

A Word for the Bereaved by Beatrice Ofwona

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By Beatrice Ofwona



God gives and God takes away; He says He will show mercy to whom he chooses and compassion to whom he decides. There is a time in life for everything, even a time for planting and a time for harvesting. We can only live the days that He allows us to live after which we must exit from this world.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-10 talks of the different seasons in life, this come and go. Solomon writes this book in his old age. Despite all the wealth and wisdom that God gives him, he realizes that it is all vanity and that the only purpose for man's creation is to live for God. And only God knows the season of our death. This death is feared yet it is inevitable.

Death is a reality; maybe a frightening one but a certainty nonetheless. It does not ask questions and when it comes knocking it must leave with someone. If it could ask for permission, we may be tempted to redirect it elsewhere, far away from our families and friends, but it does not do so and so it takes away who it has come for. Burials are everywhere, a reality of another ending life. Psalms 90:9-10 says-'all our days pass away under your wrath, we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years or eighty if we have the strength; yet their span is trouble and sorrow for they quickly pass, and we fly away'.

Death is an appointment with God which we must all keep despite being a disappointment for us humans. We are all destined to die, whether rich or poor, young or old. Every man shall face death so we must each endure to serve our Lord and live according to His purpose for our lives because Hebrew 9:27 reminds us that man is destined to die once and thereafter face judgment.

Death does not choose certain types of people when it comes knocking; we are all like sheep waiting for slaughter not knowing which one will be picked next or why. We may even move our patients from hospital to hospital but when the time comes, we cannot outrun it, for it will find us and take its passenger. Psalms 90:6-5 reminds us of God's power to sweep men in the sleep of death; like grass, though new and fresh in the morning, it dies up in the evening.

Death is a transition to another life-to one of condemnation and judgment or to one of eternity with Christ. As born again Christians, we know that our portion is with Christ under whom we

will be brought. His resurrection as explained in 2 Corinthians 4:14 and Romans 15:12-19 is evidence that we too will be raised from the dead. For the transition of death to be one of continued living with Jesus Christ, one must be born again and follow his example in as far as purity of life is concerned. Revelation 21 talks of the New Jerusalem for those that walk with Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 Paul talks of our bodies as being tents exposed to all manner of disruptions, but we have hope in heaven, in a house made by God; a permanent one. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 asks that we may fear God and keep his commandments for every deed will be brought into judgment, including the hidden things.

The question is, are we willing to live God's purpose for us or are we living for ourselves? Death is coming and it is real. However, are we prepared for it? Only Jesus Christ can guide and lead us to eternal life, he is the way and he is our master. In Philippians 1:21 Paul says to live is Christ and to die is gain. For him, as should be for us, his life was in God's hands and it was the only purpose for which he lived. Death did not scare the apostle Paul because he had an assurance of eternity; it should not scare us too.

When we lose our friends and relatives to death, we should not be too grieved if they were born again. 1Thessalonians 4:13-14 says, 'Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him'.

Let us therefore pray for those that are not born again before they die, because those are the ones we should really grieve about.

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