

Funeral – 5 Planted for Harvest

This is Redemption Church in Plano TX and I am Chris Fluitt. I am so glad to be with you.

Dearly beloved we are here today to lay some things to rest... We are in the 5th week of our sermon series called Funeral.

Funeral

- In week 1 talked about how to survive your funeral by holding on to the promise of God.
- Week 2 we talked about the year King Uzziah died; even in the worst times you can see God high & lifted up and bringing you victory after victory.
- In week 3 we told you that Jesus ruins funerals. He is the resurrection and the life and there is no grave that can hold your body down.
- And last week our Care Pastor Marshal Blessing told you about how God sometimes doesn't intend for you to attend the funeral. As was the case when Moses died and Joshua did not attend the funeral. Perhaps God is transitioning you to something new.

Today I am going to tell you upfront, this is going to be a somber sermon. This is only natural because death is sad.

Death is sad

The sadness of death is something most of us know. If you have never experienced the sadness of death, I have no pleasure in telling you that one day you will experience this sadness.

There is a physical ache in your heart because of death. Have you experienced it?

There is a regret over what may have been said or what was not said before the passing of this loved one.

There is this universal emotion that accompanies this phrase... "I just miss them."

I am sorry for the sadness those of you have experienced even recently. I know people in this room, people I love, that in the past few years had to bury the loves of their lives. I am sorry for the sadness you have felt, and some days continue to feel. I almost don't want to preach what God gave me to preach, because of the emotions this message might cause you feel.

We do not make light of death. Death is sad

Jesus is the resurrection & the life, but even He was sad about death.

We know that “Jesus wept” at the tomb of Lazarus. You may have learned in Sunday school that “Jesus wept” is the shortest verse in the Bible.

John 11:34 (NIV) “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

John 11:35 (NIV) Jesus wept.

John 11:36 (NIV) Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

The sadness and tears of Jesus communicated His love. The love of Jesus is so great.

On 3 occasions Jesus cries over the city of Jerusalem. (Luke 13:34, Luke 19:41, Matthew 23:37-39)

Luke 19:41 (NIV) As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it

Luke 19:43 (NIV) The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

Luke 19:44 (NIV) They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Jesus wept over the death & destruction that was coming to the people in Jerusalem. Jesus knew in 70AD the Roman’s would lay siege to the city and kill many. The prophet Daniel wrote (Daniel 9:26) about this event hundreds of years in advance.

Death is sad and Jesus cries about the future deaths of these people on 3 different occasions.

And Jesus cries when faced with His own death in the garden of Gethsemane. Here he prayed 3 times to be delivered from this death. It says he became sorrowful and troubled. It says that he prayed more earnestly and sweated big drops of blood. (Matthew 26, Luke 22)

Death is sad

It is ok to be sad. It is ok to cry. Death is sad.

Religion sometimes teaches us that we should only be full of laughter and smiles, but Jesus teaches us that it is okay to weep in your sorrow.

Your Bible has a lot to say about the subject of death. This week something jumped out at me I didn't realize before about God's viewpoint of death.

Death is a planting

Your Bible uses words like planting, sowing, & seed to describe death. Death is a planting and here are some examples.

John 12:24 (NIV) Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Jesus spoke this about His own death. He falls as a seed to the ground and dies.

Romans 6:5 (KJV) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15:42 (NIV) So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;

1 Corinthians 15:43 (NIV) it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

1 Corinthians 15:44 (NIV) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

God's view of death is like planting a seed in the ground. Do we view death this way? Do we find this surprising?

We bury people in the ground and we can't help but feel like we won't see them again. Even people of faith have trouble with the feelings that this burial is final, but God views burial as a planting that springs up into new life. Do you see that in these verses?

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1 Corinthians 15:44 (NIV) it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

God's perspective is that everything dead and planted in the ground will be resurrected. What is sown will be raised, but not just raised it will be raised to something better.

Sown perishable – raised Imperishable.

Sown dishonorable – raised in glory.

Sown weak – raised in power.

Sown naturally – raised spiritually.

Romans 6:4 (KJV) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:5 (KJV) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

God's perspective is that we should not avoid a burial, but that we should willingly receive Christ's burial – **that is baptism!** In celebration we should be buried into HIS death. Baptisms are celebrations, because we have the promise that as Christ was raised from the dead we too will be raised to a new life.

