

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 12:26-27;
Luke 24:1-12; John 14:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 50-58;
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 22:1-5
PRINT PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:13-20, 51-58

Thoughts on Life and Death



WAKE UP!



TYSON AND FARRAH WERE GOOD FRIENDS. They had lived in the same community and attended the same schools since kindergarten. They were now in the eighth grade, attending Alexander Middle School. Their parents had been like second parents to each other. Farrah never had a grandparent; they were all deceased when she was born. So, Tyson's maternal grandparents were like her very own. She adored them and called them Grandma Trudy and Grandpa Al, just as Tyson did.

One evening, when Tyson arrived home from school, he saw his family sitting on the sofa, crying. He blurted out, "What's wrong? Why are you crying? Did something happen?" Tyson's aunt took him aside and told him that his Grandma Trudy had passed away suddenly from a heart attack. Tyson was devastated. He ran to his room, shut the door, and cried for a long time. Then he remembered Farrah and how upset she would be.

Farrah sobbed uncontrollably. Grandma Trudy was so faithful. She loved the Lord. Farrah wanted to know why this happened. She wanted to know if she would ever see Grandma Trudy again. She wanted to know if there really is a nice place called heaven that Grandma Trudy can go to, or if she would be in the ground to perish forever. *Is there really a house there for her?* Farrah had lots of questions. They went to their pastor the following Sunday after service for answers.

The pastor showed them in the Bible where it says there is eternal life after death for believers. He showed them where Jesus said that in heaven there are many mansions for us. He showed them where the dead would rise and meet Jesus in the sky, returning to heaven. Grandma Trudy's body is sleeping in the grave, but her soul is already with the Lord. He showed them a Scripture that said there is no pain and no sickness in heaven. They both left his office feeling good about Grandma Trudy. There was no reason to continue to sob for her because she was in good hands with God.



WORD UP

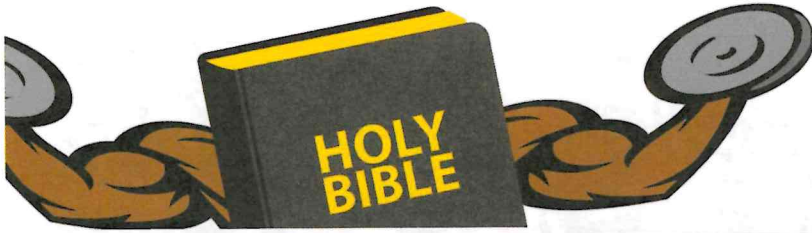
1 Corinthians 15:13-20, 51-58

13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

.....
51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—
52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

KEY VERSE:

