

Three Great Reasons I'm Willing to Live ... Three Great Reasons I'm Willing to Die ... And In Christ Both Bring Me a Joyous Sigh

A VFC Resource: # 58
www.venturesforchrist.com

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After examining this earth life for eight decades and discovering the riches of the Lord Jesus for over six of them, I have come to a contented conclusion and decision about this human existence and our inescapable physical death, unless, of course, we are caught up in the rapture! Neither our earth life nor our earth death should be primary to us in the vast eternal scheme of things. What ultimately matters is that we use both of these experiences to enrich ourselves in that higher reality which trumps them both. I speak of the third dimension – what I call “the earth path of following Jesus,” the creation of “oneness” with Him Who is our Lord and our Life! This dimension can be defined as the discipleship skill that enables one to turn every life and death situation into an experience of eternal life! You skillfully advance the level of your living on the presumption that your present abundant living must be rooted in your own cross dying to all things but the desires of the Messiah!

To be His authentic Disciple makes both human life and human death a secondary consideration and often irrelevant to the higher “oneness” that is ours as we experience the initiatives of the Godhead, Our Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter Lord! It is in realizing and incarnating “this truth of oneness” that we taste the contented spiritual abundance of the Savior’s praise, purpose, power, peace, and Presence. “This truth” is the simple yet fervent belief that the Messiah’s plan for us is bigger and better, higher and nobler than any and all other issues we encounter as human beings, including life or death! Here again Paul’s moving comment on this subject! “No matter what hits us on this earth, from our finest triumph to our saddest disaster, we are not fazed or confounded because we know absolutely that Messiah Jesus really loves us! For I am convinced that neither the things of life or the things of death, neither the angels or demons, neither the present or the future, nor the best or the worst of this world, nor anything else you could name, from the thinkable to the unthinkable, can separate us from God’s purposes of love for us, in us and through us! And think of it! We have actually experienced the Father’s splendid and overwhelming love! Not only will we never lose His love, but we can enjoy more and more of it because we are sensing how the Lord Jesus has embraced us as His Own!” (Romans 8:37-39, HDM, Peterson, Greek)

The authentic Disciple will ecstatically discover that life in its fullness is one thing, and one thing alone, a “oneness” of knowing, exploring, and adoring Christ Jesus. To know both Jesus and the Father turns our death realities, both for now and in the future, into no more than temporary doors that will open our mind and heart to an overwhelming encounter and a thrilling adventure of apprehending the Master’s Face! (John 17:3; II Cor. 4:5-6; Phil. 1:21; Psalm 27:8, 31:16, 51:9, 105:4; Matt. 17:2; I Cor. 13:12 and Rev. 22:4)

In my view this “oneness with Christ” has to be the highest and ultimate “satisfaction achievement” of our being created in the image of the Godhead. Life is simply our introduction to the curriculum of the eternal and the infinite! Death moments while we live and on the day of our death simply mark our graduation progress from one temporary reality into more of the infinite realities of Messiah Jesus! Oneness with our Living Lord as we live out our minutes will merge both our life and our death experiences into an experiential possession of eternal life! Nothing in life will ever surpass learning and sharing these eternal intentions of our Godhead! (II Cor. 4:7-15) “Our times are fully in His hands!” Our cup truly runs over when we can understand and experience these words of King David! (Ps. 31:13-17) Check out your daily struggles as compared to his in this great Psalm!

"I hear the slander of many ... who conspire against me ... so many people and circumstances and hollow things contribute to diminishing my life ... especially my own dense shallowness and foolishness ... but I trust in You, O Lord! I declare that you are my God ... deliver me from everything and everyone and every thought that would move me away from Your Presence! Let this poor servant of Yours see the revealing wonder, compassion and brilliance of Your Face! Assure my heart that I am redeemable and secure in Your unfailing love. I cry out to You, my Lord, that I will bring no shame on Your name! This is my greatest fear! Let me live out and finish my own little life without disgrace!" (HDM paraphrase of Psalm 31:13-17)

