

It Could Be You

Heb 9:27

Introduction:

1. A preacher was in his office early on a Sunday morning. The phone rang and it was a long distance call from Kansas City telling him that one of his former deacons had died. "As I announced that news that morning to my congregation I said to myself and to the people, 'It could have been you or it could have been me.'"
2. One preacher took a deacon with him to talk to a man about his soul's salvation. Together they went three different times and each time the lost man had some excuse for not talking to the preacher. A few days after the third attempt the preacher received a phone call from the local hospital saying that the man had just died. "It could be you"
3. A man was in the hospital. The doctor came into the room and told the man that he would get out of the hospital in the morning and go home. Sadly, he died that night. "It could be you."
4. A pastor and his wife were starting out on their vacation. At an intersection in Oklahoma their car collided with a semi and they were both killed instantly. "It could be you"
5. Today hundreds of people will die who were strong and healthy yesterday. "It could be you."
6. Our text says...
Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
7. I want to call your attention to four facts this morning with the hope that you will see the certainty of death and the need of preparation through Christ

I. Here is a Great Certainty

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

A. We All Have an Appointment with Death – Ecc 3:1

1 To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die...

1. Adam and Eve were our first parents, but they died
2. Abraham was the father of the Jews, but he died
3. Noah built an ark and saved a race, but he died
4. Daniel survived a night with the lions, but he later died
5. David was a man "after God's own heart" but he died.
6. Solomon was the wisest and richest man in the whole world, but he died
7. John the Baptist was a great man, but he died
8. James and John were great apostles, but they died
9. Methuselah lived 969 years, but he died

B. No Power Can Stay the Hand of Death

1. Medical science cannot save one from death
 - a) *Statistics tell us that 100 out of 100 people die*
 - b) *Medical procedures can bypass clogged arteries*
 - c) *Worn out joints can be replaced*
 - d) *Vaccines have eliminated polio and other diseases*
 - e) *You can take vitamins till you rattle when you walk*
 - f) *You can exercise, run marathons, but you will never be fit enough to avoid death*
2. The time comes when the doctor says, “We have done all we can”
3. Greatness is no match for death for the great die just as the obscure die
4. Wealth cannot stay the hand of death – all the money in the world cannot save when it is time to die
5. Goodness is no match for death – the best men who ever lived must lie down and die

C. Death is Just a Step Behind Us – 1Sam 20:3

3 but truly [as] the LORD liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth, [there is] but a step between me and death.

1. Death robs the wife of her husband
2. Death robs the children of their mother
3. Death steals the class of its teacher
4. Death robs the girl of her true love.
5. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmadge... ←

II. Here is a Great Reality – Heb 9:27

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

- In the book of the Revelation we are told that when Christ mounts the judgment throne people will cry out for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from God and His wrath
- Such a thing will never happen, but if it did, God would upturn every rock and overthrow every mountain and bring them to judgment
- The most solemn thought that can occupy the mind of man is the fact that we must face God some day and give an account of our lives
- The Bible speaks of two judgments...

A. Judgment for Christians - Judgment Seat of Christ

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

1. What is this judgment seat of Christ?
 - a) *This is a judgment for Christians*
 - b) *Not to see if we are saved or lost*
 - c) *Not to see if we are going to heaven or hell*
 - d) *We are saved, so we are going to heaven*
 - e) *It is a judgment of our works*

2. Sometimes the judgment seat is called the bema seat or the bema judgment
 - a) *At the Olympics the judges were located on a platform like our platform here in front of the auditorium*
 - b) *They would watch the athletes to make sure that they did not break any of the rules*
 - c) *When it came time to award the prizes, the athletes stood before the judgment seat (bema) to receive their prizes*
 - d) *Some were disappointed if they had been disqualified for breaking the rules.*
 - e) *Some were very happy to receive a prize for their efforts.*
3. Christians will stand before Jesus so that our works can be judged and we can receive rewards – 1Cor 3:12-15
 - a) *Works done for God's glory will be rewarded*
 - b) *Works done from the wrong motive, or for the wrong reason will be burned up*
 - c) *In 1Cor 3 Paul pictures life as a building*
 - (1) Christ is the foundation stone and we are to build on that foundation
 - (2) If our works are sorry and selfish, then they will be like wood, hay and stubble which is easily burned
 - (3) If our works glorify God then they will be like gold, silver and precious stones that cannot be burned
 - d) *All Christians will enter heaven, but it is a matter of how many rewards we receive that we can place before the Lord someday*

B. Judgment for the Lost – Great White Throne – Rev 20:11 ←

1. Those who never trust Christ as Savior appear at this throne
2. This is not a judgment to decide if they go to heaven or hell
3. They rejected Christ in life so they must go to hell
4. His works will also be judged and the degree of his punishment in hell will be settled
5. Those who were more evil will have greater judgment than others who are lost, but they all will be in hell
6. How sad it would be to heard the final verdict – Matt 25:41
 41 ... Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,
 prepared for the devil and his angels:
7. It will be too late then to trust Christ as Savior
8. Someone says, "I don't believe in a future life!" God says...
9. You can reschedule other appointments, but not this one

III. Here is a Great Necessity – Amos 4:12

12 ... prepare to meet thy God...

