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How to Defeat Death and Live Forever



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #114 ~

Death isn't a popular subject. Who likes to think or talk about it? But it's a reality that most people have to grapple with, and eventually face. I was 7 years old when my father died, and in the next 18 years, three grandparents and three uncles also passed away. Those were difficult times, both mentally and emotionally, having an empty feeling in the pit of my stomach, and wondering where they had gone. When I was a freshman at college, God enabled me to see what life, and death, are all about. I realized that sin is the root problem and that death is the result. *"The soul who sins will die"* (Ezekiel 18:4). I saw that death is physical in nature, but first and foremost, is spiritual in nature, in that people are spiritually cut off from God, and can't experience and enjoy His life and love.

What is the answer to this problem of sin and death? God made it clear

to me that either I pay for my own sins by being punished forever in hell, or that I believe His Son, Jesus Christ, died to pay for my sins, and then was raised from the dead. *"Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God"* (1 Peter 3:18). I understood that Christ's death and resurrection was the only answer, the only way I could get victory over my greatest problem, over sin and death. By God's grace, I repented of my sins, and put my trust in Christ, believing that He died for me, that He personally paid the penalty for my all sins. Romans 5:8, Mark 1:15, Ephesians 2:8-9

Now if Jesus Christ hadn't died, there'd be no forgiveness; and if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead, there'd be no hope for the future, no life after death. But Jesus did die and rise again from the dead, and that was the best news I had ever heard. I knew I was no longer guilty, but was forgiven and holy in the sight of God, for my problem of sin had been forever dealt with by Christ. My problem of death was also solved, for Christ, by rising from the dead, had defeated and obliterated death. Not only were my sins taken away, but I didn't have to worry about dying and what came after it. Amazingly, I had been given eternal life, a personal and permanent relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. I had a brand new life on earth, I had hope for the future, and soon enough, I'd be in heaven with Jesus and all the other believers. God *"has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* 1 Peter 1:3-4

During my early years as a Christian, I knew I was forgiven and going to heaven. As time went on, I realized there was much more than just going to heaven after I died. God was increasing my hope, and I could say: I can't wait to be with Jesus; I really want to be with loved ones who have already gone through death's door and are in heaven; I'm excited about seeing Christ reign perfectly over this earth and reigning with Him; and now that I am older, and am feeling more aches and pains, I am looking forward to getting that brand new, perfect, immortal body! 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

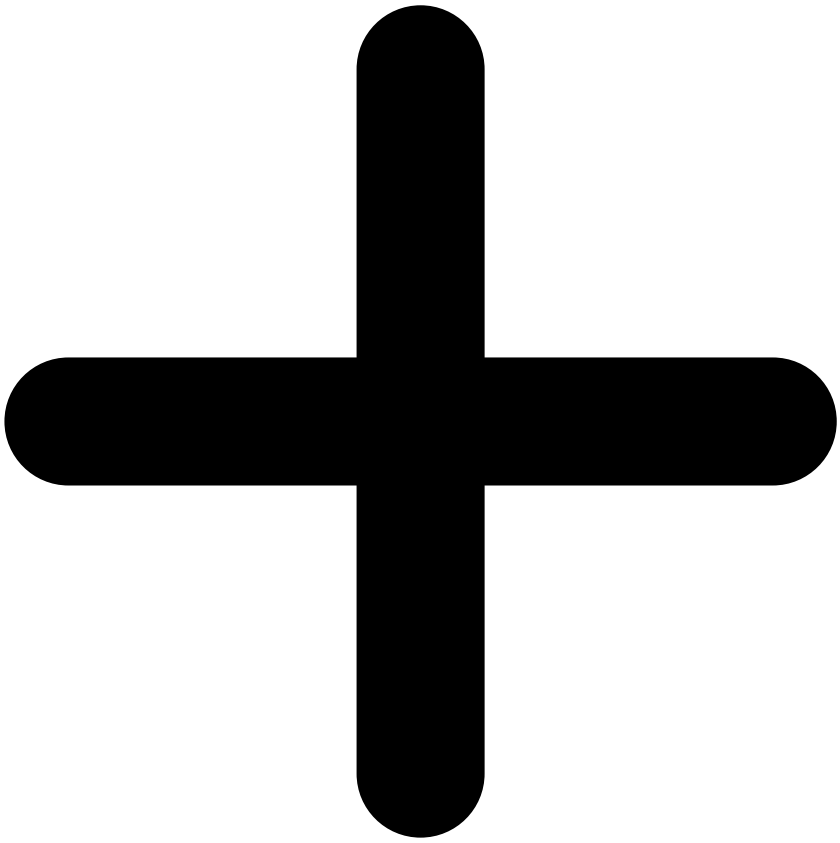
But if the future is so good, and God loves us so much, then why are we still here? Philippians 1:21-27 tells us why. We are to live on earth for the Lord, which means we are not to live for ourselves, but for others. In particular, we are to reach out to those who aren't saved. Think about the lost, about all those who live for sin, self and Satan, who love worldly things, who have no hope, and are without God in the world. Oh, they have food, a job, a home, a car, pets, games, sports, movies, video games, and a few friends. But they are in a sad and sorry state if this is all they are living for, if they have nothing more than this to look forward to. People and things may give a little happiness and satisfaction, but they do nothing to save a person's soul, make him right with God, and enable him to escape death and get to heaven. *"What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). People need the Lord!

Might you see that the lost are harassed and helpless, distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd. Might you pray for them, love them, and share the good news with them. Tell them about Christ's 1st coming, that He died to pay for people's sins and rose again, defeating both sin and death. Encourage them to repent of their sins, to trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and a future in heaven. *"Deliver those who are being taken away to death"* (Proverbs 24:11). Tell them that only Jesus can give them real love, joy and peace, in this life and in the ages to come. Warn them, that if they don't trust in Christ to pay for their sins, they themselves will have to pay for them by being punished forever in hell. *"These will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life* (Matthew 25:41, 45). Tell them it won't be long before Christ's 2nd coming, and if they don't repent, they will miss the rapture of the church, and greatly suffer when God's righteous wrath is being poured out upon this earth.

What a needed and wonderful message is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you don't know the Lord, if you are not saved and on your way to heaven, then turn from your sin, and trust in Jesus to forgive you of your sins and give you eternal life. If you do know Jesus, then thank

Him, love Him, live for Him, and look forward to seeing Him. Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (*John 11:25-26). I pray you do!

P.S. We are celebrating Easter this weekend, or as some say, Resurrection Sunday. Might we all thank the Lord for His incredible and eternal victory over sin and death. Two previous posts that also speak of this amazing victory we have through Christ are: The Resurrection and Rapture of the Church, and Christ’s Resurrection Means the Best is Yet to Come.





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