

10-23-22
WHAT WE KNOW CAN LEAD US TO ANSWER THE UNKNOWNNS
DEATH AND THE AFTER LIFE..

Intro: This past month we had two funerals of people we loved and will be missed in our church. Whenever there is a funeral we should naturally think about our own mortality. Our life is short and each day we live is one day closer to the day that the Lord will take us home.

It is a fact that fall into winter more people seem to die than any other time of the year. I don't know what it is about October that people are infatuated with death. Could you imagine people decorate their houses with skeletons, and dead things.. Halloween is a holiday where people are fixated on death.

It's kind of a spooky month. There is all kind of spiritual activity going on and most of it not good! This may be why I got saved just a few days before Halloween. This is why instead of having your kids going out celebrating death, why not come to our fellowship next Saturday where we celebrate living for Jesus.

Now there are a lot of people that really don't know how to deal with death. I remember many years ago, there was a young lady that professed Christ, she got baptized and joined the church and even got involved in a lot of volunteer ministries in the church.

It was about this time of the year .. fall and we had 4 funerals of church members within one month. That was a record. I don't think we have ever had that many funerals in a month since that time.

Suddenly this young lady missed about 3 weeks of coming to church. My wife and I were shopping for Christmas in the mall and I saw her in the mall ..

I called out to her and waved to her to come and sit with me and talk. The first thing I did is tell her we missed her and asked what was going on because I hadn't heard from her in about a month.

Then she said to me.. well I just couldn't take it any more. I said take what.. She said, you know all the funerals. Now we had 4 funerals and each was about 2 weeks apart. That means for two months there was a funeral every other week. So she got spooked out, and just fell off the grid. Then I realized how shallow her salvation was.

The truth is that if your relationship with Christ does not give you a hope for something better beyond this life, then I question what kind of relationship and salvation experience you had. Our faith is that we believe that Christ was resurrected and will resurrect us after we die. Our hope is not in this world. We have a better hope in the next world.

There are many benefits we can receive for living for God, but these are all temporal benefits. We should be after the eternal benefits.

Not I would like to read a few Scriptures this morning.

Scripture:

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years [are] threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength [they be] fourscore years, yet [is] their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Psalms 90:11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, [so is] thy wrath.

Psalms 90:12 So teach [us] to number our days, that we may apply [our] hearts unto wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 3:21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Ecclesiastes 8:7 For he (a man or us) knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

Ecclesiastes 8:8 [There is] no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither [hath he] power in the day of death: and [there is] no discharge in [that] war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

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When we come to a funeral we are forced to look seriously at man's greatest fear and man's greatest enemy... Death

There many trials that we will face in life.. and many problems.. but no doubt there is no greater problem than that of death.. death at times visits the young and the old.

Here Solomon the wisest man that ever lived says:

Ecclesiastes 8:8 [There is] no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither [hath he] power in the day of death: and [there is] no discharge in [that] war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

The most dreaded thing about death is the unknown factor..

Here are the unknowns that men wrestle with

If you will permit me.. I would like to help each of us.. think through some of the greatest questions that have concerned man in regards to this matter of death?

Maybe it is the fear of these unknowns that cause a lot of people not to be able to face death. In fact I know some people who just will not go to a funeral. They just simply cannot face death. They cannot go into a room where there is a dead person. It just bothers them. I had a brother-in-law, he would not come to my father's funeral. I have seen a lot of people like him. They just cannot face death.

The problem is that they cannot face death .. and all the questions to come with death.

1. Here are some of the questions that perplex us..

Maybe these unknowns are the reason so many cannot deal with death .. and funerals.

Solomon deals with some of these questions that we face in life .. these unknowns that scare us.. he reasons through life writes in Ecclesiastes 8:7

1. When Will Death Come Knocking at my door

Ecclesiastes 8:7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

We do not know what will take us in death..
We do not know when we will be taken in death

No one can answer these questions .. Yet we all know that someday something will take us in death .. and we know death will come upon all of us..

We don't like to think about that - yet a funeral is a good time that we all are forced to think on this subject In Ecclesiastes 7:2 Solomon says it is good that we think on this:

Ecclesiastes 7:2 [It is] better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that [is] the end of all men; and the living will lay [it] to his heart.

