



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 48”

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FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 48

John 12:24-26

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

For most people, death is one of the most unpopular subjects that you can discuss. The thought of death either brings us personal dread, if we are in danger of dying, or great sadness, if the death being discussed is the death of someone for whom we have concern. My mother died after having a difficult illness for several years. At the time that Momma died, I had been a minister for almost twenty years and I knew, intellectually, that which the Scripture teaches about physical death. I had been married to Marie for almost thirty years, and I had her for my emotional support. I was probably as intellectually and emotionally prepared for Momma's death as one could be. Still, when I looked at the result of the superb job that the undertaker did to make Momma look as lifelike as possible, I felt something that I still cannot adequately describe. I can only cry, which is our most primal way to communicate sadness and say that I miss Momma. I miss her.

Death is the major focus of the part of the last year of the Christ that we have yet to cover. As this last portion of the Gospels begins, Jesus' disciple Phillip is approached by some Jews from outside of the Palestine that have not had the opportunity to experience the ministry of Jesus Christ that want to talk to Him, in **John 12:20-22**:

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Jesus, however, appears to reject the appeal of these Grecian Jews in the first verse of our text, **John 12:23**:

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Jesus is not ready to talk, but to be glorified. Although the multitudes stood in awe of Jesus when He raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus did not count receiving their accolades as being glorified. Although the crowd laid their coats on the road for Jesus to ride over when He entered Jerusalem and shouted “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” as Jesus approached, Jesus did not count receiving their accolades as being glorified. Even though the religious teachers were impressed by Jesus’ answer to the Sadducees about the resurrection, and complimented Jesus on His answer to them about the greatest commandment in the Law, Jesus did not count receiving their accolades as being glorified.

To be glorified, Jesus must do something that brings Him praise, honor and distinction, not from men, but from God. Jesus defines that which obtaining glory from God really requires, as He watched those who contributed to the treasury, in **Mark 12:41-44**:

Across from the treasury, Jesus sat down and watched how the people were dropping money into the chest. Many rich people put in large amounts. But He looked up and also saw a poor widow putting in two tiny copper coins which amount to less than a cent.

Calling His disciples together, He said to them, “I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all who contributed to the treasury. They all gave to God out of their wealth. But she in her poverty put in everything she had to live on.”

Jesus watched those contributing to the treasury until He saw someone who gave as He planned to give. Jesus did not spotlight her because of the amount that she gave, but because she gave all that she had. Now, God does not command us to give all that we have. In our last lesson, we talked about the laws of the firstborn and the tithe, which fulfill the commandment of God. But, we cannot expect to particularly impress God by fulfilling these laws, because, as Jesus says, in **Luke 17:10**:

10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”

Those putting large amounts in the treasury were only doing their duty, but the widow, like Jesus, was going above and beyond the call of duty by giving her all. Giving your all gets you glory, meaning, praise, honor and distinction, from God. And Jesus is about to give His all, which is why He says, continuing in our text, **John 12:23**:

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Man should be glorified.

Jesus is not going to be glorified by putting any amount, large or small, into the treasury, but, as he says, in **John 12:24-25**:

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Jesus is not going to be glorified by giving money, by healing the sick, by raising the dead, by casting out demons or by cleansing lepers. Those good works only correct the temporary problems of this world. Eventually, the person who receives the money, or is healed, or is raised from the dead, or has a demon cast out of him, or has his leprosy cleansed is going to die. Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, is not here now to testify about Jesus' goodness to him. Thank God that someone decided to make a record of that which Jesus did or we would never have found out about it, because Lazarus, and all of the people that saw him after he was raised back to life from the dead are dead now themselves, and cannot testify as to their knowledge of the goodness of the Lord.

The important fact that we have to learn is that this earth is temporary, everything on this earth is temporary, and everything that we do to fix the conditions on this earth is temporary. Life on earth is a temporary condition.

