

THE TRUTH ABOUT DEATH

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There was a Junior High School girl in our community last week. She was alive, at home, and seemed to be recovering well from surgery. She was young, twelve I think... and it seemed she had a lot of life left to live. Maybe you even knew her. She could have been your classmate, maybe you had lunch with her, or perhaps she was even a close friend. Her name is Stephanie Floras, and she is no longer with us. She fainted and was flown to the hospital where she died... a surprise to all that knew her. Apparently she had moved her head to adjust her neck... and something went wrong. This was just last weekend. The community is surprised and upset. No one expected this.

Denn Guptill

I think we all share the sentiments of the tombstone that Read "I expected this but not yet".

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I. We're All Gonna' DIE

People, especially Christians, have often asked the question, "Are you ready to die?" Some people admit they aren't ready, others say they don't know, and other people will piously say, "Yes, I'm ready... death has no fear for me." Well, that sounds nice, but I don't know if we're ever really ready. No one is totally prepared for death. No one has all their ducks in a row, and has their death planned out just so, and knows just how everyone else will take it when they go.

I'm sure Stephanie expected that her life would continue for many years... after all she was so young... like you. She probably had ideas about what she wanted to do with her life... maybe she dreamed of having a family one day... raising her own kids... but none of that will ever be. Stephanie's life on this earth was cut short. Her time to choose, her actions, her words are completed.

Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

It's obvious that every one of us is going to die, and none of us know when. We may think we have a lot of time left, and for most of us here, we

probably do, but what if... What if you're the next one to go? What if I'm the next one to die suddenly? **What happens to us when we die???**

II. What Happens When We DIE???

We just read in Hebrews 9:27 that after we die, we face judgment. Every single one of us will be judged before God.

2 Cor. 5:9-10 (NIV)

So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1. **Our judgment is based on what we have done.** When we face the judgment seat of Christ what we've done in our life will be what decides our sentence. We will be judged whether we've done good... or bad. Our choices now will impact us forever. Even after we leave this world, we will be held accountable for the things we've said and done. You may be thinking, "OH MAN, there's NO WAY I've got a chance. I've done too much. I'm a sinner to the core."

The Bible says,

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (NIV)*

That is saying that every one of us have sinned, not a single one of us deserve a good judgment. We all deserve to die!!!

2. There IS HOPE

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In other words... there is HOPE for us. Yes, we've all sinned, and every one of us has earned DEATH, because ***the wages of sin is death***, but ETERNAL LIFE can be found in JESUS CHRIST. Christ died on a cross, the only perfect man that ever lived, for one purpose, to pay our debt of sin. Jesus died so that when our body dies, our eternal Spirit can live on forever with God in heaven.

3. The Choice is OURS

Forgiveness doesn't come automatically. Eternal LIFE is not for everybody!!! Does that shock you??? It is not as though God does not want everyone to have it, but the choice is simply up to us.

We have only two choices about where we will spend eternity.

1. We can either LIVE forever with God in Heaven, a place of blessing, joy, and total peace... That is God's desire for us.

OR

2. We can suffer forever with Satan and his demons in Hell... the lake of fire, a place of unending pain and torment. This eternity in hell is referred to as DEATH. It is total separation from God, and there is no relief from it.

The choice is up to us. God doesn't want us to suffer in Hell, but HE left the choice up to us. So how do we choose??? Is it by trying to be a good person? **NO**... though we should try. Is it by doing our best to say all the right things? **NO**, that can't get us eternal LIFE either. There is only ONE WAY that we can choose LIFE instead of DEATH. It is through you accepting Jesus Christ as the payment for your sin. It is through receiving God's forgiveness which is only possible through the CROSS of Jesus Christ.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 11:25-26

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;** [26] and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

ALTAR CALL:

So you see that every one of us will die... and we know because of Stephanie's story that we don't know when it will be. It could happen any day, even tonight. When this body dies and you face the judgment what will be your sentence??? Will you spend eternity with Jesus forever, enjoying the awesome joys of heaven?? Or will you spend forever being tortured with the devil, in hell??? The choice is only up to you. Your friends cannot give you life.

Even if you have Christian parents, they can't decide for you. You must choose...

ACTION: Everyone Stand UP

ASK: Do you choose LIFE??? (Get the crowd to respond)

If you choose eternal life, it can only come through Jesus Christ. This is your chance to decide. Jesus died for you on the cross. He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and then He allowed people to nail Him to a cross for you and me. He died so you can live. To receive that gift is very simple, but very precious.

Romans 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

1. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died to pay for your sin.
2. Confess with your mouth that you believe in Christ.

Tonight I'm going to ask you to make that confession of faith publicly. If you want to receive Jesus come up here right now and by coming up here you are telling everyone that you have received LIFE tonight.