with the family of heaven?

[20 : 22] Because you've heard it, haven't you? You've heard it perhaps in over many years, some of you perhaps not that long, but even so you've heard the everlasting gospel and you know what's required of you, to put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to walk as He calls you to walk, seeking to live according to His word.

Have you kept the commandments of God? Have you kept the faith of Jesus? Are you willing to try? Are you willing to endure as the early church endured? Are you willing to suffer persecution for these things?

Are they that important to you? If they came round your door and knocked and called you to make a decision as to who you were going to serve, the state or Jesus, the church or the government, if in a different day other religions were knocking on your door, calling you to flee or to convert or to die, that's what's happening to the Christians in the kingdom of Asseldure now and in other places. What would you do? Would it be quite easy for you to say, whatever you say, I'll go with it?

Or would you be unwilling to compromise? It's a difficult question for every one of us. You know friends, my calling and the calling of any minister who stands in this pulpit, as well as preparing you for life and how to live life, my calling is to prepare you for death, to make sure that when you do leave this world that you leave as a blessed man or that you leave as a blessed woman.

So let me ask you again, are you in the Lord? Are you ready to die? Are you prepared to meet your God? Do you match this description? Or have you worshiped the beast Satan and his image? Have you received the mark of his name?

[22 : 28] You know friends, if you're in this world and if you're off this world then you've received the devil's mark. You look like the world, you act like the world, you watch what the world watches, you dress as the world dresses, you think as the world thinks, you have a worldly worldview and if that's the case, what's your hope for heaven? What's your hope and death?

Well you've got no hope, do you? No hope. Or to die in your sins. What a thought, to die in your sins, to die without hope, to die without God in this world, to die clinging to this world like sand in your hand and serving this world and the master of this world with all of its poor wages, which as well will melt away to serve the Prince of the power of the ear. How foolish, how foolish.

Because the word says to us tonight that you drink the wine of the wrath of God full strength out of the cup of his indignation and for rejecting his gospel, for denying his truth and for refusing his authority. That'll be your cup to be tormented in fire and in brimstone.

In the very presence of the Lamb, the Saviour, the Jesus who you rejected, you see he's at Jesus of love and he is. Never was there such love as the love of Jesus in this world but he's at Jesus of justice too. Is he not just as you sit here and reject him and turn your face from him and walk out the door again as you've walked out of it before saying, I will not have this man reign over me.

Is he not just to condemn you, how we wait that the smoke of your torment will ascend forever and ever and you'll have no rest day or night and friends, oh how we love our rest, how we love our armchair, how we love to sit down at the end of the day, how we love to go to our bed to pull the door, do the over us to rest comfortable on our mattress, how we love our rest and yet there's no rest there day or night. Have you ever properly pondered these things?

[24 : 55] Have you ever prayed over them? Have you ever shed tears over them? You see what we're talking about here is eternity and that's what we've got to remember. We're not talking about a few days or a few weeks or a few months or a few years or a few decades or a few centuries.

What we're talking about here, what the Word of God is telling us is that this is century upon century, millennium upon millennium, time without end.

And is this what death holds for you, torment? Is this what lies on the other side for you? When you open your eyes, will you open them, will you lift them up in hell? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord certainly.

But what about those who die in the world, outside of the Lord? Curses are the dead who die in the Lord. Curses are the dead who thought that they were living, who thought that they knew what life was, who thought that they knew what life was all about, who thought that this was life, that this is all that there was to eat, to drink and be merry and to do as we please.

Curses are the dead who the Word says, for they shall have their own reward. And as the saints, as we'll see in a moment, shall rest from their laborers, well they shall never rest.

[26 : 20] And their works too, as the works of the believer will follow them, their works too will follow them. But blessed are they who die in the Lord. What is the blessedness of the Christians' death?

How is death made to be a happy thing for the Christian and a happy thing it is? Well, we can start with what we've just been saying, because all of that, all of these terrible things, these things that we hate to talk about, these things that we hate to think about, the Christians say it from all of these things.

The unbeliever dies and goes to hell. That's the just reward of his evil deeds. The wages of sin is death, eternal death. This is what the unbeliever has earned. But the Christian who dies in the Lord is blessed because he is, as it were, plucked as a brand from the burning.