But Jesus has come to bring us the solution to a much more permanent problem than mundane earthly annoyances. Jesus has come to glorify God by fixing the problem of death for us.

God originally planned that life on earth for people would last much longer than it currently does. As a matter of fact, time is not a factor for God, who does not live in time, but in eternity. God does not even rest, as **Psalms 121:2-4** tells us:

2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Psalmist tells us that God is our ever vigilant helper, one that makes our path secure so that we will not stumble and fall, and one that will not allow anyone to sneak up on us because He is always awake and watching. I heard the Old Preacher say "When I get tired, I go to sleep and do not worry, because God is always awake and watching over me, and there is no point in both of us losing sleep."

Sleep is not an issue for God, and it is certain that death is not an issue for God. As a matter of fact, the earthly death of man was not part of God's original design. When God created the first man, in **Genesis 2:16-17**:

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

In God's original plan, death was not inevitable, but conditional, based upon whether or not the man obeyed God's instructions. Death is still not inevitable, but is simply God's way of punishing us for our sinfulness, as the "A" portion of **Romans 6:23** tells us:

23 For the wages of sin is death.

I know that our death is not inevitable because I know of two men that the Bible records never died. The genealogy of Adam is recorded in the fifth chapter of Genesis, and it tells us that Adam lived 930 years and then died, Adam's son Seth lived 912 years and then died, Seth's son Enosh lived 905 years and then died, Enosh's son Cainin lived 910 years and then died, Cainin's son Mahalalel lived 895 years and then died, Mahalalel's son Jared lived 962 years and then died, but Jared's son Enoch only lived 365 years. **Genesis 5:24** then tells us:

24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

If we want to understand that which happened to Enoch, let us look at the example of the other man that did not die. This man is the prophet Elijah, who served God with Elisha as his apprentice. The sons of the prophets of Jericho warned Elisha that Elijah's earthly life was ending, in **2Kings 2:3-12**:

5 Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

6 Then Elijah said to [Elisha], "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But [Elisha] said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on.

8 Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the [Jordan River]; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9 And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

10 So [Elijah] said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So [Elisha] saw [Elijah] no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.

Elijah did not die, but was physically taken up to heaven by the direct action of God, as was Enoch. How did Enoch and Elijah physically survive the trip to heaven? Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:50**:



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Paul explains that our physical, flesh and blood bodies cannot survive in heaven because they are corruptible, meaning that our bodies decay. Our bodies are prone to deterioration because of the agents of decay and disease that co-inhabit the planet with us. Even while we are healthy, the cells that make up our bodies are constantly dying. The cycle of life is such that new cells are being born to replace the ones that die, and 98% of the atoms in the cells of our bodies are replaced every year. But heaven is a place in which nothing, not even cells, die, which is why those that are there do not decay, or in other words, are incorruptible. Paul says, in **1Corinthians 15:44-49**:

44 There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

47 The first man [the Adam in Genesis] was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man [Jesus Christ] is the Lord from heaven.

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

9 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

The body with which we are born physically is corruptible since its primary component is dust, which is the corruptible material from which the earth is formed; that is why the most necessary food for our bodies is grown in dirt, which is simply compacted dust. Dust and dirt are easily moved around, even by microbes and bacteria. But there is another type of body, not made from dust, but knit together by the Spirit, that is neither subject to decay nor to the injuries of life. If we are still living in these corruptible bodies made of dust when the Lord Jesus Christ calls us with His trumpet, He will instantaneously change our dust bodies into the type of Spirit body that the He Himself has, as Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:51-54**:

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [meaning die], but we shall all be changed—

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Animals also have bodies made of dust as do we, but the feature that differentiates us from the animals is that within our earthen bodies resides the incorruptible Spirit of the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven, Jesus Christ. Now, you may ask, “Why we are not identical to Jesus Christ if we have His Spirit within us?” It is for the same reason that children are not identical to their parents although they are made from their parent’s biological material. Our spirit, which gives us the capacity that we have to make choices, is molded more by our circumstances and by the outcomes of our choices than by our biology. If a child was born into an identical situation as his parents, with the same biological material and then the same experiences, I suppose that theoretically, the child could develop in the exact same that his parents did. However, generally, each child is born into a different set of circumstances. My older brother and I were both born into the same house with the same parents and the same rules and regulations for living at home, but I had an older brother and he did not. We had different experiences and grew up to be very different people, although we were made from the same genetic material and had the same parents to raise us.

