

# Safety in Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hear this, all peoples, give ear all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak wisdom, the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

I will incline my ear to a proverb, I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre. Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me?

Those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches, truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life.

For the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit. For he sees that even the wise die, the fool and the stupid alike must perish, and leave their wealth to others.

Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations. Though they called lands by their own names, man in his pomp will not remain.

[ 1 : 12 ] He is like the beast that perish. This is the path of those who have foolish confidence. Yet after them, people approve of their boasts.

Like sheep, they are appointed for shale. Death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in shale, with no place to dwell.

But God will ransom my soul from the power of shale, for he will receive me. Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases.

For when he dies, he will carry away nothing. His glory will not go down after him. For though while he lives, he counts himself blessed. And though you get praise when you do well for yourself, his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light.

Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 32 ] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him as father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for your sake. Who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

[ 3 : 55 ] Manor Musa I, John D. Rockefeller, William the Conqueror, and Henry Ford.

What do these people have in common? Well, they're four of the 25 wealthiest people of all time. Manor Musa I, I'd never heard of him either. But Manor Musa I ruled the Malian Empire 700 years ago, and had a \$400 billion fortune.

He's the wealthiest person ever. John D. Rockefeller's \$340 billion fortune makes him the wealthiest American ever.

And William the Conqueror earned his \$229 billion by invading and conquering countries, including our own country, England, in 1066.

[ 5 : 02 ] Henry Ford made a more modest \$199 billion by offering to build motorcars in any colour you wanted, as long as they were black.

\$199 billion. If you stick that in a bank account, even with three quarters, a paltry three quarters of a percent interest, and our highest rate income tax, that'll generate about a million dollars a day. It's an awful lot of money. What do these people have in common? They're four of the 25 wealthiest people of all time.

What do these people really have in common? They're dead. They're all dead.

They couldn't take their wealth with them, and their wealth wasn't enough to bring them back to life. They're all dead. Very dead. Point one.

[ 6 : 08 ] Everyone pay attention. Today, we're looking at Psalm 49. It's a psalm that reminds us we can't escape death. We will all die.

It's a psalm for everyone. If you're a Christian, if you're not a Christian, if you're rich, if you're poor, if you're healthy or sick, if you live in Hernhill or Tulshill, this psalm is for you.

It's for everyone. Look at verses 1 and 2. Hear this, all peoples. Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together.

It's for everyone. It was written about 2,500 years ago, but it was written for everyone. It's as relevant today as it was back then.

Whether it's 500 years BC or 2,500 years AD, you're going to die. So this psalm is for you.

[ 7 : 12 ] And you need to pay attention. The psalmist is wise and understands. Verse 3. My mouth shall speak wisdom.

The meditation of my heart shall be understanding. Wisdom and understanding. And he works out proverbs and riddles whilst chilling out and playing on his harp.

Verse 4. I will incline my ear to a proverb. I will solve my riddles to the music of the lyre. This guy is someone we have to listen to.

He's written something here for all of us. Something that we must read and take heed. Point 2. Everyone will die.

Whether you're Christian or not, it's easy to feel a little jealous when someone else is doing better than you. Especially when they boast about it. Maybe they have a better car.

[ 8 : 11 ] Or a better job. Or their children go to a better school. Maybe they're fit and healthy. Maybe they don't have a pile of bills on the kitchen table.

The message in the psalm is for everyone. But the psalmist is targeting God's faithful people. The people who are trusting in God's promises.

They're finding it hard to remain faithful when those around them who don't trust in God seem to be doing so well and they're not. He writes in the latter part of verse 5 and verse 6, The iniquity of those who cheat surrounds me.

Those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches. He's surrounded by wickedness, cheating and boasting.

But he isn't worried. Verse 5, Why should I fear in times of trouble? And he isn't afraid. Verse 16, Be not afraid when a man becomes rich when the glory of his house increases.

[ 9 : 22 ] The psalmist isn't afraid. He isn't worried. Why not? Because he knows that these wicked cheaters and boasters will die.

And the psalmist reminds us time and time again that these people will die. We'll all die. Verse 10, Even the wise die.

The fool and the stupid alike must perish. Verse 11, Their graves are their homes forever. Verse 14, Death shall be their shepherd.

And verses 12 and 20, Man in his pomp will not remain. He is like the beasts that perish. Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish.

