

# **Death and Victory over it.**

*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*(1 Corinthians 15:57)*

**Sermon preached at**

**The Strict Baptist Chapel  
St David's Bridge Cranbrook**

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*By*

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Seeking for the help of the Lord, I direct your prayerful attention to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We'll read for our text verse 57.

But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 57, and this victory is the victory over death.

In verse 54, you read from there, So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Referring back to the prophet Isaiah. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Then the words of our text. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you and I are to have victory over death, it can only be through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We can only be in the way described by our Lord, by God, who has inspired his word in the Bible and all that is said in the Word of God about death, about life to come, about ourselves. If we cast away and reject the Word of God and reject the Lord's counsel, then how can we expect to have victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ, when we have cast his word behind our backs, when we have gone our own way and sought to overcome it in our own way.

Now, why this has been brought to my attention, you would have gathered from the prayers concerning the assisted dying debate in the bill that was passed on its second reading in our parliaments here in England on Friday; a 55 majority in favour of passing the bill to allow assisted suicide or assisted dying, as the bill said. But, and we are thankful, some of the MPs clearly stated they were going to use the term suicide, because that is exactly what it is. We're thankful for much very sober debate and many good points raised. Nevertheless, we are very sad that while one MP could stand up and say that she was a humanist and that what she was saying was because of what she believed, there was none that stood up and said, I am a Christian or not to my knowledge there wasn't, and stood up and said that what they were saying was according to the word of God and what they believed as a Christian. It's a very solemn thing in our country that has been nominally Christian that the word of God is not consulted, its wisdom

is not set before our lawmakers, and those laws are made without having recourse to the counsel of God.

What a solemn thing also that it is thought that by taking a life that somehow there is a victory over death. Or what is thought is a victory over a painful death, to make death as nice and comfortable as can be. But in this there is that ignorance of what is beyond death and what we must face before a holy God. We know there have been those that, criminals that have sought by suicide to escape justice in this life, or a punishment in this life, and they have thought that through taking their own lives they can escape that. They may indeed have escaped what they did not want to face in this life, but they have still gone through death. Their life has still been terminated here, and they have entered irreversibly into eternity, their Soul present before God. So, I know that this is a very emotive subject. It was certainly in our parliaments, and many were bringing stories, harrowing stories, of how their loved ones died. But the issue is not that. Death itself is a terror, as we have sung, of the whole human race and it is an enemy. It is the last enemy and we can never escape that or change that. But what I wanted to do this morning was to very clearly set forth the scriptural position and to consider death and the victory over it through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So I want to look with the Lord's help:

**First at how death came into the world.** Begin right there.

**And then secondly, God's word on human life.** What does God say about the life that he has given? How are we to preserve it? How are we to deal with it?

**And then lastly, the victory over death only in God's way.**

**But firstly, how death came into the world.** We know that God created man, and he created him in his own image, and all was good, all was perfect. As the Word of God begins, as God created the world, there was no death. Not of animals, plants, anything at all. There was no death. Everything was good. Everything was of life. That didn't last long. We don't

know how long, but it didn't. And we would remember this, those that think of, well, we can reconcile the word of God and the science falsely so called, that would say that the world has been in existence for millions of years. And especially those who say that they are Christians should always remember this, that if there was existence before Genesis 3, where we read that man fell and death first entered into the world, then death didn't come as the Word of God declares it did, but was in existence before the world was created, or before man fell. And that cannot be. The origin of death. is through sin entering into the world and death by sin. That is what we read in our portion in Romans 5. Our Lord, when he created man, gave him a command that he could eat of all of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but not of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and of evil. In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. That was the prescribed sentence upon disobedience, rebellion, and doing what had been forbidden. Adam and Eve, in innocency, without being tainted by sin, listened to Satan, they saw that that tree was good for food, They saw it was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise. They did, as what is told us in 1 John 2, they saw the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life and they followed after that, that is what Satan set before them. And in doing that, their eyes were opened, They did now know not only good, but good and evil, and the sentence of God came upon them. And as we read in Romans 5, it also passed upon all men in that all have sinned. And it is important for us to remember that, that in our first parents' disobedience, by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So then death passed upon all men in that all have sinned. We all are sinners. The sentence is already upon us all. None can deny that all men must die. Of course, unless when the Lord comes, then there is a change. But it is appointed unto man once to die, then after that the judgment. And we are to remember it is God that has passed the sentence of death upon us for our sin. You must never forget that. That's why I begin here. How did death come into the world? Did God have anything to do with it? And if he did, how can we deal with it apart from God and apart from His way. We may then ask, what form did death enter into the world? And that is why we must also know how man was created in the image of God. In a wider sense, man was given a rationality, he was given an eternal soul, and a position over the animals, over the creation, and given dominion over