But, although our common genetic material and upbringing did not make us identical, it did make us both men. Just as all of us have the physical material to become adults, all of us have the spiritual material to be transformed into incorruptible spirit when the trumpet sounds. Physical death is not inevitable; all we must do to avoid it is to be alive on the day that the Lord Jesus Christ chooses to sound the trumpet. However, since we do not know on what day the Lord will sound the trumpet, it would be wise of us to plan for physical death, as there is no guarantee that He will sound the trumpet while we are alive.

Now, Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:52**, that if we die before the Lord sounds the trumpet, our dead mortal bodies will be raised to incorruptible status and then those that are alive will be changed to incorruptible status. But Paul is writing to the Church, and not to the world at large. Just as the corruptible body is a function of our being descended from Adam, the incorruptible spiritual body is a function of our being associated with the second man, the Lord from Heaven, as **1Corinthians 15:47** tells us. The Lord from Heaven is Jesus Christ, and incorruptible resurrection is reserved for those that are members of His body, the church. **1Corinthians 12:27** informs us:

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

And **Ephesians 5:29-30** explains:

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

God tells us, in **John 3:16-17**:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

In our text, **John 12:23-24**:

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

God so loved us that He sent Jesus to glorify Himself by becoming as a grain of wheat. Jesus is going to die and then be buried, even as wheat that is planted is buried. However, when the grain of wheat is buried, it absorbs the soil and water around it and produces a root, and then absorbs more soil and water to create a stalk, and then portions of the stalk absorb more soil and water to produce more grains of wheat.

Jesus has come to live a sinless life before the multitudes in Israel and then die and be buried. On Resurrection Sunday, Jesus' stalk, His glorified body, will rise from the dead even as the stalk of wheat comes up through the ground. The soil of the influence of Jesus' sinless life, the sight of His glorified body, and the water of the power of the Holy Spirit will first be absorbed by His disciples, the eleven men that walked with Him, who will become the first grains of wheat on His stalk after He rises from the dead. One hundred and twenty people will have been influenced and be in the Upper Room on the first Day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and will absorb the power of the Holy Spirit through the testimony of Jesus' disciples to become grains of wheat that can reproduce; they will go into Jerusalem and begin to preach and plant the Gospel, some in languages that they did not previously understand, but have instantly learned by the power of the Spirit. At the end of the day, three thousand souls will have absorbed the Holy Spirit, and the growth process will have begun in earnest. After a few more days, the Holy Spirit will empower Peter and John to replicate the miracle ministry of Jesus Christ, by healing the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. This demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit will bring even more people close enough to absorb Him, the Holy Spirit, which will create more growth, and the number in the church will increase to five thousand.

The testimony of the life of Christ and the absorption of the Holy Spirit will cause the Church of Jesus Christ to continue to grow through both Jewish and Roman persecution, and will eventually spread the Christian Church throughout the world.

When we individually absorb the Holy Spirit, we become a grain of wheat, even as did Jesus, a member of the Body of Christ, and we develop that which we need to influence others to absorb the Holy Spirit, join into the body, and reproduce in life. Then, if the Lord does not blow the trumpet and we are planted in death, we have the ability to rise, incorruptible, from the dead. The seed of the Spirit is in all of us, but for the seed to grow, we must be planted into the good



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

soil of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and then watered by the power of the Holy Spirit, to produce a crop.