So though only God knows the answer to these questions that plague us and scare so many.. it is important to remember that (death) will come and we should be prepared for it..

HERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION THAT OFTEN IS ASKED AS WE THINK ON MEANING OF LIFE AND DEATH!

2. Is there any existence after death?

Ecclesiastes 3:21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

This is debated by so many and in the world you have all kind of opinions about this matter of life after death... Of course we believe we have the answers from the Bible.. but today I am going to show that what we can know leads us to what we believe...

There are so many that have had near death experiences.. and almost all of these people talk about some kind of spiritual experience.. but again how can you know these things for certain... Some would argue that we just believe the Bible by blind faith. I say no what we can know as a fact leads us to faith..

Now just as I preached a few weeks back.. there are some things that the world has no answers for. One of these things is this matter of life and death...

Now let me give you a reasonable way to approach these unknowns... Some would throw their hands in the air and say let's not even think about this issue, because it is filled with unknowns and questions that are impossible to answer.

When we face issues that we can't understand and have questions about these matters that seem unknown, here is what we should do. We should start with what we know for a fact and build from there...

II. WE SHOULD START WITH WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE CAN OBSERVE....

1. WE KNOW FOR A FACT THAT WE ARE GOING TO DIE.. AND SINCE OUR LIFE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN WORLD... WE SHOULD TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH..

How foolish it would be ***not*** to spend time thinking and reasoning over this important matter.. Some people push it off.. none of us would want to go to a funeral by choice.. often a funeral is a forced time to think through these issues of life and death.. Ecc. 7:2 says..

It is only a fool that would not give this matter some serious thought

Jesus spoke about the rich man in Luke 19 and verse 20, who was making plans to store up all his riches so he could retire. The Lord called him a fool because that very night he was making plans to expand his barns to invest for the future.. GOD SAID THOU FOOL.. TONIGHT THY SOUL SHALL BE REQUIRED OF THEE...

NOW AGAIN LET US START WITH WHAT WE CAN KNOW FOR CERTAIN...

1. **We know that we are going to die, and the most important question we could ask is what happens to us after we die..**

Now the 1st thing we should want to know is this....

2. **2nd we should realize that there is a creator
We should know that this creator is God**

Now only a fool would deny the existence of a creator.. and that creator is God..

When I was first saved and dating my wife she and I went to talk to a friend of mine about the Lord. His name was Joe, he used to fix equipment for our band. I went to his house and brought my wife with me.. We were not married yet. I was only saved for a few months. My buddy Joe said, he didn't believe there was a God..

Elaine said to my buddy did you know that your name is written in the Bible..

He said it is.. and she said yes.. And she opened her Bible to Psalm 51:1

Psalms 53:1 {To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David.} The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: [there is] none that doeth good.

Now only a fool would deny the there is creative design in the universe and the creative designer has to be God.

Romans. 1:19-20 says it all..

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them.

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, **being understood by the things that are made**, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

We are a creation of God.. we are part of his creation.. this we can see and observe.. We all know how to reorganize an intelligent designer.. and creation abounds with evidence of design and order patterns.. beauty.. You may want to argue who this creator is who brought all things into existence. but you cannot argue the creative order of things.. which demands there is a creator.

Only a fool would deny what they can see and observe and say it has order and design.

Now you might now be saying.. Well preacher hold on a minute I know a lot of people that say, they do not believe in God. Yeah.. why does it surprise you that they are liars?!

My answer to you and them is this.. The evidence is all around them. The Bible says it clearly, that creation is a billboard declaring God's existence.

Psalms 19:1 {To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.} The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

Psalms 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

Psalms 19:3 [There is] no speech nor language, [where] their voice is not heard.

Psalms 19:4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

THE SCRIPTURE SAYS ... NO ONE CAN ARGUE WHAT GOD'S CREATION CLEARLY DECLARES AND SHOWS.. IT SHOWS THAT THERE IS A GOD OR CREATOR...

You don't need a Bible to prove this..

You don't need to know Scripture to prove this..

You don't have to be very smart to see and understand this..

We need to start with what we can know..