A. The World Says...

1. "Live a good life and you'll go to heaven."
2. "Join a church and you'll go to heaven."
3. "Be baptized and you'll go to heaven."
4. "Treat others right and you'll go to heaven"

B. God Says...

1. We must be born again
2. There must be an inner, deep experience with God thru His Son
3. We must genuinely repent of our sins and trust Christ as Savior
Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:
4. This is not just mental assent to some creed
5. Just saying, "I believe!" will not save anyone
6. There must be a spiritual transaction whereby one turns from a life of sin and unbelief to a life of faith and trust.
7. It is the most radical change that can come to any person
8. On Sept 11, 2001, a firefighter rushed into the first tower. He climbed high in the building. He entered a hallway that was filled with smoke so he turned on his flashlight. He yelled as loud as he could, "If anyone can see this light follow it to me because I know a way out of here." To his astonishment voices began calling out to him and he was able to lead six people to safety that morning. Within three minutes of exiting the building, it collapsed and came crashing down. Maybe you are walking in darkness this morning and Jesus is like that firefighter. He is revealing his light to you in a special way and He is saying to you, "Follow me." If you hear Him calling, then come to Christ right now.

IV. Today is Your Only Guarantee

1. Since death is sure and judgment is sure, we need to make prep
2. The time to prepare is now
 - a) *Pr 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*
 - b) *2Co 6:2b ... now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.)*
3. The Bible says that your life is like a little vapor that appears
4. Job said that your life is like a flower that grows and it cut down
5. Life is short and eternity is long so get ready now to meet God
6. A person snuck up on his friend and tapped him on the shoulder startling him. The startled man turned around and said, "What are you doing?" The one who snuck up said, "What if I were death?"
7. Alexander the Great was a conqueror. When he died he left these words on record, "I have given time and thought to everything but death, and that is the most important thing I could have considered."
8. During our time here together, hundreds and hundreds of people died. You could be the next. It could be you.

Conclusion:

1. In Brazil, a missionary discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle. They lived near a large river but they needed medical attention. People in the group were dying every day. A hospital was not very far away, but it was across the river. The Indians would not cross the river because they thought it was inhabited by evil spirits. They said that to enter the water meant certain death. The missionary explained how he had crossed the river many times and was unharmed. They were not impressed. He then took them to the bank of the river and placed his hand into the water. They still wouldn't go in. He walked into the water up to his waist and splashed water on his face. It didn't matter. They were still afraid to enter the river. Finally, the missionary, dove into the river, swam to the other side and emerged safely on the other shore. He had entered the water and escaped. It was then that the Indians broke out into a cheer and followed him across.

That is exactly what Jesus did. He told people of his day that they need not fear the river of death, but they wouldn't believe. He touched a dead boy and brought him back to life. They still didn't believe. He whispered life into the body of a dead girl and got the same result. He let a dead man spend four days in a tomb and then called him out and the people still didn't believe Him. Finally, Jesus entered the river of death and came out on the other side. That is the Easter story. Jesus is the answer to the six foot hole. He has the truth about life and death.

2. Jesus faced death for lost sinners
3. Jesus conquered death – Rev 1:18
18 I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.
4. Treasure every day
Ps 90:12 So teach [us] to number our days, that we may apply [our] hearts unto wisdom.
5. Make the most of every opportunity – Eph 5:16
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Dr. T. DeWitt Talmadge was one of America's greatest preachers. One day he was riding in a carriage with three other men on their way to the cemetery to conduct the funeral of one of their friends. As they rode slowly down the street, they heard a vendor crying out, "Who will be next? Who will be next?" The vendor was saying, "who will be next to buy some fruit?" The pastor, Talmadge, immediately thought "I wonder who will be next to be buried?" He looked at one of the men in the carriage with him going to the funeral and said, "If you were the next one to die, would be ready? Are you a Christian?" The man confessed that he was not a Christian and that he had was not ready to die. Talmadge said, "It would be a sad thing, then, if you were next." The lost man replied, "Look at me, I am in perfect health. I probably will not be the next will I?" The next day a servant came running to Talmadge's door and rang the doorbell. In his hand was a note. "Dr. Talmadge, please come to see my husband. He keeps crying out, 'I am the next, I am the next.' I don't know what he is talking about. Talmadge arrived as quickly as he could, but it was too late, the man had died. "It could be you"

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.