Death is a great leveller. Both the wise and the foolish die. And those with impressive homes will end up like everyone, with graves as their homes forever.

[ 10 : 26 ] And impressiveness, magnificence and pomp won't stop anyone dying just like the animals. Yet when those people get that car and that job and bills aren't a problem, they probably feel good about themselves and probably relish in the admiration and praise they get from others.

But they will still die. Verses 18 and 19, For though while he lives he counts himself blessed, and though you get praise when you do well for yourself, his soul will go to the generation of his fathers who will never again see light.

They will still die. They count themselves blessed and get praise when they do well for themselves, but they will still die. And the psalmist knows this because God's punishment for our rebellion against God for our disobedience, and because we ignore God, is death.

God's punishment is death. We can read that right back in Genesis 3, verse 19. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.

For out of it you were taken, for you were dust, and to dust you shall return. Adam and Eve rebelled, ignored, and disobeyed God, and they and us were given the ultimate punishment, death.

[12:01] Death is inevitable. The office for national statistics puts UK life expectancy at 79.4 years for men and 83.1 years for women.

The oldest person ever was a lady called Jean-Louis Calment, and she lived until she was 122 years old, and then she died.

Maybe it was the chocolate that made her live so long she ate a kilogram of chocolate every week. Or maybe it was the cigarettes.

She loved them. Started smoking when she was age 21, and didn't finish until she was 117. But she still died. The psalmist isn't afraid, and he isn't worried, because he knows that these wicked cheaters and boasters will die.

And the next point, you can't take it with you. The psalmist isn't afraid, and he isn't worried, because he knows that these wicked cheaters and boasters will die, and they can't take their wealth with them.

[13:12] Verse 10, for he sees that even the wise die, the fool and the stupid alike, must perish, and leave their wealth to others. And verses 16 and 17, Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases, for when he dies, he will carry nothing away.

His glory will not go down with him. It doesn't matter what we build up in this life, whether it's a pot of money, or it's possessions, or it's qualifications and titles.

When we die, we can't take it with us. When my family flies somewhere for a holiday, I'm almost amazed at what we try to squeeze into our baggage.

And despite a bag weight limit, and a bag size limit, and a bag count limit, we always try to stuff as much as we can in. And I'm always saying, we can't take it with us.

Some people get very creative when they're trying to take things with them.

[14:22] And in 2002, a lady flew from Dubai to Manchester with a chameleon on her head. She was trying to smuggle her pet back to the UK, wearing it as a hat, and was only stopped by security in Manchester when somebody spotted her hat sticking its tongue out.

Another lady tried to get through security with 75 live snakes in her bra. And although it was only a prop, a prop for a live action role playing game, someone packed a homemade replica suicide vest into their luggage.

It was certainly a good test for airport security. And airport security stops us taking a lot of things. But death stops us taking anything.

There's a baggage limit to death, and it's zero. Point three. The untrusting go to hell, and the trusting go to heaven.

The psalmist isn't afraid, and he isn't worried, because he knows that these wicked cheaters and boasters will die, that they can't take their wealth with them, and that they'll go to hell.

[15:48] Those who don't trust in God will go to hell. Look at verse 14. Like sheep, they are appointed for Sheol.

Death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell. The wicked cheaters and boasters will die, and their destination will be Sheol.

Well, what's Sheol? Well, Sheol was the name given to a dark place under the earth where people went when they died, a subterranean underworld where the souls of the dead went after their body died.

And in the corner of Sheol was the pit, the place where bad people went. Look at verses 7 to 9.

Truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit.

[ 16 : 55 ] The wicked cheaters and boasters are going to the pit in Sheol, the place for bad people, hell. Their destination will be hell.

And look at verse 17. For when he dies, he will carry nothing away. His glory will not go down after him. The wicked cheaters and boasters are going down.

They're going down to the pit in Sheol, the place for bad people, hell. If we look at our own lives, and we're honest, so often we ignore God and try to run our own lives without him.

And when we do that, when we ignore God, we're in with those wicked cheaters and boasters. We are bad people. So when we die, we deserve to go to the pit in Sheol too.

There isn't anyone amongst us who doesn't deserve to go to hell. And the next point, the ransom.

The only way we can avoid going to hell is for someone to pay a ransom for our freedom.

[ 18 : 08 ] But look at what the psalmist says about that. Verses 7 to 9. Truly, truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life.

For the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit. No amount of wealth can bring someone back to life.