God's anger has been turned away from him, because God's anger has been swallowed up by another, even by Jesus Christ himself. An old Christian friend, are you not blessed tonight? Are you not blessed tonight if you've been saved from these things?

Are you not blessed if the sting of death has been removed for you? And if victory has been stolen from the grave, are you not blessed to be a Christian this evening?

[27 : 42] Are you not blessed in that the punishment drew for your sin, the punishment that you deserve, that it's been paid by another? Even Jesus Christ, are you not blessed that you won't go to hell because hell had also into his soul?

And he took the punishment of it and the forsakenness of it for you? Are you not blessed? And how different it could have been? How different it may have been?

Perhaps how different it should have been, you might think. How careless you once were. And yet God saved you, not by works, lest any man boast, but by grace.

You are saved. You are saved. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord and are saved. But there's just two. Verse 13, the second half, blessed indeed says the Spirit that they may rest from their labourers, for their deeds follow them.

When you die, you have rest from your labourers. Now this word, labour, is important because it doesn't just refer to work. We speak sometimes of labour in that way of just working.

[28 : 51] This isn't simply talking about your church growing and your prayer life, your everyday Christian walk. These things are important, don't get me wrong. But there's more to it than that because the word here is a connotation of something that's greatly difficult and taxing.

Indeed something that's troublesome for you. The word is often translated, especially in the Gospels, the same word as trouble. They shall rest from their troubles. And that fits in, doesn't it?

Fits into what we've been saying because it's not necessarily easy to be a Christian. Even the run of the mill stuff in the Christian life can be difficult. Every day can be trying. You might feel that sometimes with all the burdens that you're bearing, that it would be easier to be a heathen than to be a Christian. The whole thing requires this patience.

It's a game of endurance. It's a life of constancy. Every day can be a battle. Every week can be a war. And you can feel tired and you can feel weary. And there are going to be wounds and there are going to be falls.

And there are going to be sins which are going to get you down. And backsliding which are going to hurt you and break your heart. And the whole thing can be a weirdness for you.

[30 : 05] Yes, you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord as we read in another place. But it is a labor. It's a fight and it can be exhausting.

But blessed are the dead who die in the Lord because in death they will rest from their labor. In heaven their labor will come to an end. Their toil will be no more. Their trouble will cease.

The things which bothered you in this world. The people which troubled you. The sins which wearied you. Well, there will be no more. You see heaven. Heaven for the believer is a place among other things. It's a place of quiet.

It's a place where the storms are changed into a calm. It's a port for the ship that has been out in the wild seas. It is the city-side heaven of the godly. That's what it is.

Rest that precious commodity. Rest that which Jesus promises to those who labor and are heavy laden. Here it is. Here it is in all of its blissful fullness. Here it is in its eternal refreshment and in its endless repose.

[31 : 18] Here is the patience of the saints in verse 12. And here is their restful reward in verse 13. That they may rest from their labor.

I think included in this is the fact that in dying that the believer is kept from certain things. This is very evident in Revelation because when you read through this book you read about tribulation after tribulation.

Trial after trial. And you have earthquakes and you have plagues. And you have famines and you have sickness. And you have persecution. You have martyrdom. What you have in this book in many ways isn't pleasant.

There is victory running through the very veins of it. It's not pleasant. It is labor in its extremity and toil and trouble in their intensity for the unbeliever, of course.

But you know the believer feels these things too. But the blessed dead who die in the Lord are thereafter kept from these things. They are kept from them.

[32 : 24] He is blessed to die in the Lord because the cup of his sufferings is now full. Don't take no more. Time has been called on trouble for that man.

The whistle has blown for that woman. The limit has reached the cup is full. And God has promised that he won't suffer the believer to be tempted above that which he is able to.

He keeps that promise. He keeps it for every Christian. He keeps it for you. And so the blessed dead are kept from certain things. And you may be seen this. You have seen men and women, godly people. And they have been taken from this world, haven't they?

