

## WHEN DEATH IS PRECIOUS

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" says the Psalmist in Psalms 116:2,

A person trying to explain the success of Christianity, wrote, "If any righteous person among the Christians passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby."

That is..or..should be, the spirit of this day. Yes, there are tears. Yes, there are saddened emotions---But, there is also joy -- a joy which is sustained by the thought.."Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of IVA, one of God's saints."

The word "precious" means "of great value, very dear, highly esteemed," To say death is "very dear," or, of "great value," or, "highly esteemed" seems unthinkable, the comment of a cold heart. For most of us assume death to be the worst thing that could befall us. Death..we fear it..hide from it.. attempt to evade it.

But, the Bible says, "precious, very dear, of great value, highly esteemed in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Man and God look at events in different ways. God's outlook is not the same as man's. God sees the end of things from the beginning, while we see only in part, through a glass dimly.

## I.

I believe that I can say that death is precious to God, when it comes to a Christian. The Bible tells us that God longs for the fellowship of his Children -- and when death comes to them, and they are able to come to His side forever, it is a very dear experience, of great value --precious to God.

The very purpose of creation, ~~of life~~ of life, is to develop saints worthy of eternal existence with God. Life is our school; death is our graduation- our promotion. IVA was promoted to life eternal where every tear shall be wiped away, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be crying nor pain, for IVA is dwelling with God." (Rev. 21:%)

Let's talk about heaven for a few moments. Jesus said that there would be no sickness in heaven. The last few months IVIA was sick. She know much sickness and pain. But, in heaven she is in the perfect likeness of her Lord and sickness can never touch her again.

There is a simple statement in the Book of Revelation which encourages us greatly. I shared it with you at the beginning of the service. It says that "there shall be no more pain, for the former things are passed away." What a wonderful promise to remember.

Then the Bible teaches that in heaven there will be no sorrow. Every home knows a hush when sorrow comes. We are experiencing the sorrow which comes from the death of IVIA. There is a void. And we will miss her deeply. And in these last few weeks there was sorrow in her life. But, God has wiped away all of her tears; and God has turned her sorrow into singing.

Paul reminds the Christians at Philippi that "our citizenship is in heaven from which also we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the power that He has, even to subject all things to himself."

And that, dear friends, is the best part of heaven. We have often felt the presence of Christ Jesus. He has guided our foot steps. We have heard His voice in the deep recesses of our hearts. But, for IVIA, she has seen Jesus face to face. "But now we see in a mirror dimly, but then fact to face." PRAISE God.

*about*

A farmer cultivates his field, plants the seed, and eagerly tends it, then awaits the harvest when the kernel shall be separated from the stalk. The gospel seeds have <sup>usere</sup> been planted to grow and develop <sup>in the life of</sup> our souls, in Christ's likeness. Death is the harvest time when the soul is separated from the outworn body - it is a time of rejoicing.

How pleased God must be today. I called in a home one evening where the only son had just returned from <sup>Desert storm</sup> Vietnam. From the dangers of that far away battle field, and the temptations of army life, he came home safe and sound. What a reunion. What tears of joy were shed. It was a precious homecoming. <sup>USA</sup> has gone home to be with God - safe and unharmed from the trials of this earthly life. What joy their must be in heaven, today.

II

*on the other hand*

Not only is <sup>death</sup> death precious to God, but it is also precious to <sup>TIVA</sup>. This is a day of victoyr. It is the <sup>Kingdom of God</sup> crowning event of life, entry into the ~~external~~ Kingdom. "Eye hath not seen, not ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them(his saints) that love him" (I Corinthinas 2:9).

Oh, it must be <sup>wonderful</sup>. Paul the Apostle longed to die saying, "For to ~~me~~... to die is gain." Paul was in flesh only to serve God. An elderly lady said, "I am getting a bit anxious to take that journey."

THE VICTORS

They have triumphed who have died;  
They have passed the porches 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 goint ~~wistfully~~. *Wistfully*

They have won, for they have read  
The bright secrets of the dead;  
And they gain the deep unknown,  
Learning <sup>Learning</sup> Life's strange undertone.

In the race across the days  
They are victors; their's the praise,  
Their's the glory and the pride  
They have triumphed, having died.

You know , dear friends, IVIA was saved by grace. When she confessed her sin and received Christ as her saviour, at that moment she was saved. We do not serve Christ in order to be saved. We serve Christ because we are saved. And let me tell you, this place called heaven is worth working for, planning for, and laying up treasures for. When you and I die, only one thing matters: not how much money we have, not how many flowers decorate the chancel, not how many people attend the service. There is only one thing that matters. What is in your soul? How much of Jesus Christ is there? We can say of IVIA that Jesus was in her soul.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of IVIA. one of God's Saints."

Shall we pray