

THE GIFT OF ILLUVATAR

(Rev. 22:1-5)

Introduction:

1. The gift of Illuvatar to man was death. Only man, of the three races, could escape Middle Earth.
2. Because of the sin of man in the Garden of Eden, death came to all men (Rom. 5:12). But God makes good come from the evil of sin. Death can be seen as a gift from God because it serves as our instructor, liberator, and motivator.

Discussion:

I. Death as Instructor.

- A. Death is the season for the reason!
 1. No, I did not make a mistake. We have all seen the signs that tell us that Jesus is “the reason for the season” with regards to Christmas. But death is the season of life that gets us to question the reason of/for life.
 2. If it were not for death, we would not be here talking about God.
 - a. It is true that the creation ought to get us to question and to seek God (Rom. 1:20).
 - b. But it is equally true that death adds a sense of urgency to our questioning/pursuit. It raises the specter of something beyond life and death (Eccl. 2:12-16; 3:11).
 3. Consider Matt. 22:32; John 9:4; Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10, 11.
- B. Death is the cost for all we lost.
 1. Sin is that which is not from God. It is violation of His will (both committing and omitting-1 John 3:4 and Jas. 4:17; summed up in Matt. 7:23).
 2. Sin separates us from God (Is. 59:1, 2) and His blessings (Gen. 3:24).
 - a. Death is separation (Jas. 2:26).
 - b. Thus sin results in physical (Rom. 5:12) and spiritual death (1 Tim. 5:6).
 - c. We see both addressed in John 5:25-29.
 3. As the cost for all we lost, death serves to aid is in the despising of sin (Rom. 6:21), and ultimately the avoidance of sin (1 John 2:1).

II. Death as Liberator.

- A. Ironically, the cost of sin (death) becomes the freedom from sin.
 1. Death of self is the means to spiritual life (Rom. 6:3-7).
 2. So too, physical death is the means to eternal life (1 Cor. 15:50-54).
 3. Physical death is the means to escape all the many consequences of sin in the world (Rev. 21:4).
- B. Physical death liberates us from temptation and sin (Rev. 21:7, 8, 27; 22:14, 15; and consider the removal of the enticements to sin detailed in 1 John 2:15-17).

III. Death as Motivator.

- A. The pain of losing loved ones to physical death, motivates us unto godly living.
 1. If mere physical death is this painful, how much worse spiritual death (Mk. 42-48).
 2. The hope of reunion with our beloved departed motivates us to strive for Christ-likeness (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
- B. The horrors of spiritual death motivate us unto evangelism (2 Cor. 5:11).
 1. Beginning at home with our families (by principle = 1 Tim. 5:8; Matt. 16:26).
 2. Extending to all that we may in anyway influence (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Conclusion:

1. It is true that death brings sorrow and heartache, but for Christians, God has taken death and made it a blessing.
2. Remember the childhood promise of “cross my heart and hope to die”? It is the goal of all mankind.
3. Invitation.

PRAYER LIST FOR WEEK STARTING OCT. 22ND

Those with long term issues

Louise Williams, Cliff and Rachel Greenawalt and their family, Ruth Vaughn as she lives with diabetes, and Harrison Waldron.

Those with short term issues

- ▶ The Nelsen family during this difficult time.
- ▶ Darrell McKee as he continues his recovery from surgery.
- ▶ Frances Davis as she struggles with some health issues.
- ▶ Rick McCurdy's mom as she deals with some major health issues.
- ▶ Our members who are struggling with sickness/colds/injuries.
- ▶ Our members who are traveling (Lauryn Corbelli studying in Europe).
- ▶ Our college students who are away from us in body, but not in spirit.
- ▶ Our leadership in the church; that they might be faithful, strong, and bold.