

Precious

A Funeral Message

Psalm 116:15

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FOCAL Psalms 116:15 Precious¹ in the sight² of the LORD³ [is] the death⁴ of his saints⁵.

There are many books in the world, many good books – but only one Good Book. All other books may be filled with man's wisdom, but only one Book gives us the Wisdom and the Word of God. You may turn to any number of books at such a time as this, when a loved one has gone from us to another world – but unless you turn to this Book of God, the Holy Bible, you will not find comfort in the storm of your grief.

Our text today tells us, **Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.**

The Death of the Saint Is Precious To God Because Of The Cross

- 1 H3368, יָקָר, yâqâr, *yaw-kawr'*, From H3365; *valuable* (objectively or subjectively): - brightness, clear, costly, excellent, fat, honorable women, precious, reputation.
- 2 H5869, עַיִן, 'ayin, *ah'-yin*, Probably a primitive word; an *eye* (literally or figuratively); by analogy a *fountain* (as the *eye* of the landscape): - affliction, outward appearance, + before, + think best, color, conceit, + be content, countenance, + displease, eye ([-brow], [-d], -sight), face, + favor, fountain, furrow [from the margin], X him, + humble, knowledge, look, (+ well), X me, open (-ly), + (not) please, presence, + regard, resemblance, sight, X thee, X them, + think, X us, well, X you (-rselves).
- 3 H3068, יְהוָה, y'hôvâh, *yeh-ho-vaw'*, From H1961; (the) *self Existent* or eternal; *Jehovah*, Jewish national name of God: - Jehovah, the Lord. Compare H3050, H3069.
- 4 H4194, מָוֶת, mâveth, *maw'-veth*, From H4191; *death* (natural or violent); concretely the *dead*, their place or state (*hades*); figuratively *pestilence, ruin*: - (be) dead ([-ly]), death, die (-d).
- 5 H2623, חָסִיד, châsîyd, *khaw-seed'*, From H2616; properly *kind*, that is, (religiously) *pious* (a saint): - godly (man), good, holy (one), merciful, saint, [un-] godly.

FOCAL Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD [is] the death of his saints.

One of the definitions for the word **precious** is **something of great value**. As humans we put great value on gold, silver, precious stones, paper money, yet to God none of these things are worth anything. God values life, regards life to be the greatest gift. Our Lord Jesus Christ promised us **eternal life** if we but trust in Him. The Master has said:

John 3:14-18 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Those who have look on, believed on, and surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ are **precious to the Eternal**

God. The Lord Jesus came to suffer and die on an undeserved Cross, making payment for our sins. He shed His Blood on Calvary for you and for me. The Scripture says:

1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; (19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

When you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God reckons that the Blood of Christ was shed *for you*. From that moment on the life is changed. The *son of Adam* has been adopted into the family of God – you are now a *son of God*. Your status has changed because you are no longer in the same position. You are now **one of His saints**, someone **set apart by the sacrifice of Christ**.

God does not see the death of all as precious. The *Craftsman* doesn't look at the destruction of his work of art and laugh with glee over it! Our text doesn't say, **“Precious in the sight of the Lord is death of all people”**, for that would not be true. God only views the **departure of His saints from this life as precious**, a thing to be cherished. He does not rejoice at the death of the wicked. No Beloved, the *death of the wicked* isn't **precious**, a thing to be rejoiced over in the Throne room of God. The Lord said through His prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, [As] I live,

saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways...

It is easy for a person to say, “**I know the Lord**”, easy for a person to profess that he or she is a Christian. It is but a few words to say, “**I am saved**” or “**I am a Christian**”. But the real proof of one's salvation is found in the crucible of death. When the wicked person dies the Lord has no pleasure in that, for the wicked then goes to a place of *eternal suffering*. Death for the unbeliever is a time to *meet with the judgment of God*.

Not so for the believer! The believer **cannot die**, for the Lord has promised eternal life to those who are His. **The Lord has proven eternal life through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

Our Lord Jesus died on the Cross, but did not cease to be. Death for Him was a departure from this life for but *three short days* – then He returned to go back and be with the Father. The Apostle wrote:

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 Therefore [we are] always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (8) We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

and the Lord Jesus Christ told the thief who repented and called upon His Name for salvation:

Luke 23:43 ... Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

This is where the believer goes when life passes from this body. Because our dear sister is **one of God's saints**, because she professed the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, she has not died – but lives even now in the presence of God. **Absent from the body, present with the Lord. This very day in Paradise face to face with Jesus.** Death for the believer is no dying, but a passing into the Hands of Eternal God.

