

Die in the Lord

For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.(ROM14:8) What does it mean to die in the Lord? To die in the Lord is to die while a person is a believer in the Christ. Moses, the Lord's servant, died in the Lord in the mountains of Moab and went to be with the Lord.(MAT17:3;DEU 34:7-12) The truth is that their souls of God's people who die are with the Lord and are forever secure in His divine redemption (being saved from sin, error, or evil) To die in the Lord is therefore where a believer in Christ encounters death while their faith is firmly held in Christ. Such a believer leaves a testimony of faithfulness, courage, perseverance even in his tribulation. He never renounced his faith even in pain but firmly placed his hope in the Lord. Many Christians have been martyrs for their faith, since Stephen was stoned to death. These martyr' souls/spirits are taken to heaven, because they died for his or her faith, stand for God. Bible declares "*Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.*"(PSA116:15) God comforted the saint in death, that he delivered him from death by which his soul is ushered into the presence of God. Paul teaches "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"(PHI1:21) He would remain faithful to God regardless of whether the result of his case was life or death, He knew that life on this earth meant to live for Christ, since it was important to him to spread the gospel as far as possible but death would be even better because he would be in the presence of the Lord. Believers are useful to God while they live because they serve His purposes on earth. When the servant of God dies, we can speak of glory awaits those who successfully in proclaiming gospel, preach the word and his victory over those struggles. We should all desire to finish as Paul did. So, he can confidently expect heavenly rewards on that Day. *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,*(2TI4:7-8) Salvation is by grace through faith, yet eternal rewards are based on one's faithful service to Christ. Any faithful believer has to receive this crown. *all who have loved his appearing.* When Christ died on the cross, not only did He die for the sinners, but the sinners died in Him as well. It is a fact in God that the sinners have died with Jesus on the cross. *One died for all, therefore all died.*(2CO5:14) When we put our faith in Christ and baptized, we died spiritually with Him, and to our sin. We were then resurrected to a new spiritual life. We experienced a crucifixion. Our "old self," that existed in sin and self-reliance before we were in Christ, was spiritually crucified in the same way that Christ was physically crucified on the cross.(ROM6:6) Rom.6:3 says, Baptized into His death is the demonstration and acknowledgement of our application through faith of this death. In response to our faith, God powerfully put to death our old man that was under the power of sin. We should apply His death by faith and consider His death as our death. We are no longer slaves to sin, we have now been freed from its power in our lives. God's grace is greater ruler, it reigns over sin. *For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*(ROM6:14) Because we live in a fallen world and are still fleshly creatures, we will still tempt to sin. But those who follow Christ do not make sin a lifestyle choice. If we have faith, considering ourselves as Christ's death as our death, we will have experience of dying with the Lord daily. Paul said, *The cross...through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world*"(GAL6:14) "*To know...the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death*"(PHI3:10), "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*"(GAL2:20) "*I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily*"(1CO15:31) If a believer is to have the life experience of dying with the Lord, he must take God's way, the way of fact, faith, and experience crucified with Christ on the cross. We must not offer our bodies to be used for sin, but we must offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness. The righteousness given to us for free by God in Christ leads to becoming Christlikeness. Those who have made Jesus the Lord of their lives are no longer enslaved by sin. We have the power thru Holy Spirit, to live victoriously over sin. We once followed fleshly desires, those who are in Christ now led by the Holy Spirit.(ROM8:5:14) The blood of Jesus is able to cleanse and sanctify the heart, conscience, body which is a process throughout our lifetime. Jesus has said: Those who will not take up their cross and follow Him are not worthy of Him. The cross was always about death. Jesus was teaching them to willingly participate in dying to themselves, freely giving up their own lives to follow His path. "*Whoever finds their life will lose it, but if you give up your life for my sake, you will find it.*"(MAT10:39) Jesus invites us to give our life to him, and He will preserve it. Because He gave up his life, He saved ours. It is a Consecrated life called sharing in his suffering, in his service to God and even die as a martyr for his faith. Those who do willingly lose their lives by dying to themselves for His sake will find eternal life. There is hope for the person who dies believing in the Lord. Jesus Christ tell us "*I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*"(JOH11:25-26) Be sure, following Jesus, if done whole-heartedly. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Jesus tells us "*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have keys of heaven and hell.*"(REV1:18) Because of what Jesus Christ had done for us on the cross, He died for our sins, in three days He rose up out of the grave with all power in his hands. We can have assurance of everlasting life when we trust in the Lord. Blessed are those who have died in the Lord, having Life of Christ in them. When a person dies believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that person blessed who have eternal life, for they are going to live in the Bliss of heaven. live in fellowship with our Creator. A voice from heaven encourages those who obey God and maintain steadfast in faith in Christ. The voice pronounces blessing upon those who lay down their lives for Christ. Those who die in the Lord enjoy eternal rest. "*That they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.*"(REV14:13)

What Happens at Death?