In short, for my brief time left on earth – I call it my "sunset decade" – my primary request to the Father is to let me impactively see, hear, apply, and share as quickly as possible, the liberating "cross-promise message" of Savior Jesus! I ask continually that He forgive me for my cold, slothful and deceitful heart! I know He has, but I want Him to hear me say I desperately need it! I constantly ask Him to enable me to be a sensitive and precise listener to His truth: "He that has ears (capability) to hear (opportunity), let him hear (responsibility)." (Mark 4:23) If we hear and believe our Lord aright, that He is today, right now, "the resurrection and the life" for me in all my minutes, and that those "who believe in Him will never die," our steady purpose, powerful calmness, and increasing gratitude will be enormous! "Christ absorption" will truly make our earth living and earth dying secondary issues. In Christ I already have eternal life – "now – as well as His promise that I will never actually die! Death for the true Believer is but a momentary transition from the minimum to the maximum! Anxiety over both our daily human life and our upcoming physical death fades quickly when we live by His "cross-promise message"! Everything matters less when compared to the thrilling adventure of learning the power of Scriptural promises, knowing Christ's love solutions more deeply, and having the Holy Spirit's impactive Presence in our minutes! (John 11:25-26; Phil. 8:10-11)

In fact, to truly believe Jesus, faith Him, trust Him, understand Him, relax in Him, and yield to Him will confirm in our heart the assurance that we have the ability to live "at our optimum right now" and that dying should never be a dominating concern! The process of dying can bring suffering, unusual biting pain and personal grief, but dying itself offers and promises us great release! "true Spiritual Life" is the advancing experience of becoming "one" with Christ Jesus. "Death" is the concluding experience of opening the door to paradise when we finally finish our battered but victorious journey on this fallen earth! It is then we instantly walk through our last "earth hoop" and enter our eternal destiny! It is a destiny of "oneness" with our resplendent and majestic Godhead Lord! Both living and dying are but "gift paths" on which we must walk in order to find the way to our zenith destiny of "being with" our Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter in absolute "oneness." We will at last totally grasp our connection to Him with all of our spirit, soul, and body. These three, joined to the Godhead as one, will transform our own hearts to be like the Savior's! Living and dying become "secondary concerns" to those who possess "primary vision." Both life and death experiences are to find more of our Messiah's Heart and making His Heart our own! As the Apostle Paul puts it, "To be fully and vibrantly alive on this earth is to have and love Christ; my death is simply the most powerful and immediate way to have more of Him!" (Phil. 1:21, HDM)

Arriving at Godly Reasons

In light of the above, I will list now the three reasons that make me want to keep on living and "cross functioning" on this crippled, confused, chaotic, and brain dead earth. I list also the three reasons I am ready to die and find full deliverance from this dense, dull, and dummy culture and be in the Presence of our Lord in the Heavenlies. Whatever the Savior has planned or allows, I know His timing is best for His aims for me. While I yet live, my determined desire is to exalt our Messiah, bless others with His message of grace and truth, and continue pursuing my own fulfillment in the splendor and joy of Who He is! Whenever the Savior is pleased to continue my life or content with my death, then I, too, will be pleased and content. I know He will speak to me and act upon me in the midst of "my times" and that "my praise will be complete" as I remain in Him (Greek – stay under His authority). (John 15:9-11; I Cor. 2:6-16) I am expectant about that day when I too, at my level of yielded cross

following, can lightheartedly embrace my own death. I yearn when that time comes that I can repeat the Savior's words, "I have brought You glory, Father, by completing the work You gave me to do!" (John 17:4)

