***Death, No. 1

The Great Expectation, No. 2 - PH22-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:19-20***

Please open the Word of Truth to Philippians 1:19-20 on the great expectation. This is the second in that segment. You remember that the apostle Paul sits in his house prison in the city of Rome writing the book of Philippians. He sits there as a man who has a fully developed spiritual maturity structure in his soul. Consequently, Paul has, as a facet of that spiritual maturity, the quality of inner happiness. This inner happiness he possesses as of that point in time. Consequently, whatever the future may hold for him, his happiness is not going to be affected one way or another by that. He is indeed in a very trying situation. Yet he is hopeful at this point that all of this will turn to his deliverance, and that he will actually be released from prison.

**Intercessory Prayer**

So the Lord has given him the expectation of release, and he declares that the basis of this anticipated release from prison is twofold, which we read about in verse 19. The first basis of Paul's expectation is the prayers of the saints. Number one is through prayer. The word "through" is "dia" which simply indicates the means of deliverance, and the word prayer is "deesis." "Deesis" is the word that is used for prayer to stress the sense of need. Here it is used in terms of intercessory prayer--the prayer of one Christian in behalf of another. This is intercessory prayer in behalf of Paul's life and in behalf of his release from prison. Paul says he knows on the basis of doctrine and information which the Lord has given him that he will be released--he will be spared. That is the direction that he expects to move. He also knows that God is going to do this through prayer. His deliverance will not be as a result of some piece of good luck. In any phase of the Lord's work, and in any phase of our personal crises, there is a place for the prayers of other believers to help.

Therefore, what Paul is speaking about here is team prayer. What he indicates is that people praying together in a local church is part of God's way of our meeting the angelic warfare in which we are engaged. Any lack of interest in intercessory prayer is a sign of spiritual immaturity or low doctrinal level. If you find that you have very little interest in intercessory prayer, it is showing a low level of spiritual maturity, and that ought to concern you. There is a constant need on the part of other believers for your prayers.

The apostle Paul is in danger of his life, and he says, "I'm going to make it because of you people who are praying for me the prayer that senses my need, and you come to bat with the Lord for me." The origin and the cause of some of the greatest things have been done in the Lord's work are the result of someone's prayer. The people who did the praying are not in the limelight. The results are there. The agent who is used to bring about the results is often in the limelight. But don't kid yourself. The guy up in the pulpit is the insignificant communicator. The people who are making the Word of God count are the people who are behind him praying, and who are interceding. The real star personalities in the Christian life, if there are any, are these people. They are unnoticed by men, but they are noticed very much and very dearly to the Lord.

There isn't a believer today who's without the need of the intercessory prayers of other Christians, for specific matters if you're willing to mention, or for things that are private and personal and that you put as an unspoken request. I want to tell you that if you do not respect the power of group prayer of a local church, then you have missed a very important point of New Testament doctrine. If you cannot attend prayer meeting on Wednesday nights for one reason or another within the situation of your own life; and, if when 7:30 rolls around, you just cannot be there, then at least respect the intercessory prayer believers by sending in your requests. Some of you do. Our phone will ring in the office on Wednesday, and people will call in requests. You are wise Christians, and you show that you have a respect for intercessory prayer. If you have not been doing that, if you can't make it out to prayer meeting, at least have the good judgment to send your requests in in your behalf. If you ignore the great value of intercessory prayer of others, it's because you're negative to this phase of doctrine, and the more negligence you are, the greater will be your loss.

It is the point of wisdom to pray for others, especially those who affect your well-being. There are certain people like your husband and your wife that you ought to pray for. Maybe you should also pray for your employer, and maybe even your pastor. You've got a lot at stake with certain people, and those people, at least, ought to be the ones you pray for. There's maximum effectiveness when Christians get together on an issue interceding for others.

