

THE FEAR OF DEATH

1 John 5:12 ... “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

I often encounter people who claim to be Christians who lack a future view of themselves. They believe that verses such as today's passage mean only that they will have a good life on earth. They believe they will go to heaven, but really have little understanding of what that means or what they should expect. In fact, due to the mystery of heaven, many believers are not much interested in it. They may even be a little hesitant about heaven. They just want to enjoy a peaceful life here, regardless of what happens to them after death.

The problem with this disinterest in heaven is that it leaves many believers with the same fears that most unbelievers have...a fear of death. That is a very sad state to be in. Christ died to set us free from the burden of sin and concerns about our future. Yet, I know many believers who are so worried about death, that they will not discuss or plan for it. They become angry if anyone around them discusses it. The older they become, the more worried they become. I suspect that many people virtually worry themselves to death...over their fear of death.

“He who has the Son,” in today's verse, is a reference to persons who accept Christ's death as payment for their own sins, and have received the Holy Spirit as their guide and the seal of their rebirth. The following words, “has life,” is not referring to your life last week, or yesterday, or this morning, but your life with Christ for eternity. A real, honest-to-goodness, walking and talking, smiling and conversational friendship with Jesus that begins in this life, explodes into unlimited comradery in heaven (and the restored earth), and never ends. The second part of the verse (“he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”) is the view from the dark side of unconfessed and unforgiven sins. If you do not have a relationship with Jesus, your future is not life in heaven, but suffering in hell. If you want to worry about something, worry about that, then get on your knees and fix it by turning your life over to Jesus.

Believers do not fear death. We may not look forward to health problems that could force us to suffer in the weeks or months prior to death, but we definitely look forward to what follows. If you live in fear of death, ask yourself why. It could be that you have not completed the steps to receive the gift of salvation and a future with Christ. Your fear of death could be valid because you do not have a future with Christ to look forward to. Do not put off until tomorrow – which may never come – the confession of your sins to Jesus and the acceptance of his gift of salvation. Do it today.

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