



**Does God want You
to Live or to Die ?**

SOME YEARS AGO there was an old man on a hospital bed looking all forlorn and dejected, because he was about to be operated for cancer of the stomach. I approached him and tried to comfort him. In the course of the conversation I found out that this old man was not saved. And so I took the opportunity to tell him about Jesus Christ and of the salvation He freely gives to those who will turn to Him in repentance.

He listened intently and appeared to be moved by the message, but hesitated to make a commitment to Christ. He thanked me kindly for my concern for him but still would not yield to persuasion. Finally our conversation was brought to an end when a nurse came in to prepare him for surgery.

A week later, as I was reading the newspapers, I saw to my horror, his picture in the obituaries section. I was dismayed, for I knew that he had died without Christ and was gone forever into eternal death. There was no longer any hope for him. He had come so close to being saved from such a terrible end, but he was just unwilling to receive the wonderful salvation of God.

There are many people in the world like him today, leaving this world for eternal torment, because they are dying in their sins. Every day about 100,000

people enter into eternal death. Without possessing the righteousness which Christ offers, this is the only just reward they can expect to receive for their sins. Are you not grieved when you hear about this?

I think you should be, especially since God Himself is grieved at the death of sinners. He plainly stated this in Ezekiel 18:32 – *“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.”*

Now that is the first of three important statements from God which you need to consider:

I. God wants you to know that the death of sinners does not please Him at all.

This was the message God gave to the sinful nation of Israel through the prophet Ezekiel over 24 centuries ago. It was a message given to a rebellious nation, which He was about to punish severely with oppression and captivity by a foreign superpower.

Because of their sins against God, the people of Israel were about to go through one of the worst experiences in their history. They would shortly be conquered by the Babylonian empire. All of their treasures would be taken, their houses would be looted and burned, their Holy Temple and the walls of Jerusalem would be destroyed, and thousands of them would be slain or taken captive to Babylon.

The devastation about to take place was going to be so terrible that the nation would not be able to

recover from it for 70 years. Perhaps we can imagine what it must have been like when we recall what it was like for us during the Second World War when bombs devastated our land, and people were rounded up from house to house never to be seen again.

This was the picture painted by the prophet Ezekiel to the Jews living then. But the question that was perhaps foremost in their minds when they heard this was, *“Why would God allow such a horrible thing to happen to us? Is it His delight to see us destroyed? Does He want to see us desolate? Does He not care that we suffer and die?”*

Perhaps you may have asked similar questions some time in your life. You have heard that God is holy and just, and that He cannot allow any sin in His presence. You have heard that He justly condemns all who sin, all who have transgressed His standards of holiness. And you have heard that most of the people who have ever lived in this world are thus bound for eternal torment in hell. And then you may have thought to yourself, *“Oh my, so many lives are doomed because God is against sin. It seems as if all that God cares about is to get rid of sin. He doesn’t care for the loss of these lives, and doesn’t mind their hopeless end.”*

Well, the sovereign God wants you to know that He DOES care. He has NO PLEASURE in the death of sinners. He is not coldly indifferent to their plight. He does not gleefully leave them to suffer for their sins. But as a loving Father, He mourns over them,

and is grieved at their loss. No loving parent could ever bear to be indifferent to the plight of his dying child. No loving father or mother could ever take delight or find any pleasure in watching a child sink deeper and deeper into deadly peril. So God takes no delight in seeing sinners sinking into death.

And perhaps you might be one who is sinking into such deadly peril; someone whose sins are not forgiven, because you have never trusted fully in Jesus Christ for His wonderful provision of salvation. If you are such a person, please be informed that your soul is in greater danger than you can imagine!

But please be informed also, that the God who made you and gave you your life is concerned about you and takes no pleasure at all to see you heading toward eternal death. God says in Ezekiel 33:11, “*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live*” This introduces the second important statement from God for your consideration.

II. God wants you to know that He desires sinners to live rather than die.

The Lord’s delight is in seeing sinners turning away from their sins and seeking to be saved by Him. That is what He longs for. That is what He earnestly seeks. And that is really the basic theme of the Scriptures that He has given to us – the Holy Bible.

According to these Scriptures, ever since our

first parents sinned, God has been seeking to redeem sinners to Himself. He initiated His covenant with Abraham, a man who trusted in Him. Through Moses He gave us the Ten Comandments which shows us how sinful we really are. And in His good time, He sent forth His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of those who would put their trust in Him. Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save lost sinners. And he says with tender strains of love to you now: *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls.”* (Matthew 11:28) He also says: *“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”* (John 6:37) If you are a sinner, it is God’s desire that you come to Him today, and live!

We realise even more how much God desires that sinners should turn to Christ and live, when we read what Christ Himself says: *“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”* (Luke 15:10)

And if that is not enough, there is yet another thing you can consider: Ever since the time of Christ, God has been enduring the multiplying sins of this world, in order to give more time for sinners to turn to Christ. This truth is stated in 2 Peter 3:9 which reads, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should*

perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

For nearly 2,000 years, the church has been waiting and watching for Christ to return. Yet up till now, He still hasn't returned as He promised. Why has Christ delayed returning for so long? Many scoffers today, like those at the time when this verse was written, would say that this shows that Christ isn't going to come at all, and that the world will continue to go on the way it has since it began. But God's Word says to them that Christ's return has been delayed for so long, really out of mercy to them, so that they might have time to come to repentance.