It is fantastic what could happen to a church. If you had a church of 150 members, and they all rallied out at a corporate prayer meeting on Wednesday night, wouldn't that be a revolutionary experience? Wouldn't that turn the work of that church upside down? You bet it would. Do you know how I know? Because there was a little church in the New Testament in the city of Jerusalem. That's exactly what they were doing. They all came together and they were gathered in prayer, and they turned the known world upside down. This was not because they were such brilliant personalities, but because they gathered in prayer. It was because they had not been so blinded by Satan that they could be dissuaded from that time when they gathered in Jerusalem for prayer. Therefore, I commend to you the maximum effectiveness that is within our grasp as believers in an age of apostasy. If there's a time when the local church needs to rise with greater effectiveness than ever before, this is the time, and the way to do it is through the effective prayers of the united intercession of believers. This is the first factor that Paul says is going to bring him through.

**The Spirit of Jesus Christ**

There is another factor on which he bases his anticipated release, and that is what he refers to as, not only their prayers but, the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is a title for God the Holy Spirit. The reason that Paul may be referring to the Holy Spirit in these terms is because he may have some other Scriptures in mind. For example, in Matthew 10:19-20, the Lord says, "And when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what you shall speak. For it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." To that we may also add Luke 12:12 where we read, "For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say." Then in Luke 21:14-15: "Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before you shall answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict nor withstand."

Therefore, the apostle Paul may be remembering these promises from the Lord. At the moment when he is going to have to stand before Nero and give an account (a defense) concerning his case, the Lord has said, "I will give you information through God the Holy Spirit at that moment as to what you shall say. I will bring to your mind the very defense that will answer the objections of that court, and will declare you not guilty. Therefore, the apostle Paul perhaps is thinking back and expecting, no doubt, that in that moment, God the Holy Spirit is going to carry him through.

What he is going to receive he calls "the supply." This is the Greek word "epichoregia." "Epichoregia" means "an abundant provision." This is a word which is used in the Greek language of what a wealthy man would provide in financing a Greek chorus. When the Greeks put on a drama, the drama was not only for entertainment. The drama had religious implications. When the Greeks viewed the drama, they were going through an experience of catharsis which was a cleansing of the soul. Therefore, the drama was always a tragedy. The drama always included a hero who was the victim of some tragedy. He was a hero who, though not perfect himself, yet was receiving a great tragedy in the process of which the audience was able to enter in and receive a cleansing of soul.

The people who conveyed the plot were the chorus--The singers. Therefore, they played a very strategic roll. This was a professional operation. It took much preparation. Consequently, somebody had to pay quite a sizable sum of money to provide the chorus for the Greek drama. During the festival season, these would sometimes go on for day after day after day. Sometimes they had as many as three dramas a day, in a trilogy. Therefore, consequently, there was considerable expense. When a man came along who, out of honor to the gods, would finance a drama and pay the chorus, what he was providing was an "epichoregia." He was providing an abundant supply that enabled a religious expression.

Therefore, the apostle Paul was just snatching this word out of the Greek language and out of its usual meaning and context, and saying that God is going to provide for him. God the Holy Spirit is going to make an abundant provision for his spiritual needs, and He's going to do that in response to the team prayers of the believers in Rome who were praying for him. This abundant provision is going to carry Paul through his ordeal in Nero's courtroom. Therefore, this provision is connected with what the saints have been doing. The Christians pray, and God responds with a sufficient provision for whatever the need may be.

This is all going to be done (in verse 19), "For the Lord's glory." "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed." In verse 20, he begins with the words "according to." That's the Greek word "kata." That simply means the standard. The standard is "According to this supply that the Holy Spirit will make, it is my earnest expectation." This is a rather interesting Greek word. It is the Greek word "apokaradokia." It's actually a triple compound word. First we have this little segment called "apo," That's a preposition which means "from," and it means "from the ultimate end of things." Then we have this section "kara" which means "head." Then we have the final part "dokia" which comes from "dokeo" which means "to look and to watch." Therefore, what this word came to mean, on the basis of these words that compose it, is somebody who's stretching and straining his neck to look for something. He's got an outstretched neck, and he's watching. It's like someone standing at the railing of a race and watching eagerly as the racers come around the bend with his head stretched out trying to glimpse who's in the lead.