1. We know we are going to die.. you can hide your head in the sand about this but this we all know..

2. We all can know there is a creator that we all can agree is God..

You see the creation.. this is not faith.. this is sight..

It is only foolish to think all this just happened by accident.. Any one who chooses to believe that is living in a dream world.

Romans says, that

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, ***being understood by the things that are made,*** [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

People clearly see God is our creator..

They clearly understand..

They can lie and say they don't believe but why does it surprise you that men lie.. This is not a matter of belief.. they can see his handwork and are fools to say all this just happened.

Paul quotes Psalm 19 as a proof text teaching that all men are without excuse because they reject the clear revelation of Creation ..

Romans 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

There is no one that will be able to say... I didn't know..

The creation cries out that there is a creator..

WE CAN KNOW IT..
WE CAN KNOW GOD AS OUR CREATOR..
THIS IS KNOWN..

So we can know these truths as a fact.. even without a preacher..
And without a Bible..

- A. There is a God..
- B. He is powerful..
- C. We should respect that power..
- D. He (this creator) is intelligent and more intelligent than us.

We should sense his power.. when there is a thunder storm..
As you feel the power of oceanic waves.. When you see the glory of the heavens.. etc.

Now in seeking to answer questions about death.. we must start with what we know..
we can know there is a God.. who has intelligence.. a God of order design far greater than us..

In fact we know that this God has far greater intelligence than us.. And what is the greatest attribute of intelligence..

The greatest attribute of intelligence is the ability to speak or communicate.. With Words and writing.

3. Knowing this we should assume that God can communicate to us the answers to the unknowns.. What happens after we die..

Now this takes faith.. Some would say faith is an unknown and you cannot prove something that takes faith..

Now faith is how we come to know what is otherwise unknowable..

FAITH IS NOT A LEAP IN THE DARK..
FAITH IS NOT AN ILLOGICAL THING..
Faith is built on what we know..

WE KNOW THERE IS A CREATOR.. BY OSERVATION WE SHOULD KNOW THIS..

WE KNOW HE IS MORE INTELLIGENT THAN US..

So if we can communicate.. why would anyone doubt that the infinite creator would not communicate and speak..

How, Where, When .. Is the unknown.

Now for those who are struggling with answers.. about what they do not know about death and the after life..

We can start out with what we can know...

If a person will receive that.. then we can go further.

Now .. maybe you have a friend that says, they don't believe in God. You should send them this message.

They cannot argue that God is the creator.

It is only logical..

It is only reasonable..

It is not faith.. it is sight.. someone made that.

That may not know all about this creator.. but they can know there is a creator.. that is only reasonable..

Romans 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The billboard of creation shouts 24 hours a day.. GOD IS!!!!

Now it is only reasonable that such an intelligent being can speak...
A sign of intelligence is the ability to communicate..

NOW THIS IS WHERE FAITH MUST KICK IN..
But our faith is only reasonable..

We have this great question mark????

How does God speak? How does he communicate?

Now comes the search... How does this mighty creator communicate to mankind?

John 1:1, John 1:14 The Bible claims to be the written Word of our creator..

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

III. ALL THE ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS ARE RECORDED IN THE BIBLE.. This is only reasonable to believe

There is no book like the Bible, that has recorded the words of God.

Now I know this takes faith but nothing else does.. Once you logically conclude that the creator of the universe can speak.. it then is only reasonable to believe the Bible..

1. You know you are going to die.. that is not faith .. this you know..
2. You know there is a creator (GOD) this is not faith you see it.. in creation .. to doubt it is to be a fool..

3.Now it is only reasonable to find where God speaks..

The Bible has a history like no other book in the world..

The Bible is a record of the only person who has died and came back to tell us about what there is after death...

Once we come to believe the Bible.. we find all the answers we ever could ask about what happens after death. It is only reasonable to believe it. Yes we must believe it.. but this faith is a reasonable faith. It is a faith built on a sure foundation of reason and facts..

Once we get into the Bible we realize it answers all our questions and doubts.. There are those who want more than the Bible. Jesus gives an answer to those who want miracles and not just the Bible.

In Luke Chapter 16: You all know the story of Lazarus and the Rich man who went to hell..