And you have mourned for them. You have mourned for them as you walk to mourn. You have mourned for them as it is right to mourn. And it was a painful thing and it was a dreadful thing. But you did realise perhaps not at the time, but you realised later that these people were kept from certain things in life.

Perhaps it was the pain and the suffering in their own bodies that they were having to endure. Perhaps it was the sorrow of a bereavement in the family. Perhaps it was spiritual things that they were kept from.

[33 : 37] Seeing the backsliding of a brother. Seeing the rending of the church of Christ. Things that would have broken their hearts had they seen them. But they were kept from them because their labourers were ended and they were glad because now they were at rest.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. And who blessed they are even this evening. To be in a place where there is no sin or sadness. To be in a place where there is no pain or crying.

Indeed in a place where there is no death. Nor is there any of the sorrow that inevitably accompanies death. How blessed to be in that place where death is swallowed up in victory.

Where corruption will put on incorruption. And where mortality shall be swallowed up in life. How blessed to be in that place where there is unbroken fellowship with Christ Himself.

That's through rest is it not? Is it not? There's no rest outside of Jesus. If Christ wasn't there there would be no rest in heaven. As Rutherford of Old said, if Christ wasn't there then heaven itself would be as a hell to me.

[34 : 45] But Christ is there and there is rest there. There does remain a rest to the people of God. They shall rest from their labour.

But finally the dead who die in the Lord are blessed too. And that there works to follow them. There are deeds as we have it here. It's really the same word. That word deeds or works.

It appears 21 times in Revelation and it's a very important concept in the book. You remember what the Spirit says to the seven churches at the beginning of this book.

He says to each of them, I know thy works. I know what you do. I know what you've done. I know your church life. I know the life that you're living.

You see friends and I want you to hear this. What do we do? The decisions that we make. The stance that we take. The things that we say.

[35 : 45] Our actions and our deeds. The commands that we kept in this life or didn't keep. The faith that we held on to or didn't care for.

The sacrifices that we made or refused to make. The crosses that we bore or refused to bear. The lives that we lived or refused to live. The temptations that we pulled through or that we just gave in to.

These things are important to God. They're the things that matter. They're the things you read throughout Scripture. Not only this book by which we shall be judged.

But also the works of many. Although they think that they are good. They'll send them to hell. Their works will testify against them. Now we have to qualify this because the Christians' works won't send them to heaven.

You'll notice that their works, their deeds follow them. They don't go before them. The Christians' works don't buy them a place in heaven. Your good deeds aren't a key to the gate of glory.

[36 : 55] No. Only the works of Jesus himself will get you to heaven. And only faith in Jesus himself will get you to heaven. But the Christians' works will follow him.

They'll be kept in God's book of remembrance. And long after you go, Christian friend, your works will continue to follow you. Just in glory but especially here. Your walk will be remembered.

Your prayers will continue to be answered. The prayers for this generation. The prayers for the next generation. Your fragrance will continue to be smelt. Your faithfulness will continue to be recounted.

And your testimony perhaps will continue to be recalled. And these things, long after you go, will continue to bear fruit and to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

Isn't it amazing that God can use even the memories of godly people? To bring glory to himself. And to bring men to himself. Isn't it amazing that the memory of a godly mother or a godly father?

[37 : 59] Or a godly friend or a godly minister? Or a godly Christian lady? Or a godly Christian man? Isn't it amazing that God can use these things to make you die well?

The things that they said, the life that you saw them live, the love that you saw them show that these things can be the means even after these people are long gone, even after you are long gone, that they can be the means of starting a new work in the heart of a man or of a woman.

And on countless occasions, that has been the case. The believers have gone from the pews of this church, but their works do follow them.

Oh then, to die well. There's really a sense, friends, in which that is really what this life is all about. You come into this world and you've got a short time here, but you really go into this world in order to go out of it again.

And that the time that you have is time to prepare. And only what is done for Christ, friends, will last. Some of you have done many things, you've been very industrious, you've been good people, but are you Christian people?

[39 : 16] Will you enter into the rest of which we've been speaking? Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the example of unbelief.

Christian friend, death will be a blessing for you. It will be the gate to glory and the door to paradise. The Jordan of death may be an enemy, it is. Scripture calls it the last enemy.