Three Great Reasons to Live

1. Because I love the Creator's gift of life! My brilliant Lord created me in my mother's womb! He breathed life into me, protected me, put the Tree of life before me, has led me in the paths of righteousness for His glory's sake, and has presented His Presence and pleasure before me! He has promised to permanently preserve my life according to His creation idea and eternal purpose. (Gen. 2:7-9; Deut. 30:15, 19; Ps. 16:11, 119:25) There is much I love about this present life, and I intend to live it out to the fullest of His great Mind because He intended for me to do so! His intentions are my ambitions! I love Him for giving me "my life" and the capacity to love Him back and please Him!
2. Because I love my family and my special friends. I also love all people in general and the world wide family of every ethnic group. We were made for relationships so that we could reflect the triune image of the Godhead. I love the experience of "knowing" my wife, my children, my grand children, and my little "greats" (both spiritually and physically). I love the meaning and joy I find with my family and my treasured friends! Relationships of love bring us to our richest experiences as our Triune God's "image bearers."
3. Because I love the thrill of sharing my story of Christ Jesus with everyone I can! Nothing on earth can compare to sensing the eternal current of His life coming through your own life to affect the lives of others! I am ecstatic that He has qualified me, by His choice and grace, to "make real" to others the Savior's mind, heart, and mission. Significant authentic relationships with others only come to us as a result of first having our own significant authentic relationship with Christ. The words I speak that delight me most are those I speak to others of my soaring joy, abundant confidence, and deep satisfaction with the reality of the Savior's loving presence and eternal purpose!

Summation: I am more than ready to keep on living and enjoying it because my Creator wants me to! I am learning how to live, to love, to lead, and to last! The most compelling excitement of our day should be sharing with others "your revelation" of how Jesus is the God of grace and truth!² Ponder Philippians 1:18-26. I am ecstatic knowing my presence in your life helps you to love and follow Jesus and brings you overflowing joy!

Three Great Reasons to Die

1. I will finally fully behold the Face of our magnificent Lord Jesus! I will no longer be limited from seeing and experiencing the overwhelming and wondrous Presence of my Creator-Redeemer-Perfector! I will be completely aware of my completeness in Him! I will be with my Lord Who perfectly wants me forever! I will be absolutely and totally content with His perfections prepared for all of His people! My shallow and unrighteous life will be swallowed up forever in His profoundness and righteousness! All that He is and desires for me – even me – will begin and never end!
2. I will be finished with the sick, sad, destructive, and diminishing futilities of this fallen earth. I will no longer have to endure the sorrowful, selfish, and stupid rebellions of mankind. I shall also be free from my own sin nature and the blind sinful foolishness of my ignorant and arrogant heart! I will forever leave behind me an evil, blind, crazy, cocky, vile, vicious, cold hearted, unjust, depraved, malicious, corrupt, self-gratifying, indolent, coarse, trivia mad, irrelevant passionate, struggling, and powerless humanity deceived by Satan! I hated being a part of it and being caught up in its corruption and meaninglessness! But now my bondage and imprisonment to all lies and self-deceit has ended! I will be eternally free at last from all shame, guilt, futility, waste, partiality, lust, and unrighteousness!
3. I will no longer be around to do Jesus any damage! I love this thought! I can hardly wait! I am so sick and weary of "so much of me" and "so little of Him" coming out of my life! I am so unlike the

Master, reflect Him so poorly and have hurt His cause so often! Never again will someone think less of Jesus because of my poor witness in word, attitude, or action! His high purposes and His great Name will no longer be diminished and degraded because of H.D. McCarty's weak, dense, flawed, lazy, immature and selfish thoughts, decisions and responses!³ My mediocre and impotent discipleship will be done away with! During my more mature Christian moments and minutes I have prayed one prayer more than all others, "Dear Savior, please let there be more of You and less of me as I live out my life!" My death will answer that lifelong prayer. My excitement about when that time comes is beyond human expression! I have no language, no skill, no brilliance with which to express this most glorious and noble passion! For my little life to reflect nothing but Messiah's wonder and splendor is the zenith of all I want to be!

Summation: I am not only ready to die, but somewhat eager to die and receive all the grace and truth He has destined for me and for all those who love Him! I will finally be separated from everything that causes Him and me spiritual grief and pain. I will at last be able to do my Lord nothing but good and to please Him perfectly! Ponder Philippians 2:1-11. At last I will be nothing so that Who He is and what He wants will be my exalted everything.