them. And since the Fall, these are retained, but then when they're not influenced by grace, they are very perverted. The one thing that is not retained, and after the flood, man was still put over or in charge in the world over creation, but it is left off that he then had dominion. Every animal that rises up against man, it proves, it sets forth that man does not now have that dominion over an animal. An animal can have dominion over a man. In a narrower sense, we think of that which is in the image of God, a true knowledge of God, of righteousness, of holiness, that fellowship and communion with God, when Adam was created, The Lord came into the garden and he walked in the cool of the day. And that was when Adam had fallen. He was fearful. He clothed himself with fig leaves. He tried to hide from God. But before the fall, he had that fellowship and communion. There was no bar between man and between his God. So these things They have been lost in the fall and the only way that they are reclaimed is by those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and have the image of God as they stand in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Colossians we read, And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. So, man is created in the image of God, and he has a soul. He does not just have a flesh and spirit that dies. In Ecclesiastes, we're told of the spirit of the beast that goeth downward into the earth, and the spirit of man that goeth upward. Then shall their flesh return to the dust, and the spirit shall return to God that gave it. The soul of man resides in his body. The body is a tabernacle. If we'd have had time, we could read the whole of 1 Corinthians 15, which speaks of the soul, of its mortal tabernacle, of its celestial tabernacle, The soul exists separate from the body, and indeed death is the separation of soul and spirit. With the beast, death is the extinction of its life, it ceases to exist. And so when we think of the fall, when we think of the sentence of death, it comes in effect in three different ways. The first way is to die spiritually. Adam and Eve did not die physically straight away, but spiritually they did. The communion between them and their God was severed, and we read that the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Man is dead in trespasses and sins, and that deadness, that death, is part of the sentence of God. There are many, even, that have a name of Christ, that will undermine that death. They will say, no, man is not so spiritually dead that he cannot respond of himself to the Gospel, that he

cannot obey it. But that is saying that really what God did when he passed the sentence of death was he made him not quite dead. He was semi-conscious, or perhaps just capable of responding just a little bit. He's almost saying, put it in a natural way, that when we have a dead body, that body is not quite dead. It might just respond if one speaks loud enough, and be able to respond to that person, but the scriptures are not like that. They're very clear that the natural man, he cannot know the things of God, he cannot respond. The first thing that he needs to be given is spiritual life. And so that sentence of death, we must be very clear, is a complete separation between the soul and God, a complete deadness spiritually, so though he has a soul, that soul, as regards to God, is severed from God. He cannot enjoy God, he cannot hear his voice, he cannot know God. It exists, but it exists separate from God, at enmity with God, at peace with hell, and with God at war. And it's God's sentence that man is so separated from him, banished from him. The second way that man died was in the death of the body. In dying thou shalt die. We know those first ones, Adam, Eve, Methuselah, they lived for many hundreds of years. But if we read Genesis 5, After every one of them we read, and he died, and he died. They must, and you and I, must die physically one day because of sin, because of death. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Death, not just because we sinned, but because God enacted a sentence against man. It is like if someone does something wrong, if they steal, if they commit some crime worthy of being put into prison, they don't go into prison automatically because they have committed that crime. They go to the judge first, and the judge says, this is the prescription the law for the crime that you have committed, you will go into prison. That is what God has said. You have sinned. You have taken that which you should not have done. You have rebelled against me. That is the crime. The sentence is, you shall have spiritual death, you shall have physical death. And so all men must die. We have a grave outside this chapel. Many chapels have the graveyards. A solemn reminder, we've been reminded in our parliament, of the presence of death, that man must die. He puts it off. He imagines that it won't happen to him, that he won't have to go that way. Dear friend, do not put it off. It will come. We must die. The third way in the sentence is eternal death. Because after the death of the body the soul returns to God, then there is the judgment. And then there is to be cast into hell and into those torments

