

5/19/57  
M.A.  
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Scripture Lesson: -

Text: -

Introduction: - This is not a funeral sermon. It is rather a study of life in the world to come. It is not for the aged only, but for the young as well. Youth has no assurance that it will live. The young die as well as the old. For the old it is a revealing of what lies in the future. For youth, it should be a welcome subject, for it reveals some of the glories of the next world.

I.

An End Beyond the Grave. The end of the story of life revealed by God's Word carries us beyond death. The life and the world to come carry us to the story of last things. There is mystery here; we are given so few details that our finite minds must bow before the infinite mind of God. We will need to walk humbly and to acknowledge that there are many things we cannot understand while we live this earth life. It is only in heaven that we shall know as we are known. We walk by faith and not by sight, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". But certain lines of the conclusion of our story we can read. Let us fix our minds on certain revealed facts about life after death.

Death is not the end of being, either to the saint or to the sinner. It cannot be, since morally, intellectually and spiritually, man's incomplete development here demands a future for completion. In every culture and in every civilization since the dawn of history, man has felt there must be a continuation of life for the righting of earth's wrongs. The Egyptians called their caskets "chests of the living". The German poet said that one of the weightiest arguments for the future of life is that we cannot do without it.

the teaching of Christ. But it was to the



heart of man, prepared by God's Spirit, that God spoke his clear word in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In time of stress we are neither good at understanding argument nor balancing probabilities, but the simple, direct word of Christ lifts us up and assures our hearts. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also".

(John 14: 2, 3.)

## II.

Christ is the proof that life continues after death, the kind of proof that convinces the heart and comforts the mind. Christian faith offers not a theory, not an illusion, but a fact of history as proof of its Gospel. Nothing could be clearer, simpler, more convincing, or more definite. A man once said it was hard to believe in life after death because no one had ever come back. Here Christianity meets the need of the human heart for assurance. God offers to you and to all men one who did come back from the grave. Here is no debate, but a demonstration. Let it be said again that Christianity rests its whole case not upon what will happen or might happen, but upon what has happened on this earth. We want eternal life for many reasons, and God's resurrection of Jesus assures us of obtaining it. Paul knew that this was the point of battle in the whole matter, for he said, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; and ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable". Jesus Christ, having died, came back leading death captive. Because he came back and lives, those who accept him will also live with him, and those who reject him will also live without him. His life and death, his teaching and example, the fact of his revelation of God, all these culminate in the one clear, simple, convincing and definite fact: he is risen.

This fact needs to have added to it our glad



As we follow Christ and the writers of the New Testament, our hearts find certain answers to this question about life after death. What do we really know of it.

First, it is clear that there is in this life a dividing of the ways which lead after death to two destinations, heaven and hell, life with God and life without God. In him is our assurance of life after death we have not only the glorious promise of heaven but also the dark picture of hell.

Nowhere is the contrast more direct than in the teaching of Jesus himself. Everyone, says Jesus, will have life after death, but some will go to heaven and some will go to hell.

Second, God's word makes it simple and clear that this dividing of the ways, one to heaven and one to hell, is at the point where Jesus Christ stands. Your life after death depends upon your personal decision here on earth concerning Jesus Christ, eternity depends on your choice or rejection of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as your Lord and Master. You cannot occupy Christ's mansions in the father's house without Christ. The only way you can go to the Christian's heaven is by the Christian's Christ. This sounds simple enough, but men and women everywhere take for granted that they will slip in somehow.

Christ has made this clear and convincing in the following passages.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18)

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3: 36)



And finally,

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10: 32, 33)

From this we see that the most awe-inspiring gift God gave to man was his power of choice, with all eternity dependent on whether he chooses or rejects God in Jesus Christ. You don't earn heaven by your merit. Heaven is in no sense a reward for good deeds. It is a reward only for your faith, your choice of God.

#### IV.

Third, we find the assurance that we shall live in the next world, as the same persons we are now. Identity shall be preserved and we shall know one another. Jesus made it manifest that people would and did live after the experience of death. Death to him was not a major defeat but an experience whereby he could deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. 2: 15.

Jesus Christ never argued the future life. He spoke of it as an existence where people were dealt with on the basis of their experience here. On the Mount of transfiguration he met and talked with Moses and Elijah. He told of Dives and Lazarus, conscious of one another after death, conscious of the gulf separating them, conscious of the reasons for the gulf. At the grave of Lazarus, he turned Martha and Mary and said with definite conviction, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.)

Christ reveals clearly and definitely that we move through death into life after death as persons and together. God's word is filled with this assurance to hearts whose loved ones are gone.