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What happens right after we die? Bible teaches that the Soul is ever alive and conscious even when the Body is died! Death is the Separation of the Soul from the Body, not the end of our personhood. When the Body dies, it returns to dust and the Spirit returns to God who gave it.(ECC12:7) It is certainly that we will enter a reality that is far beyond anything we could imagine. The spirit world is a waiting period until we receive the gift of resurrection, when our souls will reunite with our bodies. First, believers will be taken into the presence of Christ in heaven. According to Mark 16:19, Jesus is in heaven right now at the right hand of God the Father. Acts 1:9-11 describe bodily ascension of Jesus, which occurred 40 days after His resurrection. *"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.(JOH3:13)* Jesus' ascension was a literal and bodily return to heaven. Bible promises that those who believe in God will experience a life after death. Paul accepted that God will rule over his life and death. Even if he dies, he will be with God in heaven,(PHI1:23) Death ushers us directly into either heaven or hell, so let us look to Christ for salvation.

Second, heaven is a place of splendid glory, and being with Christ in the glory of heaven will be far superior to our present earthly lives. So, Jesus is in heaven, a place of glory where God dwells with His angels and redeemed children. Paul says that he would *"prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord"*(2CO5:8) Being in heaven with the Lord is referred to finally we are in our true home. He is utterly convinced that it is where he is headed. Heaven is where he is meant to be forever. Paul's faith that the glory of his eternal life will far outweigh/outlast the suffering of earthly life makes him want that life more than this one. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Christians are promised as their souls' eternal resting place. If we believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, live a holy life, we'll be with Him in Heaven after our life on earth.

Third, we will be continue looking forward to the resurrection of our bodies from the dead while in heaven. Paul stated that he was eagerly waiting for the redemption of his body.(ROM8:23) We live in a world subjected by God to futility and decay, as a way to bring about His perfect plan. Bible has described all of creation as expressing this frustration, sorrow and longing. Christians as those who have God's Spirit: "firstfruits of the Spirit" as a first result of being in Christ. We have already been adopted and become the children of God through faith in Christ, but we have yet to meet our Father in person. Such saved believers groaning and yearning inwardly in this waiting, to obtain eternal life in the Kingdom of God. But while creation is waiting for God's children to be revealed in glory, waiting redemption of our bodies at rapture.

Fourth, those who did not trust Christ in this life will be separated from God and enter a reality lacking of His common grace and blessing. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus speaks of Lazarus as being taken to heaven when he dies but the rich man, because he did not heed the Scriptures, disobedient, immediately entering into torment.(LUK16:22-26) Scripture speaks of reality that awaits those who do not place their faith in Christ to be rescued from sin.(MAT13:30;25:41)

Finally, we see from all these things that death is not the end of our existence. When we die our bodies become lifeless and are no longer the place where we "reside," but we continue to exist as souls, either with Christ in glory or separated from Christ in shame. Knowing that death ushers us directly into the realities of either heaven or hell should make us look up to Christ as our refuge and salvation and should make us strive, as Paul, *"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."*(2CO5:9) He wants to please Christ in every way. The glory of eternity with Christ is far weightier than any suffering experienced in our temporary bodies in this life. For believers, the prospect of death is sometimes a fearful thing because death is hidden in mystery as the realm to which we have never gone. But we may take courage and lay aside our fears in the confidence that we have a God who says to his people, *"Do not be afraid" God wants His people to be comforted in the face of death: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.(ISA43:1-2)* It is an encouragement to every Christian that God will be with you during your trying times. Trust in God's presence every day of your life.

"For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures."(ROM15:4) As the Word of God is the revelation of the sovereign God and planner of our life. It is the revelation of a God who cares and who is in control of all the affairs of our lives. The Bible alone can give man an adequate understanding, meaning, and hope in the face of the facts and realities of life with its complexities, trials, and losses as with death. Let us reflect together on some of its truth and promises that we might find courage, hope, and joy in the Lord in the midst of our sorrow. First, we might start with a question? Why death? Certainly, sometimes it is a relief because of sickness or the pains of this life, but who can ever really be thankful for death. According to Scripture, death is not normal or natural even though it is a persistent fact of human history. Because man was created by God to be a unity of body, soul, and spirit and in that state to live forever with God in fellowship with Him. This is the natural, normal state that God planned for man. This is why we have the hope and promise of the resurrection (2CO5:1-9) All who have died in Christ will be resurrected to new life. Further, death is the last enemy to be conquered by God, it is the result of a cause, the result of sin and the fall of the human race by deceit of Satan. *"For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death"*(1CO15:25-26)

Victory Over Death!