That's the idea that Paul has here that connotes an eager longing for something that he's looking for. The word "apo" also not only means "from," but it also means "away from anything else" or to the exclusion of anything else, so it implies a great intense concentration. So what is Paul concentrating on? Paul says there is something that supremely preoccupies his attention. There are any number of things that you and I might come up with, like maybe whether he's going to live. What is it that preoccupies his attention in this moment of his trial?

Well, what he's absorbed with is seeing that the Lord Jesus Christ is honored by himself, and that He is not disgraced by the apostle to the Gentiles. Therefore, he says, "According to my earnest expectation (that is, my intense observation and preoccupation), and my hope." His hope is the Greek word "elpis." The hope that he has goes with his great expectation. He is eagerly anticipating something, and consequently, he has a hope. We read of Paul's knowledge in verse 19. He began that verse saying, "For I know." This was doctrinal knowledge that he has. It gives him ground to eagerly hope that he is going to be released at his trial. He has information from the Word of God. He also has information from the Lord. He has his spiritual maturity structure. He has people praying for him in Rome. He has a provision of the Holy Spirit. This all adds up to a very great hope. Therefore, what Paul is doing is getting ready for his trial. He is actually eagerly concentrating upon it and looking forward to it, but he is doing it with great hope. In other words, he is just about absolutely sure that he is going to be released, and that the verdict will be not guilty, which is what it proved to be. In it all, he wants to be sure that he honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

"That" ("hoti") gives us his purpose. "That in nothing." This in the Greek actually says, "That not one thing." This is "enoudeis." "Enoudeis" means not in the sphere of even one thing that he should be ashamed." "Ashamed" is "aischunomai." "Aischunomai" is future passive indicative. Therefore, what he means is, "In the future when I stand before Nero, that I will not find that I have permitted something to happen to my spiritual life that I should be ashamed of my testimony and of my defense before Nero." The passive here speaks of God the Holy Spirit as the agent who is speaking through Paul. Paul is not getting up and saying, "It is my hope that when I stand before Nero, I will have so prepared my brief and I will have been so clever that I will answer the questions and the arguments and the attacks, that he will not be able to bring me a rebuttal." No, what Paul is saying is passive, and passive means that somebody else is going to keep him from being ashamed. That somebody else is God the Holy Spirit. "I am eagerly looking forward and anticipating with great hope that God the Holy Spirit will so direct my speech that I will not bring disgrace to the Lord Jesus Christ."

"That instead, that with all boldness, as always, so now, also Christ shall be magnified in my body." He says, "Always bold"--with all boldness again is "enpasparresia." That means "freedom of utterance" or "freedom of his speech." The kind of boldness he is speaking of here is a testimony which is not intimidated by either the antagonistic Christians nor by the awesomeness of Nero's court. Paul is going to speak with authority. This is what he has been doing. All during his preaching, he has spoken with authority. He spoke with such authority to the Jews four years before that when they pounced upon him, and that's part of what put him in prison. Now Paul says, "I don't want to stand before Nero and turn into a rabbit. I want to be able to speak with the same authority as I did before. I want to have full freedom of utterance to speak the truth of God, with tact and with judgment, but I want to present the factors as they are."

So Paul says that, as always (at all times as he has done), he is going to seek to be clear in his presentation of the Word of God. "Now also" means at this very point. "As at all times in the past, now also" is "kainun," and that means at this point right now in time. It's a comparison. As I have in the past, now at this point (in prison) I will continue to do. He'll be happy in facing this trial (we already know) no matter what happens. His happiness is secured, but what he's concerned about is that he be bold and that he speak authoritatively when he's under fire. It's easy to speak with authority when nobody is shooting at you. It's easy to be bold as a Christian and proclaim what you believe. It's easy for you to sound off about what you think is wrong. However, when people start firing at you, then it is harder to be just as bold and to be just as definitive. That's what concerns Paul, that now that he is under pressure, that he be just as bold as he was before.