The Scripture Sees Life and Death as One

The Prelude to Our Perfection – Oneness with Our God of Love

Verses of Emphasis:

Romans 8:38-39 – "For I am convinced that neither life nor death ... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Death is an easier victory for us compared to the lifelong struggles we have had to contend with, suffer from and conquer over!

Ecclesiasts 5:20 – "I seldom reflect on the days of my life because the Lord keeps me occupied with gladness in my heart!" Our past is nothing compared to His Presence now and the anticipation for what He has prepared that is still ahead of us. (I Cor. 2:6-10)

Philippians 1:21 – "For to me to be alive is experiencing Christ, and to die simply means I will experience more of Him to the full." What a fantastic deliverance and destiny we have that makes our life and death irrelevant to our highest purpose – oneness with the Godhead! We have been given understanding that to be fully alive in the Godhead's image and to become a vital, moral and compelling human being means this: It is to possess more and more of the Mind of Christ! Our dying will bring us full possession of what we were created for. "... we shall see Him as He is"! (I John 3:2, 4:16-18, 5:20; I Cor. 2:6-16)

Psalms 116:15 – "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." He knows the magnificence and wonder of what death will do for us. In Christ we know that death is the door to our wildest thoughts of perfection. The blessedness of our death will take us beyond all our limitations. We who are Cross Disciples can and should enter into that same conclusion and anticipation!

Isaiah 53:11 – "After the suffering of Messiah's soul He shall see the light of life and be satisfied." This is our inheritance also. It will happen when we too see the light of life out of our own suffering and dying for the Father's purposes. To suffer as a Disciple is to give your life to lifting and carrying the weight of 1) desperate human need, 2) your own struggles against sin, and 3) whatever is necessary to bring pleasure and glory to God! We call it "the cross." The Lord Jesus sacrificed to save us from hopelessness,

overcame His Won overwhelming temptations, and lived to die for the Father's decisions.

I Corinthians 15:31, 54-57 – “I die every day ... but death will not kill me and its sting is brief ... in Christ everything is either presently and/or eventually overcome and swallowed up in permanent victory.” We can endure the diseased fallenness of our earthly habitat by turning every death situation that hits us into a present spiritual triumph. Every single good or bad experience we have can be transformed into a revelation about our Creator, His creation, and His purpose for me, His creature in His image! We do this by increasingly seeing all things with the eyes of Christ so that we can interpret them with His Mind! (II Cor. 5:11-19.)

II Corinthians 4:7-18 – Our troubles and our suffering enable us to “carry around in our bodies the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are really alive in Christ are always given over to death for Jesus' sake so that the overcoming reality His life can be revealed through us! So, then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.” (II Cor. 4:10-12) Just as the Lord Jesus gave Himself over to death for the Father's sake so we could have life, so we are to do for Jesus so people around us will see His life in us and want it for themselves!

A Full Comprehension

The following is my amplified rendering of Philippians 1:21: “Being physically alive for me means one thing, gaining, experiencing, and reflecting more and more of all that Christ Jesus desires to think in me, to be to me, to do for me, to speak out of me, and to live through me! Physically dying for me means only one thing as well; I shall immediately gaze upon the Master in compelling awe, receive the completeness of His intentions fully, and be consumed totally with His magnificence! I shall at last possess and adore all of Him that is possible! He will at last change all of me into His marvelous, all consuming, and gentle image!” (HDM translation) (I John 3:2)

The key concept to grasp in this splendid verse is the presence of a triune theme put into Paul's mind by the Holy Spirit. The Triune Thinker sees three realities in which the Disciple is called to completeness. These three are *life*, *death*, and *oneness*. Earth life without oneness with God is death! If we have oneness with God, our earthly flesh death to self simply brings more exalted spiritual life. Oneness with our Messiah Lord both now and in eternity is our goal while earth life and death are both secondary. Is not oneness and eternal life the same thing? Eternal life is a relationship before it is a possession. Oneness with Jesus trumps life and/or death every time! “Now this is eternal life, Father, that they may know You, and Jesus Christ Who You have sent!” (John 17:3) “I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One – I in them and You in Me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.” (John 17:22-23)

