

The Lord Holds Dear The Death Of His Saints

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[0 : 00] Let us join together in the worship of God with the singing of Psalm 73 at verse 23.

Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee. Thou dost me hold by my right hand, and still upholdest me. Thou with thy counsel while I live wilt me conduct and guide, and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide.

Whom have I in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone? And in the earth whom I desire, besides thee there is none. My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.

For of my heart God is the strength and portion forever. For lo, they that are far from thee forever perish shall. Then that a hurting from thee go thou hast destroyed all.

But surely it is good for me that I draw near to God. In God I trust that all thy works I may declare abroad.

[1 : 22] We shall sing these verses of Psalm 73, verses 23 to the end. Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee.

O Lord, I am with thee.

O Lord, I am with thee.

O Lord, I am with thee.

O Lord, I wit thee.

[3 : 09] Shabbat shalom.

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS In God I trust, but all my words I may be with our Lord.

Let us call upon God in prayer. Let us pray. For Lord our God, as we come before you, we pray that you would encourage us in our coming.

That you would reveal thyself to us as our God. And that such a sense of being in the presence of one who would have us before him.

[5 : 56] There were those who had a great fear when they entered into the courts of your house.

And that you would reveal that you would be considered sufficient to bring you just as pleasure.

In the guilt of our first parents. Something that we have added to with our own doings and undoings.

We bless you and thank you that you have not chosen to dismiss you out of your presence. In haste because we deserve that by virtue of the sinfulness of our activities.

We sin against you in thought, in word and in deed. And we pray that you would measurefully overlook our sins.

- [7 : 51] And that we would know that you are the one who has come into our experience. And brought us to yourself.
- Even such as would profess your name. One who raised up the poor. And to have experienced our feet being taken from the filth of this world.
- To be established on a more substantial footing. Even as the psalmist of old confessed it. You have taken us from the mighty clay.
- Set our feet upon the rock. And established our way. We give thanks for all who have that new song in their mouth. And that they magnify your name.
- And we would be constantly numbered amongst them. And that we would be unhesitant. In not only doing that before you but before our fellows.
- [9 : 02] So bless us as a people today. As we wait upon you. May your spirit work amongst us. May we be conscious of the grace that you endow us with.
- That we are unworthy of the least of your mercies. Nevertheless you are able to do for us. Only what God can do.
- You are the only living and true God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We acknowledge you as such and we pray that you would bless us as such.
- And that those who are blessed by you. And that those who are blessed by you. As we confess so often. Are truly blessed. We commit to you the cares and concerns of all who are before you.
- Even this congregation. We pray for each of them. We pray for each of them. And ask that you would do for them what only God alone can do.
- [10 : 03] For those who are unwell. For those who are unwell. We pray for healing. For those who are fearful. And full of trepidation about what the future holds for them.
- Concerning their physical health. We pray that you would minister to them. We pray for those who are concerned for others.
- Within the family circle. We remember them to you. As well as those for whom they are concerned. Whether they are in hospital or at home.
- We give thanks for the care that is given to our loved ones. Within the community. Within hospitals. And those who are elderly.
- In care homes. Appointed. To their care. Strengthen the arms. And the resolve of nurses and doctors. That as they engage in their calling profession.
- [11 : 08] They may know. That they are. In your hands. Just as those that they are caring for. We remember in your presence. Our communities.
- And those who reside within it. Every home and family we bring before you. And ask that you would. Bring a portion. Of spiritual.
- Blessing. To be shared by them. We remember. We remember. Those who govern us at this time. Nationally.
- Or internationally. Pray for the Westminster Parliament. Pray for the Prime Minister. Pray for the Scottish Parliament.
- and the First Minister. It is our duty to pray for them. Notwithstanding. How they appear to men. They are to be called to give account to you at the last.
- [12 : 09] Whether they would answer to you. Or not in their own lives. They will do so. When all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
- Pray for those who are standing for parliamentary elections. May they be governed instinctively by the truth.

That alone sets us free. Whatever they would fear concerning man's opinion. May they consider what God would have them to do. So we remember in your presence.

All that is done. Throughout the world. At this time of pandemic. We pray for those who are gifted. To bring healing. We ask that you would bless the endeavours of those who are seeking.

To cancel the effects of the virus. Those who are seeking. Remedies for it. We give thanks for those who have.