Death for the believer is a necessary step. Though we may ask “why” - for our loved one is not with us – physical death is a *putting off* of the old body so that the new body can be put on. The Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in [this] tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but

clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing [is] God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

On the day the Christian is saved, the Holy Spirit of God *enters the body of that believer*. God the Son made payment for our sins, but God the Holy Spirit comes to live inside this old body. He is our down payment, the **earnest of the Spirit**, and He stays with us throughout our earthly life. **God has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5)** – and God has never done so. On the day that our dear sister accepted Christ as Savior the Lord came to her, to live and be with her. As she passed through illness, as each stage of Alzheimer's took her farther – it seemed – away from you – God was still true to His promise. Her body failed her, but her Lord never did. Finally, after it seemed that you her family had went through many trials suffering with her, the Lord took her to be with Him.

Illustrate This is truly a blessing, not a cursing. She has been liberated from her body so that she can **have her mortality, her sickness, her limitations swallowed up of life, that God promised eternal life**. Let me illustrate this. A little girl was wandering through the bushes around her home and found a bird's nest with four brightly colored eggs. She thought this to be a great treasure, and came back frequently to look at the nest. After a week or so the little girl came back to find her treasure destroyed. She ran to her mother and, with tears

on her face, cried “Momma, I had some beautiful eggs in a nest, but now they are destroyed. Nothing is left but a few bits of broken shell.” Her mother took her in her arms and told her, “Honey, those eggs are not destroyed. There were little birds in them. Listen, hear them now in the trees! They are not dead, but they have moved on.” We look at the body of our departed loved one and think, “Is this all that is left to us? Such a waste!” Yet **faith whispers to the Christian, “The shell may be broken, but your loved one sings in glory.” Death to the believer is no loss, but a moving on to a greater life with the Eternal Lord**. Though we may grieve our sister's passing,

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 {we who are saved by faith in Christ} sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

The Death of the Saint Is Precious To God Because Of The Crown

FOCAL Psalms 116:15 **Precious in the sight of the LORD [is] the death of his saints.**

The word **precious** does not only mean “of great value”, but it also means “**that which is honorable**”. I remember, not too long ago, a president dying. A huge parade followed his coffin as his earthly house was laid to rest. We make much of the deaths of dignitaries, of

presidents, of kings and queens, but **Almighty and Eternal God oversees the death of every saint**. There is no dishonor in death for the saint. **Precious – honorable in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints**.

Our sister died surrounded by a loving family. Many kings have died with much less. **King Alexander the Great** conquered most of the known world and died surrounded by sons who fought over his kingdom rather than mourning his passing. **Genghis Khan**, another great king of the past, died *of an assassin's poison*, probably put in his drink by a greedy family member. Those who have much and yet rejected God in this life often leave this life as paupers, whereas those who live for God and leave this life as paupers enter eternity as the richest of people. The Lord Jesus has said:

Mark 8:34-37 ... Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (35) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. (36) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

There was a time when our dear sister answered the Gospel call, repented of her sins, and surrendered her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. From that moment on she walked with the Master. As the Lord Jesus asked, she

picked up her Cross and followed Him.

Why was she given this Cross and not another? We do not know. I know that her Alzheimer's was not a punishment, nor was her death a punishment. The Lord, Eternal God, gives and takes according to His own Sovereign Will. Our sister had no choice in what Cross she was given – she was to pick up that Cross and follow the Master. Her work is now over. As a **saint of God** she stands in glory, honorable, her race at an end. She is, in the words of **C.H. Spurgeon**⁶:

“the death of a saint ... is a precious sheep folded, a precious sheaf harvested, precious vessel which had long been at sea brought into harbor, a precious child which has long been at school to finish his training brought home to dwell in his Father's house forever. God the Father sees the fruit of His eternal love at last ingathered; Jesus sees the purchase of His passion at last secured; the Holy Spirit sees the object of His continual workmanship at last perfected: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rejoice that now the blood bought ones are free from all inbred sin, and delivered from all temptation. The battle is fought and the victory is won forever ..”

The Scripture promises:

James 1:12 Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which

⁶ From his sermon, *Precious Deaths*, delivered February 18, 1872 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, England

the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

I know that our sister loved the Lord. Even as disease consumed her she would still respond to the sound of the Gospel. When a hymn was sung in her presence she would turn toward it and, as long as she was able, she would sing along with it. She loved the Lord, and the Lord loved her. Her race is over, her victory is won, and she now abides in glory with her loved ones who preceded her in death, with her loved ones who loved and even now love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you among them? Do you love the Lord? If so, you will see her one day, in that sweet “Bye and Bye”. My prayer is that you will be with her in glory. Trust in the Lord, believe in Him, obey Him, follow Him if you will be with Him – and her – one day.

May God touch your hearts with these words.



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