Have you been baptized into Christ? Have you been planted in the likeness of His death?

John 12:24 (NIV) Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

A single seed is all alone. The King James Version says the seed abideth ALONE. Jesus tells us something counterintuitive about death. Unless the seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone and does not bring forth any life.

Yet if the seed surrenders to the planting, the seed is transformed. Listen up believers! This is the part of death that we struggle with. We are sad about the loss of the seed. We are sad about the change the death of the seed brings to our life.

But, have you ever seen a farmer cry over the planting of a seed? No, the farmer understands that a seed surrendered to the ground will produce many seeds. A single apple seed can produce limitless harvest and limitless life.

This can only happen if the seed surrenders and allows a transformation.

What am I saying? Well, here is what Jesus is saying. Jesus is the seed that surrendered to the ground and died. And because He died, He does not abide alone as the One and only Son of God; His death has brought about many seeds, many sons & daughters!

A lot happens under the ground that we don't see

When you place a seed in the ground, you don't see it crack open. You don't see that tap root go straight down and start taking in nutrient. You don't see that first shoot of life spring out of the seed. So much happens that we don't see!

We don't see all that God does in the grave!

Paul says that He would rather be dead in the grave than alive in his body!

2 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Check out this promise to the people of God! Paul says that something beyond what we can see is taking place in the grave. You see a physical body go into the ground, but that person's spirit is not there in the casket. That person is present with the Lord!

I understand why the death of our loved ones makes us sad, but I rejoice. Because of what Christ did on the cross, our loved ones are in the very presence of the Lord!

Some of your loved ones are free from sickness and in the presence of the Lord!

He has wiped away every tear...

They are restored and made new...

They see streets of gold, a gate of pearl, a crystal sea...

They are in a city where there is no night, because the Lamb is the Light of that city...

I remember a song heard at my grandmother's funeral. It is called "If you could see me now."

"Our prayers have been answered. I finally arrived
The healing that had been delayed is now realized.
No one's in a hurry. There's no schedule to keep.
We're all enjoying Jesus, just sitting at His feet

If you could see me now, I'm walking streets of gold.
If you could see me now, I'm standing tall and whole.
If you could see me now, You'd know I've seen His face.
If you could see me now, You'd know the pain's erased.
You wouldn't want me to ever leave this place, if only you could see me now.

When you are crying over the sadness of death, I want to remind you of what is going on beyond your sight. There are things that you can't see right now (in the spiritual). Things that are greater than what you are able to see (in the physical).

2 Corinthians 4:18 (KJV) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

When the seed went into the ground, it did not cease to be!
When your loved one was lowered into the ground they did not cease to be!

A farmer plants seed in the ground because they intend to one day harvest its production.

Planted for Harvest

God intends to harvest every seed that has been planted in death.

In Matthew 13 Jesus gives the parable teaching of the harvesting of wheat & tares. The wheat represents the people of God and the tares represent those who reject God. In the parable both the tares & the wheat are gathered. The Word is telling us that NO ONE will stay dead, but that all will be called out of the grave.

We need to be the wheat, the people of God who are buried in Christ! The rapture is God's harvest plan. When that trumpet sounds your body will be called out of the grave.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NIV) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NIV) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Are you ready for the trumpet to sound?

Musician

Death is the worst

I have not preached today to soften the blow of death. No! Death is the worst!

The worst news you can get is by far an announcement of death...
-Worse than losing your job,
-worse than car trouble,

-worse than divorce.

In light of this fact: that death is the worst; let me tell you 2 things, and then we will come to this altar and talk to God.

#1 Jesus willingly received death for us

Do we realize that Jesus received the worst for us? Do we understand that He loves us this much?

Hebrews 2:9 says Jesus tasted death for everyone. Do you understand that he tasted death for you?

Romans 14:8 (NIV) If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Romans 14:9 (NIV) For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

If death really is the worst, then Jesus must love you greater than you can understand.

#2 Stop playing with sin

If death really is the worst... if we hate death, then we must really hate sin.

Romans 6:23 clearly tells us that "the wages of sin is death."

You cannot hate death but be okay with sin.

Jesus died to set us free from SIN & DEATH!

Repent of the hidden secret sins... They are death.