[13 : 22] Been vaccinated. And we pray that that. Program would continue. At pace. Not only in our own country.

But. Elsewhere. We are mindful of nations. Where there are. Hundreds and hundreds. And hundreds upon thousands.

Many of whom have succumbed to the virus. Numbers that we cannot even conceive of. We pray that in the sun darkened world in which we live.

That your marvellous light would radiate. And that. Some would see. The hope that is in Christ. As their hope. Rather than trust in the flesh.

Or the arm of the flesh. Or. The deities that abound. The deities that abound. That will fail them. At the last. That is but one God.

[14 : 21] The living. The only living and true God. And we give thanks that when we come. To God. We come to you. So bless your word to us. As we read it.

And as we wait upon you. To open it out to us. For give her every sin. Blessing. Each and every.

One. We leave in your care and keeping. Pardon us. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. We are going to hear the word of God. From the Old Testament scriptures.

The book of Psalms. And Psalm 116. The book of Psalms. And Psalm 116. I love the Lord.

Because he hath heard my voice. And my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me. Therefore will I call upon him.

[15 : 20] As long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me. And the pains of hell got hold on me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.

O Lord. I beseech thee. Deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord. And righteous. Yea. Our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple.

I was brought low. And he helped me. Return unto thy rest. O my soul. For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death.

Mine eyes from tears. And my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believe therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted.

I said in my haste. All men are liars. What shall I render unto the Lord? For all his benefits toward me. I will take the cup of salvation.

[16 : 23] I will take the cup of salvation. And call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord. Now in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. O Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds.

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. And will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord.

Now in the presence of all his people. In the courts of the Lord's house. In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing. Upon this reading of his word. And to his name be the praise. We can turn to this psalm that we have read.

[17 : 30] Read again verse 15. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. This psalm is described as a psalm of personal gratitude.

So here Bibles may have headings. And the psalm. My Bible has the title. Deliverance from death.

Perhaps it was composed having been given a reprieve from death.

When illness had overtaken the writer. When illness had overtaken the writer. Or perhaps an enemy had encountered him. And he was able to escape from the clutches of that enemy.

And either one of these. And either one of these. He was able to see. The activity of God. And recognize the way that God worked.

[18 : 43] In a different way. To the way that he had experienced it before. In verse 2 we read. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me.

Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. It is as one described it. The breath of prayer. In the new man.

As he remembers. The griefs and. The mercy that is given to him. Now the verse we are looking at.

Today appears almost. Unconnected with. The verses round about it. Yet it is that truth. That gave hope to the psalmist.

And. There is. No truth. That is. Necessary to have before a mind's eye.

[19 : 47] Than this one. We have. Have. The. Inclination to discard it.

Or disregard it. Or place it at Adam's length. The thought of death. Death. And if you discuss it at any length. With any person.

Very often. What they'll say. Don't. Can we not move away from this morbid subject. It's not something. That. Any person. Takes delight in discussing.

For any length of time. And. I wonder if that is true of you. How much time. Do you give. To the thought. Of death. And dying.

Not just. What it involves. In the physical aspect. Of it. Or even. The mental. Elements. That are involved in it.

[20 : 45] But what will lie beyond it. There's a solemn subject. Well worth. Your attention. It doesn't matter who you are.

You may think that if you're young. You may think that you have. The world as your oyster. You have time. A plenty. To think of these things.

To make plans. For these things. But there are other plans. That you wish. To put before. Any thought. Being given. To.

The cessation. Of life. Here in this world. Maybe it's something you. You think the middle age. Should begin to. Plan for. And the elderly.

In particular. The writer. In the book of Ecclesiastes. Says. A good name is better.

[21 : 43] Than precious ointment. Than the day of death. Than the day of one's. Birth. Similarly Job. Says.

Man that is born of woman. Is of few days. And full of trouble. He cometh forth. Like a flower. And is cut down.

He fleeth as a shadow. And continueth not. In a sense. These words. Speak more of life. Than they do. Of death. But.

The words. Are often. A reminder to us. That. Life. Life. Which many think. Is for living. And that's. The great adage. That they would. They would use. But others. They have reckoned. That. That. The days.