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What is that victory over death? Christ has conquered death refers to His resurrection. He who was dead is now alive. *"It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him"*(ACT2:24) Let's think in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and reflect for a moment the great declarations: *"But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. " O death, where is your sting?" O death, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"*(1CO15:54-57) Because of Christ's victory over death, He is the God who raised Christ from dead, God assures us that death separation is not permanent for believers. Because the Spirit is in us, we will be resurrected from the dead as Jesus was. When death is abolished, there will be victory over death, all saved Christians in the graves will rise from the dead, when the last trumpet blasts and Christ returns.

Bible tells us that the sting of death has been swallowed up in the victory of Christ. because of sin *"it is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment."*(HEB9:27) But the sting, which is sin, has been removed and so also the judgment. *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"*(ROM8:1) if you are "in Christ Jesus," God will never condemn you for any sin whatsoever. This condition of salvation is for those who place their faith in Christ.(ROM3:23-26) Christ's death canceled sin's penalty and its judgment was born by the Lord in the sinners place on the cross. When Christ conquered death for us, He removed the "sting of death," sin—that is, we will not be judged by God according to our sins; rather, we will stand before God attired in Christ's righteousness. Jesus is sovereign over death. Believers in Christ "will not be hurt by the second death" and "the second death has no power over them"(REV20:6;2:11) Death is the devil's most powerful, terrifying weapon against us. At the cross, Christ defeated Satan on behalf of us: *"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out"*(JOH12:31) With the empty tomb, Christ destroyed the devil's most powerful weapon, death. Bible teaches that death is an enemy of man and God. But it will ultimately be destroyed forever; that in fact it has already been defeated at the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ's defeat of death began with His own resurrection from the grave. It will continue with the resurrection of all who have believed in Him. It will be final when death is no more. At that moment, victory over death will be complete, those who have believed in Christ will be receiving a glorified, resurrected body like that of the risen Christ.(1JO3:2;1CO15:51)

Paul wrote to Timothy: *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand."*(2TI4:6) This, for the Christian, is what death is--it's setting departure, it's being freed from this life so we can go home. The anchor is weighed and we set sail for the golden shore of the blessed presence of God, carried into God's presence. This explains what death is like for the believer--it's a going home experience. While the ultimate awaits the final battle and the resurrection, our victory in Christ means that at death, we are ushered into the Lord's presence. In this heavenly home there won't be the sorrow, the tears, and the pain that we have here, and certainly, there is no death there.(REV21:4) The believer experiences perfect happiness and all the joys which attend being in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bible assures us that the victory accomplished for us by the Lord means a glorious, eternal inheritance *"an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade away, which is reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ"*(IPE1:3-5) Our heavenly inheritance is: incorruptible in substance, undefiled in purity, unfading in beauty and joy, reserved in heaven for every believer in the Lord. We're just strangers, pilgrims on the earth, looking forward to the time when we're in the glory and at rest with the Lord. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.(HEB13:14)the Holy city called New Jerusalem; whose builder and maker is God.

Finally, we can find further comfort in knowing "that precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints." When a believer is called home, it's because God's purposes for that believer are over. It's because in God's love and wisdom, He wants that believer with Him in glory. Believers "are more than conquerors through him who loved us" What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? "Neither death nor life" Christ has conquered death, believers stand firm on Jesus' words: *"And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die"* Our victory in Christ assures us that the believer will experience a glorious resurrection and a glorified body like that of Christ.(PHI3:20) *The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth.*(JOH5:28-29) The grave is not final. We naturally will feel sorrow/grief when those we love die when we are separated from them in this life. But believer does not grieve as one who has no hope. For our manner of life is in heaven; from there we look for the Savior, on that day dead in Christ will be taken from their graves with glorified bodies. But awful pity is when one dies, departs without faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ.

The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.(PSA90:12) When we recognize that we have only as much time on this earth, truth will help us think rightly about how to spend our time. This, in turn, will encourage us to grow in wisdom. We will want to judge well how to use the time allotted to us, and this requires godly perspective.

When we number our days, we will strive to fill each one with value, living every moment for God's purposes and glory. Pray: Thank You Lord for sacrificing Your life for our sins so that we might live. We're thankful that because You died and rose again, we can have assurance that one day we'll be with You in a place of no more death. Amen. Praise the Lord!

Why is your soul important?

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The Bible teaches that we consist of body, soul and spirit: "*May your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1TH5:23) Soul refers to a living, breathing, conscious in the body. The mind is man's faculty of thinking, reasoning, and applying knowledge. Your soul is the part of you that consists of your mind, character, thoughts, and feelings. The heart is a physical area of the soul in the human body. And the heart is considered the seat of life or strength. It is a symbol for love. By the Spirit, we can communicate with God, who calls "Abba! Father!"