So his concern is that in all of this Christ, shall be magnified. The word "magnified" is "megaluno." It is future passive indicative. That means in the immediate future when he shall stand before Nero. Passive again indicates that God the Holy Spirit shall do the magnifying. It's indicative so it's a statement of reality. Paul does not make the mistake of saying that he is going to magnify Christ, or that somehow he is going to bring honor to the Lord. No, what he is saying is, "God has given me information. I have taken the information of doctrine. I have learned it. I have believed it. I have stored in my human spirit. I have developed a spiritual maturity structure. Now that thing is going to work in me, and it will work to make me bold, and it will work to magnify, to glorify, and to honor the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's what's important about the passive. If we didn't know this, we might think this is active. We might think that Paul is saying that he is going to magnify the Lord. The next thing we would do would be telling Christians and be telling our children, "Now you must so live that you magnify the Lord." What have we done? We've given our kids the idea that they must go out and say, "Now let's see, how do I magnify the Lord?" Do you know what they would do next? They would say, "Let me get a piece of paper and a pencil, and I'm going to see how I will magnify the Lord. One, I won't chew tobacco. Two, I won't spit. Three, I won't talk to bad girls. Four, I won't go to movies. Five, I won't dance. Six, I won't play cards. Seven, if I play monopoly, I will use a spinner--not throw dice." And I'll let you go on. You all have your own list. You can finish it out.

That's exactly where that leads. Why? Because we give Christians the idea, "You must magnify the Lord, dear Christian." Anytime you tell that to a Christian, he starts thinking, "Now, let me see. What should I do? What should I not do? That's how I'm going to magnify the Lord. No you're not. The way you magnify the Lord is by developing spiritual maturity in your soul. Then it's a passive operation. It's a very important little grammatical factor here. That's why we're explaining it to you. When Paul said that the Lord shall be magnified, he didn't mean he was going to do it. He meant God the Holy Spirit, who was going to make him bold in Nero's court, was also going to magnify Christ in that court. Get that straight because that means that every one of us can do the same thing.

So, "According to my earnest expectations (stretching my neck out, and craning my neck, and looking), I have a hope that in nothing, at no time, I shall be ashamed. However, with all boldness (freedom of utterance), as always in the past, so at this point now, Christ shall be magnified and shall be honored in my body." "In my body" is "en soma." The word "body" here uses the word "soma" which is a little more than just physical body. It is what we would say, "In my human being capacity--the totality of my humanity. The word "sarx" means just "flesh"--body in itself. However, "soma" refers not only to the physical but to the soul and spirit--to the totality of a human being who is born again.

What Paul says is that he is going to magnify Christ "in the entirety of his person." Why? Again, because his spiritual maturity structure is developed, and consequently, he has the capacity for doing this. He says he is going to do this through the totality of his being, primarily here in terms of his physical body or his physical structure. He's going to magnify Christ "whether it be by life or by death." Here you have a contrast, whether / or. In the Greek, it's the little word "eita," and it's repeated "eita eita." This means whether / or. These words signal that he's contrasting. "By life" is "diazoe" which means by means of life; or "diathanatos" which means by means of death. Whether Paul is living or whether he is dead (in the process of dying) God will be magnified.

This is going to be very important because he doesn't know what the outcome of the trial will be. It may be execution, or it may be acquittal. Therefore, he says, "Whether by life or by death, it is my great expectation that I shall honor Christ and that I shall give a bold and clear defense and utterance in behalf of the gospel and in behalf of the reality of a living God in an empire that is oppressed with idolatry. Paul's eyes are on the Lord. They are not on himself, and they are not on anybody else. Boldness for the Lord in life is one thing, but that kind of devotion in the face of dying is another thing.