which are forever and ever. The scripture is very, very clear on that, that there is life after death, there is the judgment, and heaven is a real place, hell is a real place, and the torments of hell are a real place for the damned and those outside of Christ. So, our first point, how death came into the world, it came through sin, it came through the fall, it came because of the judgment of God upon man, And it comes in these three forms, spiritual death, physical death, and eternal death, after the judgment. May we remember that. If we're trying to escape death, if we're trying to soften it, if we're trying to avoid it, may we remember those three aspects of death. And if you and I are delivered from it, it will be in this order, delivered from spiritual death through our Lord Jesus Christ, and delivered from physical death, being made death, a way that we are brought from this sin-cursed world to be with Christ forever and ever, and in Christ we escape the eternal death as well. I give unto them eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of mine hand. So, that was a quick summary also of the victory over death.

**Secondly, I want to look at God's Word on human life.** How are we to look upon human life? Are we to just say, well, man must die anyway, so it doesn't matter whether he dies earlier or later? Or how he dies. Does it, does it matter? Well, if we can put animals down, why can't we put a human being down? How are we to preserve life? Well, again, let us begin right at the beginning. Who is it that gives life? Right through scripture, we read these words, and the Lord gave her conception. Life begins at conception, in the womb. This is one of those laws that was mooted on Friday as being something the Parliament could be proud of, that they'd passed the abortion laws allowing the murder of children, that they'd passed these laws to make homosexuality to be something that is paraded as worthy of praise in this land. those things that are so contrary to the Word of God, but may we remember that God gives life. Now remember that when Mary came to visit Elizabeth, that the babe leapt, John Baptist leapt in the womb at the salutation of Mary. The child was alive, a real child in the womb. Everyone really knows that. Psalm 139 speaks of being in the womb and in the process of time, all the members, though they were not, yet they're fashioned and they're brought forth. You read that Psalm. Life begins there.



Life is a sacred thing. The authority over animals is given us by God as man, and animals do not have a soul. And so in that way, animals after the flood were given also for food, really at the fall of man. Animals were slain, their blood shed for clothing of man. They are for men. But for a person, the vast difference is the soul, the soul that lives. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 12 and verse 7. Israel were given laws which give us the pattern of how killing should be treated. They were given cities of refuge, six on one side, Jordan, six on the other. If a person committed premeditated murder or took someone's life, in a deliberate, premeditated way, knowing what they were doing, they could flee to these places, cities of refuge, to escape the vengeance of the relatives. But when their case was heard, then they were to be put to death. Premeditated killing was murder. Then we have killing by accident. If someone's axe head flew off, if someone did something that they did not have any hatred, any malice, and someone got killed, then they could flee to those cities of refuge, and then their case was heard. And if it was found it was not murder, but it was manslaughter, then they were in effect shut up in that city. They couldn't go home to their wife, their family, their house. They had to stay there until the high priest died. If the high priest was young, they could be there for many years. If he was old, not many years. But that was the law. In effect, they had a life sentence. They had a sentence upon them. Then there was judicial killings. And, of course, those that had committed murder, in the nation of Israel, when the case was heard, and it had to be done in the mouth of witnesses. (Numbers 35, you can read these cases in that chapter.) Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses. It's another thing that is very strange in our country again. Capital punishment has been abolished. There was even mention of that on Friday. How is it that in the past we have legislated to stop judicial killing, but now we are legislating to allow for killing by a doctor? These scriptures are clear though, that where there is a murderer, one witness shall not testify against any person who caused him to die, but moreover thou shalt take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. The sentence of death enacted by a court of law must be with two or three witnesses. And after the flood, this is the word of God then. Surely your blood of your lives will I require.