Jesus told a story one time about a man who died and went to Hell.. There was another man who died and went to paradise or Heaven.. The man who went to Hell lived a life of disbelief.. and his eternal state.. he wanted God to send someone back from the dead to tell his family that:

Eternity is real..

There is a God..

They should not live like he did .. but change their ways..

His desire was that God send someone back from the dead to tell his family.. Here is what the Lord said..

THEY HAVE THE BIBLE.. LET THEM HEAR AND BELIEVE THE BIBLE

The man said.. they won't believe it.. nor will they hear it..

He said.. if they will not hear the Bible they will not be persuaded even if I send someone back from the dead..

So it is in a time like this where we are faced with many funerals we should naturally be asking these important questions.. AND IF GOD HAS COMMUNICATED TO US.. IN THE BIBLE THEN WE SHOULD ASK:

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DEATH?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE AFTER LIFE?

THE BIBLE IS A THICK BOOK.. AND WHENEVER WE ARE FACED WITH A DIFFICULT BOOK WE WISH SOMEONE COULD JUST SIMPLIFY IT FOR US..

Computer Software.... no way to get it to work except you read the instructions.. sign of intelligence is to communicate.. FAITH IS JUST READING AND FOLLOWING GOD'S MANUAL

Last night I was trying to record the final song for our Christmas musical. There was something not working right.. I must have spent hours trying to figure it out. Finally I realized the problem was that I just did not read the directions when I loaded something into the program. People who say they can't find the answers they need in the Bible are not reading it properly..

Now the answers to life and death and eternity are very simple and they are in the Bible. But sometimes people misunderstand the Bible. They misread the Bible. And they get stuck or confused. This is why God gave preachers. Today I am preaching just about the most simple message anyone could ever hear.

HOW CAN WE KNOW FOR SURE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH..

Well I said, let's start out with what we can know..

1. WE KNOW WE ARE GOING TO DIE.. AND IT WOULD BE STUPID NOT TO TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AFTER YOU DIE..

2. WE CAN KNOW THERE IS A CREATOR.. AND THAT CREATOR IS GOD.. THAT GOD IS HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND WE SHOULD ASSUME HE CAN SPEAK..
After all he is smarter than us.. so we can speak.. why couldn't he..
3. WE SHOULD SEARCH FOR HOW HE SPEAKS.. THIS IS ONLY REASONABLE.. IT IS ONLY REASONABLE TO BELIEVE BY FAITH THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD..

Romans 10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

IF GOD IS THE CREATOR.. HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN A BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS.. HOW FOOLISH I WOULD BE TO TRY AND FIGURE IT OUT FOR MYSELF. What creator doesn't provide an owner's manual? Whether they create a computer, a software program, a machine, etc.. I just sold a used digital piano.. the first thing the lady asked for was whether an owner's manual came with it! Now the thicker the manual the more helpful it is to get some help in knowing what it says..

Now you could go ahead and read the Bible for yourself.. and try to figure out the answers to these important questions.. or you could listen to someone who has read it and let them give you a condensed version of what it says..

I love gleaning information from others who know more than me about a subject..

GREATEST NEED ANY PERSON HAS IS WHAT I AM ABOUT TO SHARE..

1. If we had time we could read from this Bible about God the creator.. Genesis 1-3

We could read about how God created man

2. We could read how he gave one prohibitive law.. Don't eat from a certain tree called tree of Knowledge good and evil..
If we had time we could read how God's enemy Satan convinced Eve to reject God's law and do her own thing.. We could read how Eve talked Adam into doing the same thing.. and then in Chapter four we could read how one after another.. Death started occurring in this world.. Just like God said it would..
3. If we had time we could read how men got more and more wicked.. and murders started to become rampant.. This world got so wicked that God had to bring a flood that destroyed the whole world.. To this day you can find sea fossils everywhere even in the Blue Stone quarries..

God saved Noah and his family alive.. in the ark

4. Then after the flood God called out one man named Abraham .. and he promised him that through his children a deliverer would come who would establish his rule

over the whole world.. That ruler to the Jews became known as the Messiah.. Abraham would produce a nation called Israel....for that Messiah to rule..

