

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**  
**AT THE FUNERAL OF**  
**A BELIEVING FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST**

***Perhaps you have asked . . .***

***How can we grieve with hope?***

When we remember the hope that we have, we may still grieve the loss of a loved one who believed in Christ, but not without hope. It is written, *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words”* (1 Thessa-lonians 4:13-18).

***Was God unloving to let the believer die?***

We know God loves us, even when we face death, *“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:6).

***Was God punishing the believer for something  
by letting him die now?***

We know that believers face no punishment for their sins because Jesus paid the full payment for all of their sins, and, *“there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1).

***Did God withhold His goodness or protection  
when the believer died?***

We know that God would not withhold any good thing we need because He did not even withhold His own son, as it says, *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things”* (Romans 8:31-32)?

***Was the believer separated from the love of God  
by the power of evil?***

We know that the believer could not have been separated from the love of God because of this wonderful promise, *“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).*

***Was God unfeeling and cold  
to let this believer die?***

We know that the Psalmist tells us that, *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15).* So even in death, the Lord was graciously watching over His saint.

***Was the believer’s death arbitrary  
and outside of God’s control?***

*“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (Psalm 139:16).* God knows all our days and He has a plan that is beyond our full understanding, but one we can rest in because we know He loves those who have by faith received Jesus as Savior.

***Where is the believer  
who has died right now?***

The Apostle Paul gives words to our confidence that the believer who has died is now with Christ. *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (Philippians 1:21-23).*

And while the believer who has died is still looking forward to the resurrection of their body at the return of Christ, we can be assured that they are now home with their Lord, as it says, *“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).*

The author of Hebrews speaks about our worship and how much better it is compared to the Old Covenant. In that description he says we come together not just with one another, or even just into the presence of God in heaven, but also to *“the spirits of the righteous made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23c).* Though still awaiting the resurrection, the believer who has died and is now with the Lord, has had their spirit made perfect through the work of Christ.

***Should we consider it a blessing  
to “die in the Lord?”***

The Bible tells us to be faithful as followers of Jesus, even unto death. In describing the victory of the martyrs, we read, *“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death”* (Revelation 12:11).

So, it is a great blessing to be faithful, as it also says in the final revelation given to John, *“And I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them”* (Revelation 14:13)!

***Is it helpful to go to funerals?***

As Solomon says, *“It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart”* (Ecclesiastes 7:2). May we all “lay it to heart” knowing that, *“it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27).

What joy and peace attend the deaths of believing followers of Jesus. They knew they were sinners who needed a Savior. And, by repentance and faith, they trusted the Son of God for their eternal salvation. Their eternal destiny is secure in Christ. We may grieve for our temporary loss but rejoice in their eternal gain.

If you are uncertain about your eternal destiny, Jesus offers you eternal life today. He did not come to condemn us because we all have already been condemned as sinners. John records Jesus saying, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God”* (John 3:16-18).

If you sincerely talk with God, expressing the following, you too can become a believing follower of Jesus:

*“Dear Lord Jesus, I now understand that I was created for a life with purpose and meaning under Your rule. I confess that I am a sinner and have rebelled against You. I cannot perfectly keep the Law so I cannot earn my own salvation. So right now I am turning away from my rebellion and sin and turning to You in faith and trust. I accept the work that You did and will do for me through Your life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again. Please, come be my Savior and send Your Holy Spirit to live within me, as You have promised You would. Amen.”*

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