**The Doctrine of Death**

Therefore, that brings us to a doctrine that Paul will be dealing with here for a while because he goes on and he picks up the subject of death. That brings us to the doctrine of Christian death. Therefore, let's back up here and take up the subject of death. The doctrine of death. How many deaths can you die? There are seven deaths in the Bible. Let's look at them.

1. Death number one that we all are well-acquainted with, of course, is **physical death**. For the believer, this means the separation of soul and spirit from the body. In 2 Corinthians 5:8 we read, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather, to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." The thing that is absent from the body in the case of a believer is his human soul and spirit. That's what goes into the presence of the Lord. In the case of the unbeliever, when he dies, it is a little different because an unbeliever does not have a living human spirit. Therefore, in Luke 12:20, we read about the man who was rich and who was going to build himself greater barns. In verse 20, he says, "But God said unto him, 'You fool, this night shall your soul be required of you. Then who's shall those things be which you have provided?'" This man was an unbeliever. Here we are told that what is going to be removed from him is his soul. In the case of an unbeliever, death means separation of the soul from the body.

Remember that death always means separation. You can take the word death and equate it to the idea of separation. Death is always some kind of separation. In the case of physical death of a believer, it is separation of soul and spirit from the body. In the case of an unbeliever, it is separation of soul from the body. The Christian's soul and spirit goes immediately into the presence of Christ, awaiting the resurrection of his body. The soul of an unbeliever goes into Hades, awaiting the resurrection of his body. The body in the meantime is placed in the grave. It returns to the chemicals of the earth. In time it will be replaced by an entirely different resurrection body (a different body) but in the same form and identification as the previous body.

Demonic influence today consequently, would very naturally zero in on this thing that is a temporary structure--the physical body that we have. So demonic influence, particularly at funerals, seeks to make a great deal over the physical structure. I personally think that it is always in the best of wisdom and in the best of Christian taste never to have a casket open at a funeral. Secondly, it would be even better, in order to demonstrate our Christian understanding concerning death, that there not even be a funeral service where there is a casket around. I think that all the burial should be done privately. That should be done with an immediate small group, and then the believers gather in a memorial service where God can be honored and praised for the fact that one of the team has been promoted (and that's what death is for a believer) into the ranks of heaven itself. However, physical death is a matter of separation of soul and spirit from the body. Demonic influence causes people to venerate the body--the nothingness of what is left, as if the person was there when he is gone. It seeks to make a great deal over a piece of chemical material which is destined for disillusion. The body that is raised is a totally different resurrection body.

1. A second kind of death is, of course, **spiritual death**. Spiritual death is a separation of the human spirit from God. We read about this in several places in the Word of God. We have this in Ephesians 2:1: "And you He has made alive (spiritually alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." A person was dead because the human spirit was dead. Romans 6:23 reminds us that the wages of sin is death, and this is spiritual death--separation of the human spirit from God. Everyone is born with this kind of death because everyone is born with the old sin nature. The old sin nature causes spiritual death. Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore as by one man, sin (the old sin nature) entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Romans 3:23 adds to us that, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That is, all are in the status of having an old sin nature, and consequently, all are spiritually dead.

All of you are well-acquainted with the fact that we can break this down as being a wall between God and man. This wall has several blocks in it. God is on one side and man is on the other side. There is no way between God and man through this wall. One side is spiritual death and the other side is spiritual life. God is on the side of spiritual life. Man is on the side of spiritual death. We are born that way. The Lord Jesus Christ was born without an old sin nature. Therefore, he was born spiritually alive. He had to be in order that he could give His spiritual life for us. That's what we needed. We needed someone to die for us spiritually. We could not die for ourselves because we were already spiritually dead.