No amount of wealth, any kind of wealth, whether it's money or possessions or titles or commendations for good deeds or just good deeds, no amount of wealth can get someone out of dying and going to hell, going into the pit.

So we're stuffed. We're going to die and we're going to hell. No earthly ransom will be big enough to free us from death and hell.

In 1974, some very wealthy Argentine grain traders were kidnapped by a terrorist group. The terrorists released them once they'd received a \$293 million ransom, the largest ransom ever paid.

[ 19 : 28 ] But even \$293 million won't get us out of dying and going to hell. And Mansur Musa I's \$400 billion won't get us out of dying and going to hell either.

We're stuffed. We're going to die and we're going to hell. Or are we? The psalmist isn't afraid and he isn't worried because he knows that the wicked cheaters and boasters will die, that they can't take their wealth with them, that they'll go to hell and he, the psalmist, will go to heaven.

Verse 15, but God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol for he will receive me. How can he be so confident?

Because he trusts in God's promises. The psalmist trusted God because he'd heard about and maybe even seen, witnessed the power of God.

God's power punishing those who don't trust him and God's power helping those who do trust him.

God's punishments, plagues, deaths in battle and impenetrable city walls falling.

[ 20 : 41 ] God's help, seas parting, food dropped from heaven. People kept safe in impossible situations and the promise of a promised land. The psalmist trusted God because he knew how God treated the untrusting and how God treated the trusting.

Two and a half thousand years ago the psalmist wrote the psalm to encourage his people to continue trusting in God. Knowing that the untrusting who were doing so well would end up in hell with nothing and knowing that continuing to trust in God would get them into heaven.

Well, we're two and a half thousand years on. What does trusting in God's promises mean for us today and how can the ransom be paid? Well, we continue to be disobedient to ignore God.

We try to run our own lives without him and God's punishment for this disobedience which is what it is, disobedience, God's punishment is death. And God sent his son Jesus down to earth so that we could get to know God and in his grace God gave the punishment we deserve which is a punishment we deserve every day of our lives.

God gave that punishment we deserve to his son Jesus. Jesus was crucified and died and that's the punishment we deserve every day of our lives.

[ 22 : 11 ] We all deserve that terrible, terrible death. God then raised Jesus from the dead showing that he has power over death and can give eternal life.

The ransom for our freedom from hell was the death of God's son. That was the ultimate ransom for our freedom. 400 billion dollars doesn't even get close.

Peter, an apostle, an authoritative messenger for Jesus writes in 1 Peter 1 verses 18 to 19 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers not with the perishable things such as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Jesus who lived a life of complete obedience to God was killed as the ransom to save us. So for us today to be trusting we have to put our trust in Jesus.

We have to recognise that he was the ransom for our freedom. He paid the price for our continued rebellion against God and we have to recognise that his resurrection shows we can have eternal life.

[ 23 : 33 ] trusting is putting our trust in Jesus. John chapter 3 verse 18 whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

Believe in Jesus the son of God and you have eternal life. don't believe in Jesus the son of God and you have death and God's anger on you forever.

So to finish the psalmist isn't afraid and he isn't worried because he knows that the wicked cheaters and boasters will die that they can't take their wealth with them that they'll go to hell and he the psalmist will go to heaven.

If we put our trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus we shouldn't be afraid of death either because we will go to heaven and we shouldn't be worried about those who are doing well in life but aren't trusting in Jesus because they'll get what they deserve and they won't go to heaven.

If you're here today and you're a Christian live your life remembering every day that Jesus died for you and rose again and you will die and go to heaven.

[ 24 : 58 ] Remember also that your friends who are not Christians will die and won't go to heaven. So tell them about Jesus. Remember that this psalm is for everyone.

If you're here today and you're not a Christian think about where your priorities lie. Think about the consequences of ignoring God.

Think about what's going to happen when your time in this world is over. You can't take anything with you. There's a baggage limit to death and it's zero.

So please talk to us about Jesus. Remember we will all die. Those who trust in Jesus go to heaven and those who don't don't.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father thank you for paying the ransom for us to have eternal life in heaven.

[ 26 : 03 ] help us to live our lives remembering every day that Jesus died for us and rose again.

And give us the courage to go out and talk to our friends who are living their lives trusting in themselves and not in Jesus.

Amen. Amen. And that's it. ■■■■■■■■ to not have the unprecedented thought