

Acts # 44 “The Measure of a Man is How He Dies”

Acts 7:53-60; John 8:40-47

Fear is the sign of rebellion and like all mental attitude sins, it attacks the soul and anything that attacks the soul, attacks our vital lifeline.

The most important part of our lives is what goes on in our soul, the real you is the soul.

Therefore, fear is a part of the makeup of our soul when we don't have an inner residency of biblical truth.

Love which is basically a mental attitude is the absence of fear; 1st John 4:18 “*There is no fear in love.*

But perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect

(complete, finished or spiritually mature) in love.”

Taking up your cross and following Jesus is a synonym for having biblical truth in your soul.

The idea of picking up your cross is the concept of self-discipline.

To pick up our cross is to follow a course of action contrary to public thinking.

So, taking up your cross means developing the self-discipline of attending Bible class regardless of any factor; it's maintaining the principle of not letting anything distract from taking in the Word of God.

For the unbeliever, the death of others is a reminder of the shortness of life and that time hangs by a very fine thread that can be snapped at any moment for any one of us.

Life is a constant preparation for death which actually becomes the dessert in life for the mature believer.

Death is also a reminder of the futility of gain, profit, human celebrity and of everything that is considered important in life — for once a person begins to die, all of these things fade away and only eternal things count.

The death of the man that we are studying is a dying grace death; something which is fantastic because it sets aside all

of the horrors of death.

It's a greater blessing than any blessing in life because of Who and what Jesus Christ is and because of His magnificent provision in the written Word known as the mind of Christ.

And because of this Gift and because we have received this Gift and because we have followed the call to discipleship, we recognize that our departure from this life is described as a good gift.

If you are a mature believer in Christ, you are a good gift to someone in this world.

It's inevitable that a mature believer will have those around him who dearly love him and totally appreciate him and therefore he is

a good gift and the departure from this life of that good gift is part of that good gift.

When God sees fit to take any gift from us by physical death, it is always a reminder to us of many things; a reminder that for the believer time and eternity are only a temporary separation and that the death of loved ones isn't the end of anything because we will see them forever and ever in eternity; loved ones cannot be separated by death because of Who and what Jesus Christ is and has done.

Dying grace is the death of the mature believer who is a winner and also an invisible hero.

Dying grace is the divine vehicle for transferring invisible heroes from earth to Heaven.

Dying grace is the mature believer passing over the high golden bridge from earth to Heaven, traveling from grace to grace.

Deposited blessings for time are distributed to the winner believer so that he receives the best in time. Dying is the best blessing any believer can have and dying grace is the final deposited blessing in our account, so dying grace is better than the best.

And the distribution of deposited blessings for eternity at the Judgment Seat of Christ is better than the best of the best.

How, when and where we die is not only a sovereign wise decision but also a grace decision from God.

For the winner who successfully executes the plan of God, God has saved the best in this life until last, so for the spiritually mature believer, dying is the best dessert after a satisfying main course meal.

If we enjoy living in the experiential plan of God, we'll really love dying in the experiential plan of God.

And if we don't enjoy living in the plan of God, dying will be a horrendous experience because dying actually is an extension

of the decisions we made to prepare for it.

By making positive decisions while living, we grow in grace and so, for us dying is gain or profit and by making negative decisions, we do not grow in grace and our dying will be miserable under the sin unto physical death.

If you get into the habit of using God's solutions while living, then you'll use them in dying and enjoy far greater profit from them in dying than you ever did in living.

The winner actually enjoys dying because he's accumulated a tremendous inventory of biblical truth in the living stage.

He has an unshakable happiness while living and while dying, so he loves living and dying because he's occupied with

Jesus Christ while living and while dying.

He has a personal sense of his own destiny while living and while dying and he has fantastic personal love for God the Father while living and while dying and he has impersonal love for all mankind while living and while dying.

Basically, he's oriented to grace and truth while living and dying.

Do you feel sorry for Stephen?

If so, you're missing the point here.

Do you feel sorry for Jesus when you read about Him being beaten, whipped, lied about, mis-characterized and crucified?

If so, you're missing the point of the Gospel.

Stephen, just like his Savior is the winner here and he recognizes that; but instead of it making him want to say, "I told you so losers," he has sympathy for them because he understands their hopeless inability to do anything about it.