

FUNERALS AND MORTALITY

Ecclesiastes 7:2 ... "Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart."

I have spoken at a few wakes and funerals, and my message is always the same: "We are here not for the dead, but for the living." If there is something you want to say to commemorate the life of a friend or family member, say it to them today. Do not wait until they die, because they will not hear it then.

Some attend funerals to publicly pour out their emotions of grief. Others consider it a time to suffer regret for not saying something kind and loving to the deceased when they had the chance. Some just want a last look at their friend, or to express condolences to the loved ones of the deceased. And, of course, in this culture many go to wakes and funerals for the food, gambling, karaoke and other entertainment, even if they did not know the deceased or the family. There are many reasons why people attend funerals, but I fear that the most important reason is often overlooked: To be reminded of your own mortality. The grave you stand over today, could be your residence tomorrow.

A wake, funeral or burial does nothing for the departed. Anything that might have been done for the person while they were still alive is now too late. But it does serve as a very clear demonstration that you will someday meet the same fate. So, when I speak at these events, I share the message of the Gospel of Christ and invite those in attendance to not pass up the opportunity to sign-up for Heaven, because it may be the last chance they have. You could be hit by a car while leaving a funeral for someone else. You might trip over a grave marker in the cemetery and break your neck.

Your soul will never die. A believer's soul will pass immediately into the presence of God. The soul of an unbeliever will go to Hades (the waiting room for hell). However, death of the body is very real and you can see the fear of it on the faces of some people attending funerals and grave-side services. Some people – even very close friends of the deceased – are so fearful of death, they will not attend the funeral of their friends. You need not fear death IF you are assured of a future in Heaven by your acceptance of Christ's gift of salvation. If you are afraid to die, it could be because you have not fallen in love with Jesus. In Christ, there is no fear, only promises of a glorious future.

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