But a promised land awaits you on the other side, and there you will have rest from all of your labour. There your works will follow you.

You can say with Paul that to you because you are a Christian, to die is gaining. For you because you live for Christ, to die is far better, because it's to be with Christ where Christ is.

Christian friend, how blessed you are in your life, and how blessed you will be in your death, but unconverted friend, you're not ready to go.

[40 : 18] You're here tonight and you're in the right place, and you're not ready to die. It's not a solemn thing to be so near and yet so far, to be near to the kingdom of God and yet to be outside of the kingdom of God.

You're not ready to die, and does that not strike fear into your heart? Does it not? Well, you might think, my, you're not ready to die yet, but time is on your side, you're but young lord, if you're not young you're healthy, but you know friends, the word says it, what we see in this world shows it to be true, but death doesn't walk to your calendar.

It doesn't check your diary before it comes, it doesn't look at your watch to see if you're ready to go, it comes, and that's it. Are you ready for it to come?

What I want friends is for you to die well. What I want is for the day of your death to be a day of rejoicing, as well as a day of mourning. Will it be that?

Will your death be the gateway to blessing, or the gateway to further curing? Will it be the door to heaven or the door to hell? You know, I don't know you well enough to know, and I can't see your hearts even if I do know you, but you know where you stand with the Lord.

[41 : 44] Friends, what can I say to you about this? Make sure that you're ready to go, make sure that you're ready to die, make sure that you're prepared, make sure friends that death will be a blessing to you, and not a curse to you.

It's good to be here, it's good to be under the word, it's good to be sitting here hearing the gospel preached. You know this friends, you'll hear it in hell, but it will have no effect.

You'll hear the voice of all the preachers that you've had here. Mr. MacDonald, Mr. MacLeod, Mr. Davis, all of the men that you've heard preaching to you, offering you to come to Christ, and you'll hear these voices throughout the endless ages of eternity, and you'll be sick of them, and you'll want them to stop.

You'll hear them inviting you to come, you can't come, because the day of grace is over, and mercy's ground has disappeared from under your feet, all that you've heard.

After every opportunity that you've had, after every thought that you've had, sitting in that very pew to come to Christ, to take up your cross, to follow Jesus, to be done with this world and all that it offers you, and to take up your portion with the Lord himself.

[43 : 09] Make sure friend, that death will be a blessing to you, because blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, but those who die outside of the Lord are anything but blessed.

What about you? Where do you stand? Where are you going? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to save you, who is able to turn your morning into dancing, your darkness into light, your cursing into blessing?

Do you know, have you closed in with Him? Will death, amongst all the sadness which there will be in the community, and in your home, and in your family, will death in many ways, indeed in the ultimate way, will it be a blessing?

Will there be a hint of blessedness here, when we perhaps gather for your funeral? Will there be hope? This was a man, no matter what kind of past he had, no matter how he mis-spent his youth, no matter how she, in many ways, neglected the means of grace, and didn't live as she ought to have lived, will there on that day be a hint of joy, and of happiness, and of blessedness, knowing that, despite all of these things, this was a Christian woman, this was a Christian man, and that his or her sins had been wiped away, that they had been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, blessed then, friends, of the dead who die in the Lord, and I pray and I hope, and I long for you to be a blessed man, to die in the Lord.

Amen, let us pray. Gracious and ever-blessed God, we do thanks for the everlasting gospel of which we have been thinking, all grant that will appear in your hearts this evening, grant that we would be renewed, young and old, that our faith would be put in this area, and that we would seek to live for Him, to do our best to keep His commandments, and to keep the faith of Jesus.

[45 : 45] O Lord, we are so unfit in and of ourselves, we are such sinners and our hearts are so dark, and yet we thank Thee, that in Jesus Christ, that there is hope, that in Him there is forgiveness, in Him there is redemption, all give us grace then, to close in with Him, to love Him, to trust Him, and to ensure that when we do inevitably leave this a city which is no continuing city, that we will go to that city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, grant that our death would be a blessed death, and that we truly will know rest from our labour.

Move forward we pray Thee, forgive for sin and for Christ's sake Amen.