Again: Life is introduction! Death is graduation! Oneness is eternal life. Life and death are both attractive options for me because my oneness with Messiah Jesus can be strengthened by either. Death and life are both at work in me already and are simply “tools” for eternal construction! I am excited equally about my “earth life” and my “earth death” for together they will bring me the reality of “eternal life.” My greatest discovery and increasing delight on earth is my “oneness” with Him Who is my Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter Lord. His life is actually being revealed in your mortal body and mine as we learn to carry our cross and behold the glory of what is eternal! (II Cor. 4:10-18)

I cannot resist sharing another triune theme Paul puts before us in Romans 5:1-5. First, he exults in the hope of glory! (v. 2) Second, he equally exults in his sufferings because putting all of our experiences in Christ increases our hope (confidence). (v. 3-4) And, thirdly, this confidence (hope) we place in God will never ever disappoint us. To actually believe and trust God with all of our issues is the greatest thing we can do in life because

it results in His pouring more of His love into our hearts (oneness) by the Holy Spirit Whom He has given us. (v. 5) Do you see it, dear Reader? We have the joy of salvation life! We also learn the joy of death suffering because it opens our eyes more fully to the Savior's kind of life! The result of the two is the sanctifying life of our pure oneness with our beloved Messiah Jesus Who has revealed to us the grace and truth of the Godhead!

An Eternal Conclusion

Perhaps the following illustration will capture the essence of my six reasons that bring me comprehension, comfort and contentment about my living and/or my dying. I was having lunch with a dear friend with whom I have shared many happy hours. He was a member of my church and a physician. We had both served as officers in the Air National Guard; he, too, was a pilot. I loved his wife and children. He always gave himself willingly to help me and to sacrifice for our church and many other causes for Christ! To share lunch and "catch up" on our lives was a treasure! But the most significant and sweetest moment of the meal was a God sent word to me through my dear friend. The truth of his words has been branded on my mind, heart, and actions until my own dying day of total Jesus discovery!

My friend had heard a true story about an elderly Christian lady who was in hospice. Her son and other loved ones were with her. She knew – as someday each of us will know – that her earth minutes – even seconds – were numbered. "Death time" (graduation) had finally come. The little lady was no casual Disciple. She had sought to be an earnest cross follower of the Lord Jesus, and her life showed it! As her earth life approached its conclusion she motioned for her son to come close so she could speak to him with her weakened voice. As he tearfully put his head close to hers she smilingly whispered her final triumphant testimony: "I'm so excited!"

And so am I, my friends! All six of my reasons for living and for dying leave me excited – for each one is the "truth touch" of Jesus on my mind, my heart, my present, and my future! I am convinced I have the Mind of our Lord in this. Once more I leave you with the words of the blessed Apostle, "For me to be alive is Christ and dying is to gain more of Him. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ. Which is better by far; but it [seems] more necessary for you that I remain in the body. As I am convinced of this, I will continue then with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me!" (Phil. 1:21-26) I have no greater ambition than "on account of me" many other will make progress in carrying their cross and have overflowing joy in the Lord Jesus!

I first read the above words some sixty-three years ago as a High School Senior who had just accepted the Lord Jesus as my Savior! They inflamed my young mind at the time, but now they are branded into my veteran heart. As best as I know, *and see me as God sees me*, I am continuing my earth life for only one purpose, one passion, and one priority! I pray for the reality of this achievement daily with these words: "Oh, Lord Jesus, for this one last thing in my sunset decade I ask, enable me and use me to be a significant fragrance of your grace and truth, totally for your sake, to every person whose path I cross! I ask for nothing else, but for your lavish and overwhelming love to miraculously pass through weak, sinful, and needy me to them! As did our blessed Lord, teach me how to make myself nothing so that, for Your sake, You can make me everything You want me to become!"