In Mark 8:35-36, Jesus says our soul has great value. "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?* Do you know why this is? Your soul is breathed into you by God. The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (GEN2:7) God formed a body. It was made from the dust of the ground. God breathes life into this corpse, and this makes Adam a living soul. This soul is capable of knowing God and enjoying God. God has breathed life into you. All that you achieve in life, will arise from the life of the soul. A healthy soul keeps you fulfilled and content. You are made in the image of God. (GEN1:26)

Your soul is the cause of all your sin. Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (JAM1:14) Temptation comes to us through the world (sinful humanity), the flesh (a slave to sin), and the devil. Wherever it comes from, it attaches itself to the soul. Our souls are sticky toward sin. The problem is that our souls are not pure. *Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.* (MAT10:28) Jesus' encouragement to his followers, as persecution will come to them, but they must not be afraid. Their enemies can only kill their bodies not the soul. They should fear God only.

Your life had a beginning, one day you will die and your soul has an endless life. Each of us are responsible for how we live life that soul will experience joy or misery. Those who choose to reject the truth of God are without excuse. (ROM1:20)

Our Lord tells the story of two men who died in Luke 16:22-23. One of them was carried by angels to Abraham's side. Not the poor man's body—his soul! The rich man also died and was buried," His body was placed in a rich man's tomb, and the rich man goes to Hell. It was the rich man's soul! Death takes life from the body, but not from the soul. When you die, your soul goes on to one of two places: One is a place of great joy. The other is a place of great torment. And You can't get from the one to the other in either direction. There is a heaven to pursue and a hell to avoid. Your soul can be saved and it can be lost. To lose your soul is ultimate disaster, because it is only loss from which you can never recover.

Jesus confronts humanity with a profound reality: Your soul can be lost. He asks: *What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?* (MAR8:35-36) Think about the rich man in Luke 16: He lived well. He enjoyed life. He dressed in purple. And, he never really thought about his soul. He only lived for this world. But this rich man had no taste for the Word of God—no hunger for it, no appetite for the things of God. Bread sustains your body. But the Word of God sustains your soul. "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*" (MAT4:4) "take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, "*Fool! This night your soul is required of you*" (LUK12:19-Parable reflects foolishness of life attaching to wealth. They have no purchasing power after death. What about your soul? God wants our life to be devote knowing Him. Learn the doctrine of Christ. And *you will find rest for your souls.* (MAT11:29)

You can deter your soul by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. There was a time when your heart was tender towards the Lord. You wanted your life to count for him, but now your whole life is taken up with the cares of this world. The desire for other things have taken hold of your heart. The Word of God has been choked, and it is becoming unfruitful in your life. And you are losing your soul. God says there are "passions of the flesh," and that they "wage war" against your soul. (1PE2:11) They wage war, means these passions of flesh are out to destroy your soul. When you experience temptation toward some passion, you give yourself to it, here's what is happening: You are surrendering your soul! You are saying to enemy of your soul, "You win! I admit! I'm yours now" then he claims on you and takes you captive to Hell.

But your soul is of great value. It lasts forever. If you surrender your soul to sin it will be your everlasting loss, and you will have no one to blame but yourself! What Can You Do? The first step towards heaven is to find out the worth of your soul." Thank God if you feel that today. The soul that is saved is the soul that is given to Jesus Christ. Repent, confess your sin. If you see the value of your soul, you will come to Jesus Christ and say to him. "Have mercy on me, Lord! "I need you to be the Lord, Savior, and Captain of this soul. I need you to save my soul. I need you to feed my soul. And, I need you to guard my soul. I need to turn my entire life, all that I am, over to you and place myself wholly in your hands."

Praying for the dead is not a biblical concept. (HEB9:27) Mediator prayer other than Christ Jesus is sin, since He is the only one able to reconcile God and men and He is our High Priest in Heaven. (HEB2:17) A person will be judged by God or eternal state of mankind is determined by our actions, choices during our lives on earth. So, pray for mercy/repentance/sanctification after a person dies done in vain. Instead have burden/compassion/pray for all people who lives on earth to be saved by grace thru faith in Christ Jesus. Pastors will be held responsible/accountable before the Lord for how they kept watch over the souls. Death is the end of man's earthly faith pilgrimage of the time of grace. Pray to our Heavenly Father as children of God that we depart this world with a loving heart and a good conscience. When the time of our death comes, we follow Jesus' example, say again, *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.* When we die, angels will accompany us on our journey to heaven (if that is our destiny) We love you, Lord. Thank you for our salvation and eternal life. Halleluiah!