[22 : 42] And the life. That is lived. Is all too short. And all too few. The words. Of the psalmist. Often bring. To our attention. The reality. Of what the future. Holds for all of us. Without exception. Well the first thing.

That we can. Consider here is. That these words. Of the psalmist. Reminds us. Of the privileged position. Of the child of God.

The person who knows God. As their God. It speaks of. Divine protection. For those. Who are his saints.

His holy ones. Separated for his service. In life and in death. Somebody has once said.

[23 : 41] Of the saints. And whoever they are. It doesn't matter. What time. They are in the world. Not one of them. Will die. Prematurely. It is said. They shall be immortal.

Until their work is done. And not one. Will leave. Anything undone. That God. Has committed. To them. They are his in time.

Time. And. They will do. All to his glory. As they will be his. In eternity. They are precious to him.

The psalmist says. Because. He has paid a price. For them. He knows. Who are his. He calls his own sheep.

By name. They are his jewels. They are the apple of his eye. For that reason. They will not stumble. Into death.

[24 : 41] And is that. How you consider. Your own. Particular. Journey. Today. Are you confident. Are you afraid. That death will. Find you. Unprepared. More than once. I have witnessed. Someone being. Taken by surprise. When a moment of weakness. Took them. Which they feared was. A harbinger of the end.

And they were certainly. Not prepared for it. There is a story told. Of a Welsh miner. He was on his way to. Night shift.

And as he went. On his way. He passed. The chapel door. And he heard. The singing. Of the hymns. Which grabbed his attention.

[25 : 45] And. The words. That he heard. Gripped his heart. And when he returned home. He told his wife. That he would attend.

Chapel. At the earliest opportunity. But. Unfortunately. Unfortunately. For him. That opportunity. Never came.

Before. He was able to. Fulfill that promise. Whether he would have or not. There was a. Collapse. In the mine.

Or an explosion. And he was one of the ones. Who lost his life. It may be. That God spared him. There is.

The possibility. There. That that could have been done. But that cannot be trusted in. That cannot be. Something that we depend upon.

[26 : 45] And there was no comfort in that. For the grieving family. Who had lost a husband. And a wife. Perhaps. He himself.

Had little comfort. To face death with. How often. Do we think of that. Are we ready. At a moment's notice.

Do you not think of. Of death. And some people. Even Christians. Have that thought. Pressing upon them. The fear of death.

Is worse than the pain of death. And because. Fear kills often. Whereas death can do it. Only once. Someone said. Is that not the case.

How many fears. Do we have. Even. Concerning other things. And they're with us. And they. They go away. And they come again. Just like the tide. Comes to the shore.

[27 : 45] But death. Can only do it once. The Puritan. Thomas Fuller. Wrote.

Lord be pleased. To shake. My clay cottage. Before you throw it down. Make a tofter a while. Before it tumbles.

Let me be summoned. Before I am surprised. The reason for that. Was that he wanted. To be ready.

And the scripture. Reminds us of the. Wisdom of that. Be ye also ready. For in such an hour. As you know not. The son of man will come.

Yes that speaks of the. Second coming of the Lord. But. There is a sense in which. He may come for his. People.

[28 : 43] In an hour. When they know not. He may come for those. Who are not his people. And bring them to the dust. The verse before us.

Also speaks about. Watching over his own. As they approach death. And go through death. There are always.

Remarkable. Illustrations. Of the fearlessness. Of the saints. The martyrs. Who were facing death. Did so.

With the certainty. That whatever the pains. They had to endure. Before they entered into it. What lay beyond that.

Was something that. Was far better. Another. We can't understand that. In a measure. We can't appreciate. The grace that was involved.

[29 : 42] To encourage such. When they. Were torn. Sometimes. Limb from limb. If you read. The brutality. Of Nero.

Who sent. Countless. Christians. To the lions. To face death. There. And. They did so fearlessly. Others. Who were. Tied to the stake.

And. And. Burnt there. We read of some that. Had suffered. Excruciating pains. Because.

The wood that was used to. To. Put them to death. Was damp. And. Rather than the flames. Swallow them up.

Hastily. They were left. To burn. Painfully. And. Yet. These people. With God's help. Face death. Because.

[30 : 38] They knew. What was. What was. Awaiting them. And they. They despised. The experience.

When they compared. To the experience. Of their Lord. And their Saviour. Perhaps the words of. Of the apostle. Who were on their lips.