Perhaps one more "final" thought from my beloved mentor Sidlow Baxter is spiritually appropriate. "Remember, my dear Harvey, the man who is full of himself can never represent the Christ Who emptied Himself!" Let it be so with each of us, dear Reader! Life and death are simply two progressions toward discovering and possessing that final third reality that will last and expand forever: The oneness of Christ Jesus alive in me and in you! My completion in the Godhead will come, and I live in increasing awe of that stunning promise. I am aghast with incredulity at the wonder and splendor of even thinking that thought! My worship, praise, gratitude, amazement, and adoration are beyond words. My vocabulary is mute! My communication to my loving, gentle, gracious Lord rests in but one hope – He sees my heart!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort" – Paul in II Corinthians 1:3-7

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you” Peter in I Peter 1:3-4

End Notes

¹ The process of earth dying can be accompanied by much stress, pain, high costs, exhaustion, deep questionings, conflict, grief, anticipation of loss, fear, etc. by both the one dying and the caregivers. Dying is not a casual happening, but, in Christ, it can be one of our most redemptive events of life. This is true both for family and friends and especially for the one dying. Believe me! I know something of what I speak! I have conducted about 450 funerals and have been deeply involved with most of the families in the death and loss process. This includes my own mother and step-father and many close friends, the suicide of my birth father, the loss of my wife’s dear parents and her beloved brother, special loved ones and dearest friends. I have sought to handle traumatic, sudden shock losses like those of a little child or a teenager in an accident, plus countless others that have called on me in my role as pastor, counselor, and shepherd. These profound experiences make “dying” to me far more than academic. Broken hearts have also broken mine! As you read this, there is always someone you know and love who will “die next”! It could be you. Please ponder Ecclesiastes 7:1-18. I use this text, at least briefly, at every funeral I conduct! Let us all determine today that we want a death that will glorify God. (John 21:15-19) The Lord Jesus had His earth death; He told Peter about his death, and you and I should plan for ours. Let us make it, as our Lord desires, as glorious as possible! We can start right now by listening afresh to the Lord’s “follow Me!” The Greek has it “My plan for others is not your concern, Peter; you – must follow – ‘Me’”! Let us continually aspire to use our life and our death as pointers to Jesus!

I wrote all the above prior to the sudden death of my own beloved son on Christmas Eve, 2012! I would amend all my previous comments, but now with a more fervent force of heart and a depth of “pain loss” I have never known before. Kevin was only 51, and many family tears flowed! Imagine having to write your “little boy’s” obituary and conducting his funeral. Although his last couple of years of life were his hardest, he held on to a deep hunger to follow the Lord Jesus to his last. The Savior spoke to me continually and mightily through my son’s life and, even more profoundly, in his death! Yes, he was a blundering and often deceived sinner like the rest of us, but he was wonderful to me even though I grieved his mistakes. It is in losing him that my greatest lessons from the Master have been branded on my heart. In silence I have shouted to him in heaven, “I miss you, Kev; how I loved you with all my heart! Forgive me for not being all wanted to be to you as your Dad!” And I have heard him answer me in the whispers of our blessed Holy Spirit, “I still love you, Dad, with all my heart! Forgive me for not being the son I wanted to be to you!”

I know my beloved son is now perfect, fulfilled, and complete in the Presence of our wondrous Savior! Like King David, I know both of us “had it in our hearts” to build great lives for our Messiah Jesus! I know His Word to us both is what He told David, “You did well to have it in your heart.” (I Kings 8:18 and II Chron. 6:8) Hallelujah that “in Christ” He will complete what we authentically have in our heart for Him! My Kevin is now willed with the Master’s glory! My own completion is closer than ever! With Kev’s prayers from heaven and my grace efforts on earth, we shall focus on Kevin’s precious son, Hayden, the wonderful grandson my son gave me. From Kevin’s place at the Right Hand of the Father and my own cross obedience place on earth, we seek to convey to our handsome, witty, talented, gracious, and loveable 16 year-old the sweet fragrance and abiding strength of the Lord Jesus Himself! Harvey Dwight and Kevin Dwight are proud forever of their heritage in their little brother in Christ, Hayden Dwight!