At the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. for in the image of God made he man. And then in Proverbs we read as well, a man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit, let no man stay him. Proverbs 28, verse 17. You might say, well, didn't David commit murder? Didn't Moses commit murder? Yes, they did. And they were shown mercy. for that murder, but it doesn't take away the value of human life and that sentence that is to be enacted when murder is committed. You might say, well, what about war then? Well, we read King David speaking about Joab, the son of Zeruiah, his sister's son. And he speaks about what he did to him and to the two captains of Israel. That is, he killed Abner, the son of Ner, and he killed Amasa, the son of Jether. And he makes this point. He says, whom he slew and shed the blood of war in peace. put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins and in his shoes that were on his feet." He charged Solomon, his son, to execute judgment upon Joab because of what he'd done. But we have a clear teaching there. There is a difference between blood shed in a time of war and bloodshed in a time of peace. So God has given directions concerning life, and really all of us have an instinct given, it is with the animals as well, to preserve our lives. If we see something threatening our life, we don't need to think, well what shall I do to avoid this? We naturally will try and preserve our life. This is the only life we actually know. But then we have the situation that people feel, well, their quality of life is so bad, their pain is so strong, and that it would be better for them that they might die. Well, we also should consider that with the eternal nature of the soul and the reality of hell, and the only way of deliverance, while there is life, there is hope. If you and I are to obtain the victory in our text through our Lord Jesus Christ, it must be while we have life. Where the tree falls, there it shall lie. If we die as an unbeliever, we are lost forever. If we die as a believer and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. We should not cut off life, remove the opportunity of hearing the Word of God. While we have life, there is hope. Our bodies are the temple of God. The Spirit dwells in us. We have the soul within us. We are told, he that destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy. We think of some of the examples of the people of God. We think of Job in his great affliction. One of the utterances he makes, oh that thou wouldst hide me in

the grave, that thou wouldst keep me in secret until thy wrath be passed. But then he says that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me. And he makes this comment as well, that all the appointed days, he says, if a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. He wouldn't put his hand to take away his life. He'd wait to the appointed time, the time the Lord had appointed him. And the word of God is very clear then of how we should be. caring for one another, looking after one another, treating the life that God has given as a valuable life, treating this day as a day of grace and the time that we have upon this earth as a time of grace. Because it is only in this time that we shall find the victory in our text. The word of God is very clear. The sixth commandment, thou shalt not kill. And as we have spoken of the only ways in which that killing can be right and the different ways of killing and how it's viewed in the word of God. God speaks on human life, that it is a precious life. It has worth, has worth above animals. and it is the Word of God alone that decrees how we should treat it and the only way that we may obtain the victory over death is through God's way.

**I want to then look at our last point, that victory over death.** In Hebrews chapter 2, we read of those that through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. And it is through the Lord Jesus Christ alone that there is to be a deliverance. For as much, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." And it's speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Hebrews 2.15, as then taking on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham is body and soul. Angels are just spirit. Animals are just flesh. But the Lord took a real body and a real soul. And it was then that he should die. He could die, not because he had to die, but because he would lay down his life as a substitutionary offering in the place of his people, in the place of those that sinned. That is the only way that death is overcome. It must be, it must come to pass, but in God's way, there is the substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the victory. This is our text. but thanks be to God which

giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. How ever much more I might say, may this word seal upon your heart, seal upon mine, and that we view the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of escape from death, and it was through His coming into this world, entering into this world, as a babe, born of a virgin, born of the Holy Spirit, truly God, truly man, that He would then be capable of laying down that life as a ransom for His people. If we were to escape death, may we think of our Lord Jesus Christ and His sufferings and His death. and why he came into this world to suffer, bleed and die. What a solemn thing, to really think of death and think of handling it in our way to escape it, while at the same time in effect saying to God, I despise your word, I despise your plan and way of salvation, I don't want anything to do with that, But I think that by my device and my way, I am going to escape death and its consequences. You will not. The Word of God is so very, very clear. You may escape out of this world quicker than what you would have done otherwise. But you will not escape the judgment. You will not escape hell and eternal vengeance and justice forever. You will not obtain victory, not the victory that is set forth here in this text. Never, ever take or touch your own life. Never allow someone else to do it for you. Never step in before God and take things into your own hand in thinking that in that way, yes, you may relieve some suffering here, you may make death come quicker and think it is a relief, but beyond that grave, what a solemn thing, what awaits. I read to you what is in Psalm 73. In Psalm 73, the psalmist was very perplexed because there were those that were going on in this world that had no bands in their death. They had no troubles. Everything seemed to go well in their life, they had everything, whereas God's people were troubled, they were fearful, but these were, the ungodly, were not. You see, God's people, they know they have a soul, they know the worth of a soul, they know what is at stake. But these are those that don't, and don't want to know what is at stake. And so the psalmist, he says in Psalm 73, when I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. How can this be? I've cleansed my heart in vain. I've followed these things in vain. No, until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. And may everyone that thinks nothing of beyond this life, beyond the grave, you read, you think of what is set forth here. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castest them down into destruction, how they are brought into desolation, as in a moment they are utterly consumed with