So, on the cross, Jesus Christ died spiritually. Matthew 27:46 reads, "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' That is to say, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?'" From the sixth hour, at 12:00 high noon, the earth was covered with darkness, signaling that at that point Jesus Christ began to bear the sins of the world. By 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, in the ninth hour, He had cried out in a declarative statement, "My God, my God (addressing the Father and the Holy Spirit), why have you forsaken Me?" In other words, "Why have you turned from me?" He was describing what spiritual death is--separation of spirit from God in heaven. That's what has happened to the Lord on the cross. He was separated from God the Father and from God the Holy Spirit. He died spiritually.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ died spiritually and physically so that believers can be born twice. We can be born once physically, and we can be born once spiritually. We are born spiritually by simply accepting the fact that Jesus Christ died as our substitute on the cross. He asks you nothing more than that you believe that--that you accept it. This wall now no longer exists. It once existed. Now it's just a line. God is on one side, and human beings are on the other side. All you have to do is like at the Alamo, you just have to step across the line and say, "I'm with you." God has promised that He will take your sins and exchange them for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It's just as simple as that. The wall has been removed, and this goes for everybody. The people who are in Hades at this moment suffering for their sins have had their sins paid for. They just refused to accept the offer of God. So spiritual death is the second kind of death.

1. There is a third death, and that is called the **second death**. This is the separation of the unbeliever from God for all eternity. We have this in Revelation 20:11, where we read, "And I saw a Great White Throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them." At the Great White Throne judgment, only unbelievers stand--no Christians, and no believers of any age. "And I saw the dead small and great (unbelieving dead) stand before God, and the books were open." These are the books which contain their good works. There's not a book of their evil works because the wall has been removed. Christ has paid for their sins, so they're not held accountable for that anymore. The only thing they're going to be held accountable for is the sin of unbelief, of not trusting in Jesus Christ as personal Savior--not accepting what God has offered. God's justice has been satisfied. Therefore, God is free now, in His love in grace, to receive us simply on the basis of our faith. However, the unbeliever says, "I'm going to give you my righteousness." His righteousness will always be short of what he needs to enter heaven. It will never match the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the books were open, "And another book was open which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead that we're in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." This is the second death. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The lake of fire that we have here is actually the same thing as the second death. You can take "like of fire," and you can equate it to "second death." This is the perpetuation of spiritual death on earth into eternity in the lake of fire. The second death is in relationship to the preceding physical death of an unbeliever. First a person dies physically, then he has a second death which is the lake of fire. It's the final judgment of God upon all unbelievers--the perpetuation of spiritual death on earth into eternity in the form of the lake of fire. That's the second death.

1. The fourth kind of death is **positional death**. This is identification with Christ in His death. You have an extended passage such as Romans 6:1-14 which tells you about the believer who has been identified with Christ. Or you have it in Colossians 3:3 which says, "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." In Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." What these passages are referring to is the fact that at the point of salvation every believer, as per 1 Corinthians 12:13, experiences the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When you experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that means you have been baptized into Christ (union with Christ). That's what this is called--being in union with Christ. This means that when Christ died on the cross, you died with Him. That means that when He was raised, you were raised with Him. That's what we mean by positional death. It's retroactive positional truth. It goes back to the cross and it identifies you with what the Lord Jesus Christ has done on the cross. So the believer in God's eyes is dead. That's the outer circle of our concentric circle diagram.
2. Then number five is **temporal death**. This is a very serious one. A person may be sitting here today who is temporarily dead. A Christian may be here who has experienced, and is experiencing at this moment, temporal death. This is separation of the believer from fellowship with the Father in time. There are many verses about this. We won't read these. You can look these up for yourself: Romans 8:6; Romans 8:13; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:6; James 1:15; Revelation 3:1; and, Luke 15:24-32. This is the status of carnality. That is being out of the inner circle of temporal fellowship. 1 John 1:9 was given in order to correct temporal death. Anytime a believer sins, he leaves the inner circle of fellowship with the Lord and he leaves the status of spirituality. He becomes a carnal Christian the moment he sins. At that point he has died temporarily. That is, his fellowship with the Lord is dead.