My beloved son is gone from earth, but he is not gone from all that is in me or from those others who loved him. The Father has left me enough memories and will give me enough vision to see my dear son’s death as

both resurrection for him and increased earth triumph for me and our beloved Hayden! “And by faith he (my son) still speaks, even though he is dead in the flesh.” (Heb. 11:4)

² One of our greatest errors and self-betrays as His Disciples is to assume we know the fullness of a word’s meaning. The Lord Jesus said that “The words I speak to you are life!” (John 6:63) Our dreams of living begin with words, and we had best learn exactly what these words mean. My best definition so far of “grace and truth” is this: “Grace is God’s initiatives of love on our behalf! Truth is God’s standard of reality that no one can ignore.” “The Word was made flesh [Jesus] to tell and show people everywhere the fullness of the Godhead’s grace and truth!” (John 1:14-18) To the degree you and I understand, experience, and share with others our own thrilling connection to the power and promises of “grace and truth,” we lay before other people the glory, the significance, and the attractiveness of Messiah Jesus. To possess no exciting daily message about the Father’s “grace and truth” renders one as almost useless to the Kingdom. Let us not squander our lives on the secondary, the trivial, or the irrelevant.

Like Paul, let us find our total life in Christ! Like Paul, let us know the Lord is leaving us here because we are necessary to specific other people to enable their progress in the faith. Like Paul, we need to be with them again and again in order that they may find and possess overflowing joy in Christ! Like Paul, let us be convinced that our lives – my life – are about what is primary. The essence of that is simply this, “... for me to be alive is all summed up in Christ! Who He is; why He came; and what He wants from me is everything. That primarily means I must seek to know and do what He did if I am to live significantly and fully. It means I must begin to live where He began to live. He turned human flesh into a channel of revelation about the fullness of the Father’s grace and the Father’s truth! The person who pays any price to be alive to that mission is truly alive to all the Father wants him or her to be!”

³ Desiring not to be around and to anticipate death is not a morbid attraction. Nor is it a surrender to futility or an exercise in self pity. Nor is it to be unfeeling toward your family’s painful loss or others who would be grieved by your death. We must understand that every person on earth is destined to lose cherished loved ones. The Lord permits these deaths as one of our most significant life lessons for comprehending His own love for us and to experience understanding and gratefulness for His own suffering. Your loved ones were all a gift from God. They never fully “belonged” to you but always to their Creator Lord! The main point in losing the ones we love is to gain entrance into the heart of the Father when He lost His Son for us. We should all pray that our own death will bring many fresh perceptions of Jesus to our loved ones. Gaining these eternal insights from the Lord will far exceed the pain, grief, and loneliness of losing us! Our focus should not be on death’s loss to us but on what our loved one in Christ has gained of glory! Our greatest comfort is in knowing their wondrous ecstasy and that we are on the way to join them!

I deeply regret the pain my daughter and her family will experience when my wife and I die and leave this earth. Our grandchildren, in-laws, and special friends will also know to different degrees the pain of loss and grief. Nevertheless it will be a greater value for them to learn more perfectly how the Father felt when His Son died on the cross than to have beloved sinners like us remain with them in this fallen and sin cursed world. We never lose, regardless of the severity of our trauma, pain, and regret, if we use the loss to gain more of the Master’s Mind about His primary realities. For those of us “in Christ” death is a secondary reality! “... the day of a person’s death is better than the day of a person’s birth.” (The Preacher in Eccl. 7:1) “... to die is gain!” (Paul in Phil. 1:21) “I Am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (Jesus in John 11:25-26) “... because of God’s own purpose and grace ... given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, and now revealed to us through the appearing of our Savior, Messiah Jesus, death has been destroyed while life and immortality has been brought to light up the world through the Good News that we call the Gospel!” (Paul in I Timothy 1:9-10, HDM)