If God had not been merciful, if He did not desire to see sinners live, the door of salvation would have been closed a long time ago. He would not have endured to the present day. This also explains God's mercy to many individuals. There are some who would have died in their sins due to accident or disease, if God had not somehow spared them in some wonderful way, granting them an extension, so that they would have a little more time to repent and to turn to Him for salvation.

So we can see that there are many proofs that God earnestly desires to see sinners turning to Him for salvation. God desires to see you repenting and finding life in Christ. Thus He says, in Ezekiel 18:32 – *“Turn yourselves and live!”*

But if God desires that we live, why then do not all live? It is because all have not the will to live. Strange as it may seem, all sinners seem to have the

will to die rather than the will to live. This evokes the question that God asks both in Ezekiel 18:31 and 33:11 – “*Why will ye die, o House of Israel?*” – Why do you have the will to die, and not to live?

This brings us to the final important statement, or rather question, from God that you must consider:

III. God wants to ask you the question, “Why will you die?”

There have been a number of times where I have encountered people, both old and young, who hear the gospel and yet refuse to turn to Christ. This is not because they don’t believe that what God’s Word says is true. They say, “*I understand all that you have said, and I know that I will be eternally condemned if I continue to be the way that I am. But I am willing to bear whatever comes. After all, it is my life, I can do whatever I want with it. I am willing to live with my own decision.*”

When I hear a person say this, I feel very sad. When a person just does not seem to have the will to live, there is really nothing more that I can say. Do they not love their souls? Do they not care for the welfare of their life in eternity? After all are they not spending much time and money caring for their welfare in this present life?

Our generation is probably the most health-conscious generation ever to live on this globe. People are ever so careful to watch their weight and their blood pressure, to eat health food, to take vitamins,

to get themselves immunised, to go for aerobics classes, to go jogging and to get enough sleep and drink expensive tonics . . . and yet ironically, they are not careful at all about their life in eternity!

What is this short life on earth we have of 70 or 80 years compared to the vastness of eternity? It is like a millimeter compared to a mile! And yet men and women care more for what they can get out of this present life. A writer name Tillotson said very aptly, *“He who provides for this life, but takes no care of eternity, is wise for a moment, but a fool forever.”*

It seems very uncanny that people should be so short-sighted and see no need to be prepared for eternity. They do not seem to have the will to live. Perhaps they think that these preparations they are required to make for eternity would deprive them of enjoyment in this present life. They want to be free to do whatever they like by whatever means they want, lawful or unlawful, without any restrictions. They seek the pleasures and powers that this present life can offer, and that is all that matters to them. For a moment’s pleasure they are willing to abandon and sacrifice everything!

But the sober truth about this is stated by Christ Himself in Matthew 16:26 – *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* Your soul has immense value, far more value than all the treasures of this world put together.

Yet, it is a sad thing to see so many today losing their souls forever to gain the world for just a fleeting moment. It is a sad thing to see so many willing to die, rather than to live, in eternity. And they will have no one else to blame but themselves for these consequences.

And when they finally have to face the sober reality of their loss in eternity, they will only be able say with much regret, *“If only I knew then, what I know now, I would surely have spent my time more wisely. How blind was I to the things of eternal value. I invested in corruptible goods, transient pleasures, vain ambitions and empty achievements. Where are they now? All have come to nothing! They were all gone in just a moment! What wasted effort, what wasted time! All that my mind and heart delighted in, and all the pomp, complexity and intricacy which I had taken great pride in, have proved to be mere illusions. So here I stand in hopeless eternity. There is nothing now that I can do.”*

How about you? Where will you stand in eternity? In eternal life, or in eternal death? If you have not turned to Christ for eternal life, then consider the question, *“Why do you want to die?”* Why do you not want to live? You should not want to die. You should want to live. Why will you die? God has no pleasure in your death. He desires that you should live, not that you should die. Why then will you die?

After the end of the Second World War, when

the soldiers were on their way home, there was a train heading for a particular destination. In one coach was a soldier who was looking forward with great anticipation to reaching home. In his mind he could see the faces of his loved ones waiting for him at the train station. He asked the conductor, "*Can't this train go any faster?*" The conductor said, "*This train is going as fast as it can!*" In another compartment of the train there was another soldier with his head hung down. He wished the train would go much slower and would never reach its destination. He was in handcuffs and had a military policeman on both sides of him. He was going back to be court-martialled for a crime he had committed.

If you are headed for eternal life you have every reason to be happy and look forward to your eternity. But if are headed for eternal death, eternity can offer you nothing but misery.

It would be a very sad thing if you were to read this tract and still be heading for eternal death after that. Please let me urge you not to put this tract aside until you have settled this important issue of your salvation. Value your own soul. Listen to the voice of God speaking to you from within, the voice that plainly echoes the words of Scripture saying, "*Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?*" **Repent of all your sins and ask God today to give you this new heart and new spirit through the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:6,7)

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