

Dead To The World: Destruction And Dysfunction We Just Won't Miss

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, May 31, 2016

Today's Scripture Focus: Matthew 5:4; Romans 6:11

We are focusing on sin recovery principle number six of 12: "We are now ready for God to give us new characters that reflect that of His Son's."



Most of us hate death! If you scour a Facebook timeline at any given time, you are likely to see the hashtag `#cancersucks`. This is just one example of the hue and cry against the convicted murderer called cancer who has ripped so many families apart. People are fed up and exhausted by death and cancer is one of the chief culprits.

A friend of mine shared that she was sad due to a loss in her family. She talked about wanting to be "strong" for her loved ones by not crying around them, especially not at the funeral. I told her that sadness is natural at these times. God did not create us to be separated from each other through death. Death is an evil with which we must contend now, but will meet its own demise a thousand years after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. At that time, there will be no more death, sorrow, or pain. Sin, the grave, and death will be cast into the lake of fire that will burn with brimstone. But until then, we will mourn when people die, and God will provide comfort in our times of need.

I don't know if you realize this or not, but oftentimes we mourn the loss of things we should be happy are dead. For example, some of you have been locked up in dysfunctional or abusive relationships for years. When that abusive man or sexually unfaithful woman decided he or she just could not stomach being another day in a relationship with you and left, you cried real tears. Despite the fact that your lover demonstrated disrespect for the God who lives in you, and by whom you are called, you were chained in your mind to that relationship. When it died abruptly, you mourned. Dry your tears and rejoice! That sort of relationship does not lead you closer to eternity with God. Good riddance.

Some of you are mourning because you are not as desirable a companion to longtime friends after you received Christ into your life. When they go to the bar, they no longer call you to ask if you want to go. When they go on vacations to enjoy the most opulent casinos in the world, they don't look for you. When they go out to be wined and dined for a night out on the town, you are no longer on speed dial. They go without you. Dry your tears! Do not mourn the death of that aspect of your relationships. Yes, you should want to have their companionship if you miss them. But your new focus is leading them

to experience your newfound relationship with God so they, too, can be delivered from eternal death. Do you see where I am going with this? There are times in our lives that we should welcome death! And before you misunderstand my point, I am not talking about being suicidal, reckless, or having a death wish. I am saying that we should welcome the fact that just as Jesus miraculously died the second death in our stead (that is, eternal separation from God—the penalty for sin), we can die to sin. By faith in Jesus, we can die to sinful desires, addictions, and soul-destroying habits and relationships. If we choose to surrender our lives to Him, to be empowered to do His will, we should rejoice that we can be dead indeed unto sin.

But wait; there's more! We not only have the privilege to revel in our death to sin but also in our life unto righteousness. Just as Jesus miraculously took His life back from the tomb the Sunday immediately following His crucifixion (He said that He would lay down His life, and He would take it back again), He is miraculously giving people all over the world new lives of righteousness. He is releasing people overcome with pride, greed, drunkenness, rage, laziness, and violence from their tombs. They are, we are, dying to sin and being raised to live according to God's plan.

So commemorate the day you chose to allow God to crucify your evil character and be thankful for the opportunity to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. This is a necessary, blessed step on your road to recovery from sin.