

**How to Smile at Death - 1 Corinthians 15:12-26 & 58**

*“Death smiles at us all, all a man can do is smile back”*

*Gladiator, 2000; Marcu Aurelius.*

Death is at the forefront of our society and culture right now, when it is usually something we avoid. However, St Phocas greeted his impending arrest and death with hospitality, how do you believe you will greet death? With confidence? If not, what are some of the things that keep you running & hiding/kicking & screaming when it comes to death?

The Resurrection confirms that everything is true. When this fact is integrated into our worldview how does this affect our view of death? How does this keep us from becoming overwhelmed by thoughts of death or dying? Consider 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Tommy’s goal was to ensure that we are able to smile at death when we face it because we will sooner or later - the 3 confessions that we make that will free us to smile at death.

1. Confess death is your enemy: 1 Corinthians 15:26
  - a. A friend doesn’t rip you away from your loved ones, your plans, your nest eggs, etc.; an enemy does - so let’s call a spade a spade! Culture wants to gloss over or explain away death as something that isn’t so bad because “it’s the circle of life”, beautiful, natural, etc.
  - b. Death is a monster, an intruder, and wasn’t part of God’s original design (Romans 5:12, Genesis 3) Death is God’s judgement on sin; we are all sinners so will all face death and not when we plan to or are ready but...Hebrews 2:14-15

What are some ways that we tend to gloss over or explain away the severity of death? Why is recognizing death for what it is important? What does explaining the severity of death away do to the gospel message?

2. Confess you are helpless: Hebrews 9:27b
  - a. We are powerless to death; it comes with a judgment. Because “God has put eternity in our hearts” and “there is none righteous, no not one; we know that all the guilt and shame we carry can no longer be suppressed - exposure will take place.
  - b. Hopelessness and despair after realizing that we are helpless to death. The “world” tries to help us cope with death by telling us to ignore it, admit that death is part of life, study it, charm it with rituals, slow it down, beat it with preparation.

Death is the one thing we cannot control, so why do we try? How is confessing this freeing? Admitting helplessness is so countercultural, how does our daily living reflect this confession and its importance to those around us?

3. Confess Jesus is Lord: Romans 10:9
  - a. Jesus took on our enemy and won - saving us from sin’s consequences because he did not sin. (Acts 2:24)

- b. Death is no longer a threat to us; Jesus has the keys (Rev 1:17-18) & because we are ‘in Christ’ his victory is our victory. We can smile at death because we know that Jesus has already won, it's no longer our master - Jesus is. (David and Goliath - David defeated the monster saving the people just like Jesus)
- c. Death can no longer hurt us - Death is a shadow. Death has been stuffed and hung above the mantle so that we can appreciate what we have been saved from (Tommy's taxidermy story). Death can no longer reign over us because of Christ and the resurrection.

In what ways is death still lording over you instead of Jesus? “This sounds all well and good but...”, what are your “buts”? What are some ways that you can apply this “no fear” attitude to your life? Are there things in your life that you can speak these confessions into so that you may feel less anxious? If so, are you willing to share? How can we use these truths to encourage others especially during pandemic? How does the idea of discernment play into this, can we now throw caution to the wind?