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

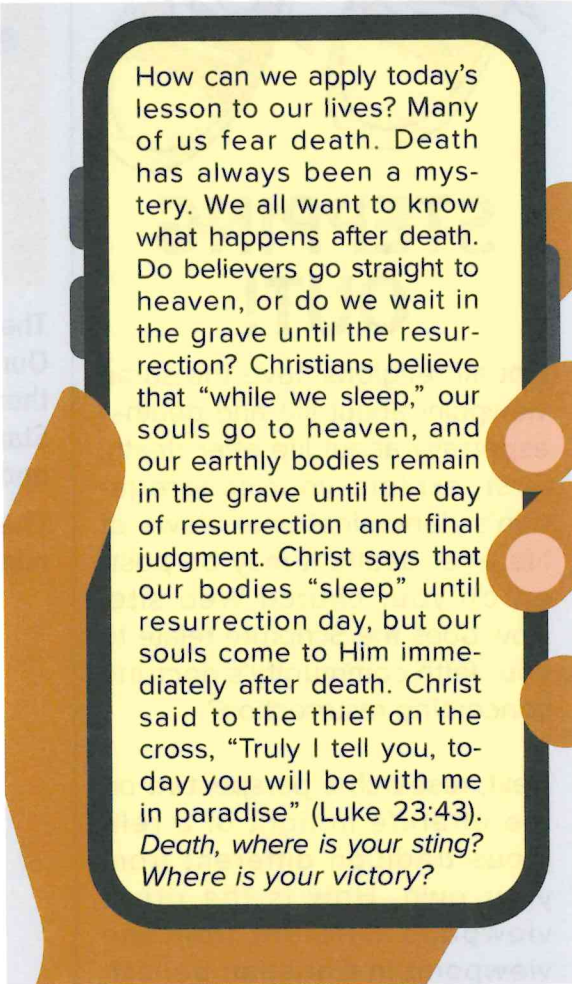


THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

WORK OUT

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH? MANY HAVE ASKED THIS QUESTION, AND IT IS STILL ASKED TO THIS VERY DAY. Death is a scary mystery for many people. But should it be? Understanding death and life after death should help ease the fear of it. What we do in life, how we live our lives, what we believe in, and who we believe in are questions we should answer while we are living so that the “sting of death” is not an issue for us. Do you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and might? Do you love your neighbor? Are you obedient to God’s Word? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God who died for our sins on the cross and rose from the dead? God said that the believers will be in heaven with Him to live eternally. *Death, then, where is your sting?*

Do you question whether we can be raised from the dead? If you question this, then you question whether Christ was raised from the dead. If we question whether Christ was raised from the dead, then we question ourselves and our faith because we have been believing that God raised Christ from the dead. Do not doubt—God did indeed raise Christ from the dead. Be careful not to mix with nonbelievers who can cause your faith to waver. Keep your mind on what awaits you after death. Believe that you will be raised and caught up in the air with Christ and other believers on your way to your mansion.



How can we apply today’s lesson to our lives? Many of us fear death. Death has always been a mystery. We all want to know what happens after death. Do believers go straight to heaven, or do we wait in the grave until the resurrection? Christians believe that “while we sleep,” our souls go to heaven, and our earthly bodies remain in the grave until the day of resurrection and final judgment. Christ says that our bodies “sleep” until resurrection day, but our souls come to Him immediately after death. Christ said to the thief on the cross, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). *Death, where is your sting? Where is your victory?*

INSIDE OUT



Respond to the statements and questions below by filling in the blanks. Then explain in your own words what the words mean to you.

- _____ has been swallowed up in victory.
- Where, O death, is your _____? Where, O death, is your _____?
- The _____ of death is _____, and the _____ of sin is the _____.
- But thanks be to God! He gives us the _____ through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- But Christ has indeed been _____ from the _____.



Being a youth is an exciting period in life. You are full of energy and curiosity, and yearning for independence inside and outside the home. You are beginning to think about what you are going to be when you grow up. The last thing you may be thinking about is death. But we know that death happens at any age. This text prepares us for the death of a family member or a friend, or even ours. God wants you to know that death is not the end. It is not final. It is the beginning of a glorious life for believers. We do not welcome death, but we do not have to fear it.



STEPPING OUT!

Not all religions have the same viewpoint about life and death—especially about life after death. First, explore your congregation’s denominational views of life after death. It may be posted on your church Web site. How does the Scripture relate to your faith community’s doctrine concerning resurrection?

Next, research a perspective on the afterlife in light of a religious tradition different from your own. How is the other viewpoint different from the viewpoint in Christian belief?

Media Mission



Listen to the lyrics of the song “He Got Up” by the Edwin Hawkins Music & Arts Seminar Mass Choir. (Refer to the link below.) You will hear words from today’s Scripture.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVRkdpJUUTo&list=RDfVRkdpJUUTo&start_radio=1



The chart below highlights some of the fundamental Christian beliefs. Our lesson is on Numbers 15 and 16. Study the chart for one minute, then write on a sheet of paper as many beliefs as you can remember. Start with the ones that you are familiar with—baptism, Communion, and there being one God.

There is a reward for the person who can name the most in one minute.