O death. Where is thy sting. O grave. Where is thy victory. They. Believed that. With all their heart. Augustine the Saint.

Speaking about. The words of Exodus. 33. You can't see. My face and live. The Lord God said. But he says.

Then Lord. Let me die. That I may see. Your face. It was. Something that he rather. More wanted.

- [31 : 40] Than life itself. Why is that so? Well that's the final thing. That I would like. Just to say a brief word about. That for the believer.
- There is something in death. That is not in death. For the unbeliever. Somebody has summarized it in this way.
- They change their place here in this world. In this world. They have their habitation. For long or for short. It doesn't matter.
- This is where. They are to spend their days. Until such time. As they are removed from this world. And when their.
- Time comes. The body and the soul. Separate. And the body. Is laying in the dust. And the soul goes to God. Who gave it.
- [32 : 39] God. They have a new place. They shall change. In their. In their. Locus. Just as a change. Occurs.
- In their. In their. Experience. They have a change of company. Here in this world. They must endure. Mixed company.
- God has mercyfully. Provided for the saints. With. With fellow saints. At times anyway. Brothers and sisters. In the Lord. Who share. With them.
- In their journey. Through this world. Lessening the load. That they must carry. Being able to. Commune with them. And to. To share with them.
- Their woes. And their joys. With them. And their. And their. And their. And their company. Will be changed. Where they will. Be with. An undivided.
- [33 : 36] Host. Not just. The host of heavens. The angels. They will be. In company with them. In a. Visible sense.
- In a. Sensible sense. But the glorified saints. Will be there. Some that they. Knew in the world. Some that they may have heard of.
- It's a. It's a good. Good. Thing to think about. That some people. Are convinced. That. When they get to heaven. All they will be.
- Engaging. Is to. To gaze upon. The beauty of Christ. And to. Think about. And to. Commune with Christ. The exclusion of all others.
- But Christ did not. Save. Individuals. He saved his church. And the church. Is made up. Of individuals. No doubt.
- [34 : 34] And the body of believers. Will be collectively. Engaged in that activity. Where they will worship him. Their employment. Will be different.
- Their enjoyment. Of that. Will be different. There will be no. Distractions. And there will be no. Lessening. Of the pleasures. Even the best of times.
- That we have in this world. Such as the. Tis. And we do have good times. We've enjoyed. Many privileges. Under the word of God. We have.
- Been lifted up. Perhaps. In the company of God's people. People. But. Too often. We've seen these things. And enjoyed these things.
- As passing experiences. The day. The day will come though. When there will be no more tears. No more.
- [35 : 31] See. When the race will be run. When the prize is attained. When the likeness. Is complete. When they are perfectly. Holy. Sanctified.
- And the conclusion. Of that. Is them being. Ever with the Lord. God. And no wonder. With a clear view.

Of such. That some. Embrace it. With longing. When you think of death. What do you think about.

Are these your thoughts. Or are you thinking. Thinking of it as something. You want to distance yourself from. For as long.

As possible. Because your Lord. And he is Lord of all. Will be your judge. And he will be your accuser.

[36 : 27] And he will not say to you. Peace. Peace. And he will not give to you. A blessed release. And he will not give to you.

The rest. That the grave is held out to offer. For those who have a disturbed life. Here in this world. So often you hear that. Said of those who have died.

That they are at peace. The Lord says different. If they are not is. There is no peace. No rest for the wicked. May God give you the grace.

To look to himself. To ensure that. When you look at these words. You wonder. With. With. A scrutiny.

Of your heart. And mind. Whether you are one. Of the saints. Of God. Whose death is precious. May God in his grace.

[37 : 27] Encourage us to think of these things. And to think of them seriously. Let us pray. Lord God in heaven. We give thanks. That your word reminds us.

Of many things. Concerning. Our life here. In this world. Those who are your people. Will die well. Because they know what.

You have. Laid up in store for them. But there are others. Who cannot have that. Confidence. There is no escape. For any one of us. At any time.

This is before us. Until. We enter into the experience. For ourselves. Of us. Mercy fully undertake. For us we pray. Watch over us. And keep us.

Until the time. We keep our appointment. Cleanse from sin. And now may grace. Mercy and peace. From God the Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now.

[38 : 24] And always. Amen.