

Funeral Bible Talk on John 3:13-21

What would you say happens to us after we pass on from this life on earth? Whose opinion would you believe? One famous Australian said this of what awaits after death after being revived by doctors after a heart attack, "Son, I've been there and there ain't nothing there!" The message of Jesus Christ says something different: "It is appointed for men and women to die once and after that to face God's judgement (*Hebrews 9:27*)."

What would you say happens to us after we pass on from this life on earth? Whose opinion would you believe?

Jesus Christ said he had an authority that far surpasses anyone else when it comes to this question. He said about himself: ***No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.*** Jesus is saying that he came from heaven, that he is God come into the world as this man Jesus. That he alone has authority to tell us about heaven and what's after death. A big claim. But a claim he backed up by the things he actually did. And capped off by his own resurrection from the dead. Jesus backed up his claim to be God by doing the kinds of things that displayed God's authority.

"But so what?" someone might ask, "What use would his words be to us anyway?" It's one thing to have Jesus tell us we'll meet God and be judged by God. But can Jesus do anything to help us?

Jesus stated very plainly what he would do to help us: ***Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.***

Hundreds of years before Moses had lifted a bronze replica of a snake up on a pole. It was part of a promise God made to save from death his people who believed what God said at that time. Jesus says that he too would be lifted up. Of course, he's talking about his death on the cross. Jesus says that because of his death on the cross ***everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.*** He makes eternal life possible because of his death on the cross. He steps in as our replacement before God. He takes the blame for all those wrong actions and choices that we've done. Those things that would see us condemned and rejected by God when we meet him and are judged after we die. God gives everyone who sincerely asks God to forgive and accept them, on the basis of Jesus' death, forgiveness and eternal life!

What good news! God loves us! He sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us. ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.***

When we're honest about ourselves we know we deserve to be condemned by God. But God came as Jesus not to condemn us but to save us. ***For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*** That's sounds such good news!

But there's an edge to it! Because Jesus goes on to say: ***Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.***

When I was a child I got into trouble swimming. I was going under and coming up. An adult through me a float on the end of a long rope. I grabbed it and was dragged in. I'm alive today because that adult rescued me. I had to respond and accept the rescue.

God sent Jesus to rescue us from being condemned for our wrong ways. God's done that through the death of Jesus. We need to respond and accept the rescue.

So why would anyone reject such an opportunity from the One who can give us eternal life? Because we have to admit the truth about ourselves to God: ***This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.***

To prepare for the day when we will meet God in the way Heather has now done before us, we need to admit to God that we have done what is evil as far as God is concerned. To accept the rescue in

Jesus' death on the cross, we have to turn to God and abandon the sin we love. Jesus said, ***But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.***

A moment ago we sang what is probably the most famous Christian hymn ("Amazing Grace"). When John Newton wrote that song he was talking about himself. He had been the captain of a slave-trading vessel. He had kidnapped men and women from Africa and taken them by force across the Atlantic Ocean. John says:

That grace first taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!

John says he came to the point of recognising he was in the wrong with God. He realised he should be very concerned about being condemned by God. And when he asked God to forgive and accept him because of Jesus' death that fear of being judged by God was taken away.

John Newton died ready to meet God. He died relying on Jesus' death. His confidence was that God would forgive him because of Jesus' death as his replacement. Are you ready?
