



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Death, Glorification, Unification: What happens to our Body, Soul and Spirit? Series

Lesson 1 – Why Do Christians Die?

February 12, 2017

I. **Series Starters:**

How should Christians view their own death and the death of others? We ask ourselves, what happens to us between the time that we die and the time that Christ returns to give us our new resurrection bodies? What happens to your body, soul and spirit during each stage of Death, Glorification and Unification?

Let's set some definitions for the series:

Death: Physical death of our bodies

Glorification: Receiving our Resurrection Body; The final step in the application of redemption. This will occur when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of the believers for all time, then reunites them with their souls and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive. All believers will have the perfect resurrection bodies at that time.

Unification: Union with Christ: Phrase used to summarize several relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation

All of these are stages of the application of redemption.

II. **Death is not a Punishment for Christians Sins**

Paul clearly tells us that there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). All of the “**penalty**” for our sins has been paid through the death of Jesus Christ.

- Christians should not view the death of Christians as a punishment (retribution which is intended to do harm) from God or in any way a result of a penalty due to us for our personal sins.
- While true that the penalty for sin is death, the penalty no longer applies to us, not in terms of spiritual death or separation from God: All of that has been paid by Christ.

III. **Death is the Final Outcome of Living in a Fallen World**

In God's great wisdom, he decided that he has not chosen to remove all evil from the world immediately, but to wait until the final judgement and the establishment of the new heaven and earth. We still live in a fallen world and our realization of the full salvation is still incomplete while on this earth.

1 Corinthians 15:26

26 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

54 Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

- The last aspect of the fallen earth will be the removal of death.
- But until that time, death will remain a reality in the lives of Christians and all people.
- Death does not come as a penalty for our individual sins (that was paid in full by Christ), it does come to us as a result of living in a fallen world, where the effects of sin have not been removed

Other aspects of living in a “Fallen world” are the fall that harms our physical bodies and signals the presence of death: aging, illnesses, injuries and natural disasters. While we are spared at times in our lives from these things, nevertheless Christians eventually experience all of these things to some measure.

God has chosen to allow us to experience death before we gain all the benefits of salvation with him.

IV. God Uses the Experience of Death to Complete our Sanctification

Christians know that they will not have to pay any penalty for their sin, since Christ has taken it all away (Romans 8:1). God is not punishing a Christian to harm them through our death experience.

Sometimes death and suffering are a result of Christians living in a fallen world and others it could be because God is disciplining us for our good. The purpose of disciplining us is clear in Hebrews 12:

Hebrews 12:6, 10-11

6 The Lord disciplines him whom he loves....He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Not all discipline is in order to “correct” or sinful ways; it can also be allowed by God to strengthen us in order that we may gain greater ability to trust God and resist sin in obedience.

Christ was made perfect through his suffering where he learned obedience. Christians should view hardship and suffering in our lives as something that God has allowed to bring us “good”, strengthen us, gain trust and obedience.

Understanding death is not a punishment for sin, but simply something God brings us through in order to make us more like Christ, should be an encouragement to Christians.

V. Our Experience of Death Completes our Union with Christ

Through our death, we imitate Christ in what he did for us and thereby experience a closer union with him. Union with Christ in his sufferings also includes union with him in death as well (Phil 3:10).

- Our world's goal of preserving one's own physical life at all costs is not the highest goal for a Christian
- Obedience to God and faithfulness to him in every circumstance is far more important
- Paul endured many sufferings and risks of life in order to obey Christ

VI. Group Questions:

1. Before this lesson, would you have been more likely to say that 1) “Death” was a punishment for sin in a Christian's life or 2) It is the “completing of our Sanctification process to be more like Christ”?
2. Are Christians typically taught that our death is the result of our sin? Yes or no; any usual variations?
3. If we “**die due to our own personal sins**”, then how can you reconcile that Christ died and covered all of our sins, past and present? How can you be punished for something that God has eternally forgiven?
4. Do you believe that all suffering and death is the result of sin? Why or why not?
5. Have you observed a dear Christian go through a death process and observe how God used it as part of the “sanctification process”?
6. Have you ever thought about our death being the final imitation of Christ before our union with Him? Does that change your thoughts and thinking of death?
7. Remaining questions or comments?