However, before any of this process can continue, it must begin. Jesus is the seed; He is the first cell of the body, and He must die and be buried before He can reproduce. Jesus has committed no sin, and so is not eligible for the penalty of death. However, Jesus lives among plenty of sinners, all of whom are eligible for the penalty of death. So Jesus voluntarily takes on our sin; He pays the penalty of death that we owe for the sins that we have committed. Since Jesus Christ has paid our penalty for us, there is no need for us to pay the penalty; we only have to absorb the seed and drink in His Holy Spirit so that we can reproduce and help others to avoid the penalty, absorb the seed and drink in the Holy Spirit.

This is the purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He has come from heaven to be a seed in the lives of Christians, whom He transforms into seeds in the lives of others. Jesus tells us, in **John 12:25**:

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Until we obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ, become saved from the power and penalty of sin and receive the Holy Spirit so that we can reproduce Jesus' eternal life in others, we will be tempted to consider the things of this life as our leading considerations. But the things of the life are corruptible; whatever you have, you will eventually need another one.

The real purpose of life on this earth is not the acquisition of possessions, which you are either going to replace or to leave for someone else to use and replace, but the real purpose to which we are called by God is to transmit our knowledge about eternal life to through Jesus Christ to others that are not acquainted with Him rather than to transmit our love for the things of the world to them. Jesus tells us, in **John 12:26**:

26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

The things of the world do not bring us glory. Only immature individuals are thing oriented. When you reach the end of your life and look back, you will probably not focus on the things that you possess, but rather the relationships that you have nurtured and been nurtured by. The story is told of a man with a diabetic condition. He had a young son that he and his wife were raising. The boy was the apple of the man's eye, but the man was slowly going blind from the diabetes. By the time that the boy was nine years old, the man had gone blind.

The man could not see, but he committed his life to teaching his son. He could not teach his son a trade, because he couldn't see to do it, but he taught his son about life, about how to live honorably, about how to treat other people, and about the Lord Jesus Christ.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

As the son grew, he developed an interest in baseball, and the father would go to the games with his son and cheer for his son although he could not see the game. As the boy grew he continued to progress, until he was drafted by a major league baseball team after his senior year in high school, and was sent to a minor league team in the area. The first year, the father went on the road with his son, and did his best to keep his son from the negative influences that tempt young men in towns with which they are unfamiliar. At the beginning of the son's second season on the road, the father sat down with his son, and they had a talk about their relationship with the Lord and about the proper way to behave. The man said, "Now, son, I'm going to leave you on your own. You've been a good son, and I want you to keep going to church, keep your nose clean and make your mother and me proud of you. I'm praying for you, and the Lord will be with you."

The son said, "Thanks, Dad, for all your help and guidance. I'll do my best to make you and Mom proud." The father went home. Shortly after his father left, the son was called up to the major leagues, and found himself traveling around the country to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and the other large major league cities. The son was doing fairly well on the team, but spent most of his time on the bench as a utility player. But one day, the son received a call from his mother. "Dad's in the hospital", she said, "and they don't think that he's going to make it."

The son rushed home and sat with his father in the hospital, but after a day or so, his father died.

After the funeral, the son returned to the team, and asked the coach if he could play in the next game. The coach, understanding the motivation that tragedy has for some players, put him in the starting lineup. The son hit a home run in his first at bat, got two more hits in the game, and made several excellent plays in the field.

When the game was over, the coach came up to the son. "You really played a great game today", he said, "I've never seen you hit or field like that."

"Thanks for putting me in, coach", said the son. "Today was the first time that my Dad ever saw me play."

John 12:24-26 tells us:

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

As the father gave his all to his son, Jesus has given His all to us. Let us remember, as we go down from this place, that our real worth to the Lord and to the world is the way is not the corruptible things of this life that we obtain, but the



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

way that give ourselves to influence others to become incorruptible. Jesus gave all that he had to raise a crop of the eleven men in which He planted his incorruptible seed, and because of Him and them, the world has never been the same. Let us also pick out someone to influence, and give all that we have to produce a crop through them.

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