



Speaking of Heaven

What Happens When I Die? (2 Corinthians 5:1-8)

By Pastor David Hillis, 14 August 2016

BIG IDEA: While our lives don't stop when our bodies do, what happens to each of us when we die depends on what happens before we die.

Our Lives Don't Stop (2 Corinthians 5:1-10; John 11:25; Philippians 1:23-24; Hebrews 9:27)

- 2 Corinthians 5:1 assures us that when we throw off this temporary shelter, we will replace it with something that is far more permanent and perfect.

Three main things Scripture says happens at death to people who have put their faith in Christ:

- 1) **Your soul leaves your body and returns to God.** (2 Corinthians 5:6,8; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:42-43; Hebrews 9:27)
 - The breath of life departs the body, and Ecclesiastes says the spirit returns to the God who gave it. Our body, in essence, returns to dust.
 - If you know Jesus, there isn't the slightest reason to fear death. You'll find yourself ushered into heaven, where you will see Him face to face.
- 2) **You're conscious and in command of your faculties of thought, feelings, speech and memories.** (Luke 16:19-31)
 - This passage, in Luke, clarifies that people after death function very much like we do here in this life.
- 3) **Our bodies are lifeless until a future day when Christ restores them, reuniting the soul with an upgraded, improved body.** (1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
 - Regardless of what happens to your body after you're gone, there will come a day when God will make it new again.

Many people, today, have the wrong view of death. We think we are in the land of the living going to the land of the dying, when in reality, we are in the land of the dying headed for the land of the living. Death is not the end of the road; it is only a bend in the road.

May you come to a place where, when you speak of heaven, you have nothing to fear or dread. May you find yourself each morning as you awake, telling yourself, "One day I'll experience something more real than this. This morning, I am one day closer to home."

NEXT STEP

How might your understanding of what happens when you die change for you how you live your life today?

FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

1. Many people who have had near-death experiences report encountering a Supreme Being who radiated love and grace. Spend some time talking with God about the ways this description is similar to and/or different from how you experience him in your life right now.
2. As mentioned, there are generally three responses to the thought of death: don't think about it, fear it, or be ready to welcome it. Where do you fall on that continuum and why? Read Hebrews 2:14-15. Talk to God about where you are at and how he might be asking you to shift your perspective.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and Revelation 20:11-15. What does the first passage teach about the resurrection of the saved? What does the second passage teach about the resurrection of the lost? What is your reaction to each?
4. Look again at the last verse of the 1 Corinthian's passage. Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you how you can stand firm and give yourself to the Lord's work – living in light of the promised resurrection of our bodies.