How to Declaw Death September 23, 2018

*Philippians 1:19-26 Series: Inextinguishable Joy*

My little body has grown tired of the battle, and treatment is no longer helping. But what I see, what I know, what I have is Jesus. – Kara Tippetts

Intro: Triumph for Gillette’s Colman Mockler?

1. Centre your life in Christ and view the world through His eyes.
2. When this world is your life, then death is painful loss.

Luke 12:19-20 *And I will say …, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’*

1. To live is Christ = See life as an opportunity to honour Christ.

v. 20 *it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death*

1. To live is Christ = Relationships are opportunities to serve Christ.

v. 22 *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor*

v. 24 *to remain … is more necessary on your account*

vv. 25-26 *I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus*

* How was death discussed in your home, growing up?
* What were the early impressions you had of death and dying?
* What does Paul mean when he says, “to live is Christ?”
* Does “to live is Christ” mean we ignore the world?
* How are you tempted to complete the sentence, “to live is \_\_.”

1. Centre your life in Christ and death is a door into His delights.
2. When this world is your life, death won’t be seen as gain.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 *I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.*

Italian proverb: He who leaves God out of his reckoning does not know how to count.

1. When Christ is your life, death becomes a time of vindication.

v. 20 *it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed*

1. When Christ is your life, death is the door to your Friend.

* v. 23 *My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*
* 2 Corinthians 5:8 *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*
* Why does the speaker in Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 see such meaninglessness in death?
* Paul has been falsely arrested and imprisoned and is currently awaiting trial. What would it mean for him to be vindicated by God and declared a “good and faithful servant” given all that he’d been through?
* Does v. 23 allow for the idea of purgatory?
* What is it that makes heaven so sweet to Paul? What is it that makes heaven so attractive to other people? What does Paul’s anticipation (being with Christ) reveal about him?

1. Centre your life in Christ and your faith becomes confidence.
2. When fuzzy faith is your life, then death is wishful thinking.

Jeremiah 6:14 *They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.*

1. Trust in Christ gives confidence about heaven.

v. 19 *this will turn out for my deliverance*

v. 20 *I will not be at all ashamed*

1. Confidence about heaven is rooted in God’s faithfulness.

1 John 5:12-13 *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Jude 1:24 *Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy*

Conclusion: Only when Jesus is your life, does death become gain.

* Give some examples of the wishful thinking that exists about life after death?
* What are some of the things that have given you confidence that you’re going to heaven?
* In 1 John 5:12, what does it mean to “have the Son?”
* In 1 John 5:13, what is the added nuance that the phrase “believe in the name of the Son of God” gives over just saying “believe in Jesus?”
* What is Jude saying about stumbling? Why is that a great encouragement?
* Where do you most need prayer in applying this message to your life?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Philippians 1:27-30

Notes