

## FACING DEATH VICTORIOUSLY

On this occasion when we meet to pay tribute to our loved one <sup>Marlin</sup> Roberts, it is not our purpose to praise his/her character, though many wonderful things could well be said as you who are here well know. It is, rather, my purpose today to speak words of comfort and faith to you who mourn this passing.

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, verse 4, Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The last thing we would apply to the heart that is broken by sorrow is blessedness. It is not easy to see the silver lining that surrounds a cloud of bitter grief. Yet, the silver lining is there, and if we let <sup>The</sup> ~~Christ~~ <sup>Lord</sup> open our eyes when all seems dark, we shall see it.

All of us need to learn how to live as if we would die tonight, and to work as if we would live forever. For not until we look at death victoriously can we learn to live victoriously. And ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> until we live victoriously can we face death victoriously.

Therefore, let us look to Jesus, the master and lord of our life, who teaches us some lessons in facing death.

1. The first thing that Jesus teaches us is that God is with us in our sorrow and that God himself suffers in it.

Jesus made this plain when he went with his two friends to the grave of their brother Lazarus.

This is a world in which God is at work with a purpose. There are things <sup>God</sup> ~~he~~ can teach us through the pain of sorrow. It may be that we never come alive to what life really means until bereavement comes knocking at our door and we see in it the hand of God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4....Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our afflictions.....

2. A second lesson that Jesus teaches is that death ~~is beautiful~~ <sup>comes as</sup> because ~~it comes as a friend to~~ (old age.) I really mean that. We often wish in a childish way that life would never end, and in our rebellious moments we wonder why God created the universe so death comes at all. We feel death is an enemy of life -- and not a friend.

But that is not right. It is the knowledge that our years are limited that makes them so precious. And the person who said that infinite life on this earth for us human beings would not be desirable even if it were possible, was absolutely right. Who would want to live a never - ending existence on earth through endless years of struggle and revolution, pain and worry, conflict and labor - with no possibility of escape? Life would be so monotonous and boring with no heights or depths, with no challenge nor achievement. What drudgery if day would never end, and the sun would never set.

Have you toiled through the hot, sweaty, day, looking forward to the sunset? Time moved so slowly; it seemed the day would never end. Then, when evening finally came - how welcome, what cool peace and embracing rest; what satisfying release, what a wonderful friend.

\*\*\*Markus lived many years, and death must have come as a friend indeed.

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They have TRIUMPHED

3. The most important lesson that Jesus teaches us is that life exists beyond the grave, and death is the doorway to the future.

The best is yet ~~to~~ to be. Death is not the end. It is only a new beginning. It is <sup>like</sup> going to bed on a cold, black night, and waking with the sun always shining. *Read / Joseph*

Victor Hugo, once wrote: "When I go down to the grave, I can say, like many others, I have finished my day's work. But I cannot say, I have finished my life. My day's work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a throughfare. It closes on the twilight, and opens on the dawn."

*... of Jesus say*  
They have triumphed who have died;  
They have passed the pourches wide;  
Leading from the house of night  
To the splendid lawns of light.  
They have gone on that far road  
Leading to their new abode  
And from curtained casements we  
Watch their going wistfully.

They have won, for they have read  
The bright secrets of the dead,  
And they gain the deep unknown,  
Hearing life's strange undertone.

In the race across the days  
They are victors; theirs the praise  
Theirs the glory and the pride,  
They have triumphed, those who died.

I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In Him my star, my sun;  
And in that light of life, I'll walk,  
Till traveling days are done

*Dear Friends,*

This is our faith. Without the experience of death, we could never know the future. And we can never know the future without experiencing Jesus Christ who said, "Because I live, you shall also live...He who believes in me, though he die, yet, shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

PRAYER