5. If we had time we could read in the New Testament how Jesus came was born of a virgin.. therefore bypassing the sin nature of man kind and Adam HE ALONE NEVER REBELLED ..
6. We could read how he came and presented himself as the Messiah and said he came to deliver men from death..

He did miracles to prove what he said was true..

7. He showed in every way he had power over all the elements of death.. He even had power over the physical elements.. he made water into wine.. He rebuked the wind and the rain.. stilled a storm..
8. Before people die they get sick.. HE HEALED EVERY MANNER OF SICKNESS TO PROVE HIS LORDSHIP...
9. HE EVEN RAISED PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD... MANY .. not just a few.. And predicted that he would die and resurrect himself..
10. But the children of Abraham .. the Jews rejected Jesus.. and they convinced the Romans to crucify him ..
11. If we had time we would read how Jesus went into the grave and 3 days later came out of the grave
12. AFTER THIS he commissioned his disciples to go and present him as the rightful ruler of Heaven and Earth.... but now because the Nation of Israel rejected his Kingship.. he said take this message to every nation.. Jew and Gentile alike..

Everyone who will receive him he gave this promise to them.. THAT THEY WOULD NEVER DIE.. BUT HE WOULD RESURRECT THEM AND BECOME CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD..

Used to pray in school.. Thy Kingdom come..

So this is the message the creator gives about death.. and his restoration of this planet.. and his future Kingdom to come.

DEATH COMES AS THE PENALTY FOR REJECTING HIS RULERSHIP AND LAWS ..

IT IS CURED BY RECEIVING CHRIST AS OUR LORD AND KING...

So now we can know that if we receive Christ, even if we die and go into a grave, that we have this promise of eternal life.

If we receive him as our creator..
If we receive him as our Lord.. Ruler of the Universe..
If we receive him, acknowledge him and believe in him

THAT HE DIED FOR OUR VIOLATIONS OF HIS LAW.. WHICH THE BIBLE CALLS SIN...

HE PAID THE PENALTY OF OUR SINS ON THE CROSS
HE AROSE AND DEFEATED DEATH FOR US ALL..
So yes we can know the answer to these questions..

IF WE JUST START WITH WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW..

I. WE KNOW WE ARE GOING TO DIE SO WHAT HAPPENS TO US AFTER WE DIE SHOULD CONCERN US

II. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS THE CREATOR AND OUR CREATOR.. THE BIBLE SAYS PEOPLE CAN VAINLY DENY THAT BUT IT IS FOOLISH TO DO SO..

Romans 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Those who claim to deny God because of opposition of science so called could never use there so called science to solve problems at work .. Try to use random chance to create and solve problems.. you would be laughed to scorn..

III. SINCE WE KNOW THAT THIS GOD IS MORE INTELLIGENT THAN US.. WE THEREFORE KNOW THAT HE CAN AND SHOULD AND HAS COMMUNICATED TO US THE ANSWERS TO THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS CONCENRING LIFE AND DEATH IN THE BIBLE

What does a ruler do, he makes laws.. and punishes those who violate his laws..

Death is the punishment that we receive for violating God's laws..

Because men have rejected their creator.. God as the ruler of the universe has placed this sentence over us called death..

BUT What law maker really wants people to violate the law.. none
God never wanted to punish men with death he wants to restore them..

IV. THE MESASAGE OF THE BIBLE IS THAT GOD IN HIS LOVE AND KINDNESS HAS GIVEN US A WAY TO ESCAPE ETERNAL DEATH...

Even Jesus died.. and was in the grave for three days..

But he did not stay there..
This is the hope of the Christian..

This is what the Bible teaches.. Now I as a minister of Jesus Christ have been given the commission to share this with as many as I can.. this is what Jesus commanded his disciples to preach ..

IT IS CALLED THE GOSPEL.. I hope that this will help you to understand what the Bible gives as the answers to these important questions..

I must confess I did not always believe it.. and therefore I can understand those who do not believe it.. I am not here to browbeat anyone into believing.. This message is not bad news but good news.. It was about 48 years ago that someone shared this message with me.... after wrestling with it about one year.. I came to believe it was true and invited Christ into my life.

And you can receive this gift.. you will have this victory over death someday..

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

SO HERE IS HOW YOU RECEIVE THIS GIFT:

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.