terrors, as a dream when one awaketh. So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. And you see death as like that veil, and as they take that medicine, as a person passes through death outside of Christ, and they close their eyes to this world, and they open their eyes to that which is to come, then, to read this, are brought into desolation as in a moment, utterly consumed with terrors. What a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God. But what a blessed thing to have this victory. Our Lord Jesus Christ, upon Calvary's tree, shed his precious blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. He laid down his life freely as a freewill offering. He took it again, the empty tomb bearing witness that he had put away the sins that he was bearing. "Thou hast laid on him the iniquity of us all," and laid down his life to take it again, a ransom, a substitutionary offering, like with Abraham, who took Isaac off the altar and put the ram in his place, and received Isaac, as it were, from the dead. The Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary has settled the debt, He has paid justice. Justice now cannot demand two prices. It cannot demand at the Lord Jesus Christ a payment for my sin and then demand at me payment for that same sin. Those for whom Christ died will most surely be saved, will most surely never know eternal death. How do we know that we are those for whom Christ died? We know from the Word of God that he laid down his life for a people chosen in him from eternity. It was love specifically to them that he laid down his life and took it again, and because of that, his sacrifice is effectual for that people. It will not be wasted. It will not be done as if it was paid for the whole of mankind and some avail themselves of it and some not. And this comes in the idea that men are not quite so dead that they can accept of themselves. The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ died for his people. He shall save his people from their sins. The way that they are saved is that the gospel is proclaimed throughout all the world. We do not know who God's people are. He does. And so the Word of God, as we do this morning, is proclaimed to everyone, irrespective of race, of who they are, however wicked they are, whatever their lifestyle is. The Word of God is set before them, the way of escape, is through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through believing in Him, through believing that He is God's only begotten Son, He did come to this world, He did lay down His life, He did pay for our sins and rose again. God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. How is it that God's people are saved?

The Lord said, that none can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. As we speak the word, as we preach the word, though there will be those that are drawn to it, and may each that hear the word this morning, each of you, and each that may hear it later, that you may be drawn to this word, drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ, attracted to this way of victory through his death and suffering, instead of thinking, well, all this about Christ and all this about Calvary, what's that to do with me? Why did he come into the world? This is why the Lord came into the world. Did he come for nothing? Did he suffer for nothing? Was there no purpose, no reason? May it be raised up in our heart, there is a reason. It's to save me, to save my soul. to deliver me from wrath, deliver me from the destruction to come. You know, it's a blessed thing to be drawn to the Lord, to believe in Him, to trust in Him, to see in Him the only hope for sinners. Our Lord said that I, if I be lifted up above the earth, will draw all men unto me. And it will be the people of God that are drawn to Him. drawn to the Lord as that way of escape. If you feel your guilt, your sin, if you feel the terror of death, the fear of death, if you tremble at what is before you, if you tremble at how dead, how cold, how lifeless, how unspiritual, how sinful you are, before you, I set forth the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe on Him and trust in Him, lean on him, rest solely upon him. There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. It is the only name and only way. And it is a way. It is a way. It is given by God, designed by God for sinners, commended to us in the gospel and in the word and in the word of our text. A cause of great thanksgiving, but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Years ago, over in Australia, the deacon at Geelong Chapel, he told me of when his mother died, a believer. And on her deathbed, she was very weak, but she suddenly raised herself up in the bed. And she took hold of the covers and she moved them. She said, victory, victory, victory. And then she laid down and she died. She sung victory with her last breath, as if one foot was one side of the grave and one the other. And she realized she was out of reach of sin, of Satan. She was safely landed, safely brought above. It's always remained with me. What a wonderful thing, on a deathbed, to be able to sing of victory. To be able to have the language of this verse, but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Dear friends, do not turn away from the word of God. from the way of

salvation set before us in it. Many will think, well, you can go up this way, and you can believe this, and you can believe that. You cannot. There is only one way of salvation, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. And one way, that is through believing, through faith in his name, and through repentance, and a life that will reflect a life of following the Lord Jesus Christ. love to Him and His people, obedience to Him and to His ordinances and to His ways. May we have this witness. May we realise the victory and realise it really day by day as we deal with sin in us, as we wrestle with it, as we fight against it, as we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus. And in the Lord Jesus Christ, we realise we have victory. He is in heaven. He is already there. The Apostle says, let us run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.