At the point that a Christian is in sin that has not been confessed, he cannot pray and be heard. He cannot study the Word of God and understand it so that it is responsive in his life. He cannot give money to the Lord's work and have reward for that money. He cannot serve the Lord with the blessing of God upon it. He may serve the Lord with considerable success as far as human eyes can see, but it does not bear the success of God upon it. It is just human ingenuity and public relations promotion. It is a serious thing for a Christian to be in temporal death because the status of temporal death is the status of losing rewards. All the while that you are in temporal death, you are short-changing yourself on rewards in heaven. Acts of sins cause this separation from fellowship with the father.

1. Number six is **operational death**. James 2:26 speaks about a death that is the result of not producing divine good. James says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." This is operational death--a Christian who is non-functioning and non-productive of divine good. It is related in a way to that temporal death.
2. Finally, there is **sexual death**. You have this described in Romans 4:17-21 and Hebrews 11:12. Both these passages deal with Abraham who, because of his age was incapable of procreation. Hebrews 11:12 says, "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." A Christian who is incapable of sexual procreation is considered sexually dead.

So there are 7 types of death that a person may experience. Why does a Christian die? There are 4 basic reasons why a Christian dies:

**Reasons for Death**

1. A Christian may die in order to glorify the Lord (John 21:19, Luke 16:19-31). There are times when the Lord is honored and glorified by the death of a saint. We have, for example, the case of Stephen in the Bible. Stephen brought great honor to the Lord Jesus Christ by His death. There are times when the Lord simply takes the life of a believer because it is converted to the Lord's honor. In Philippians 1:20, we read of that which is the normal desire at the time of death of every spiritual Christian: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed. But, with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." This is the very thing we have here that Paul was speaking of--that the Lord might take his life, and He may take it in order to bring glory to Himself.
2. A second reason that a Christian dies is because his service on earth is completed (2 Timothy 4:7, Revelation 11:7, John 19:30). Ephesians 2:10 tells us that God has a plan of good works for each of us to perform. While we are alive on earth, the work of the believer is not finished. So whatever may have happened to you in the past, as long as you're alive and kicking, God still has purpose for your life. The sin unto death terminates that. However, while the Lord has work for you to do, you are immortal. You may not be a very good Christian, but while the Lord has work for you to do, you are immortal, and you will not die.
3. Third is maximum discipline. We have this in 1 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 11:30, 1 John 5:16, and in 1 Chronicles 10:13 in the case of King Saul. This is the sin unto death. This is persistent residing in temporal death (the status of temporal death, or carnality). Persistent continuance in temporal death will result in maximum discipline because you build calluses on the soul until you cannot respond any longer to God the Holy Spirit. Then God exercises maximum discipline, and He takes your life, and He takes you home to heaven. This cause of death we are particularly warned of in connection with the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:23-34 gives very strict warning that a believer should not participate in the Lord's Supper if he has known sins unconfessed because he is in the status of temporal death. People in the status of temporal death should not participate in the Lord's Supper. If they carelessly and indifferently do, God says you are opening the door" first of all, to physical weakness; secondly, to sickness; and, thirdly, to death. It will go to the point of the sin unto death.
4. Finally, of course, there is suicide. Some Christians take their own lives. A Christian may interpose his human will over God's directive will, and then God's permissive will comes into play to allow him to commit suicide. A Christian who commits suicide goes to heaven. Christ died for that sin also. However, this is a Christian who denies himself, perhaps, much reward by taking his life prematurely. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was a unique death. He, of course, did give up his own life. His life could not be taken until He took it, but He took it in a different combination than we do. He was not only human, but He was divine. Therefore, there was the divine and the human will acting together at the moment he said, "Father into Your hands I commit my spirit." So, suicide is out of line for the believer.

So why do Christians die? To glorify the Lord; because their service on earth has been completed; because of maximum discipline; or, because of the interjection of suicide. For one of these reasons, believers die. The apostle Paul, in the book of 2 Corinthians, takes us into greater detail concerning what happens in the case of a person who is a believer when he dies, and we're going to look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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