

Death by Living

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! 10 to 8, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth. And if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will be.

He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the way the Spirit comes to the bones of the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

[1 : 24] Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all.

But let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

Remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near, of which you will say, I have no pleasure in them.

Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain. In the day when the keepers of the house tremble and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, and the doors on the street are shut.

[2 : 47] When the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low, they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way.

The almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about in the streets, before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was.

And the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the preacher. All is vanity.

May God bless the hearing, preaching of his word. Like so many young men born in the 80s, I cut my teeth on the movie Braveheart.

The movie tells the story of a time in Scotland when King Edward of England, Longshanks, his nickname, had invaded and conquered their land. A time when the people of Scotland were subjected to all sorts of abuses at the hands of English soldiers.

[4 : 24] But William Wallace, played by Mel Gibson, became fed up. The English killed both of his parents, and when they come for his wife and kill her too, he can't take it anymore.

He fights back. He leads his clan to fight for their lives, for their country, and for their freedom. He succeeds. Hundreds of Scots join the cause and fight alongside William Wallace.

In one memorable scene, William Wallace and the growing crowd of Scots join to fight at Stirling Bridge. The English march up in all their pomp with swords and shields and many, many soldiers.

And this ragtag band of Scottish fighters began to turn back. Who's going to fight against that army? But at just the right moment, William Wallace cuts through the crowd with his men.

He's ready to fight with Scottish blue war paint on his face and indignant with the men walking away. Wish I had a Scottish accent for this.

[5 : 32] He says, Sons of Scotland, I am William Wallace. I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men and free men you are.

What would you do without freedom? Will you fight? One soldier says, Fight against that? No, we will run and we will live.

He says, Ah, fight and you may die. Run and you'll live at least for a while. And dying in your beds many years from now. Would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that one for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take away our freedom.

And all the people started shouting and going nuts. A few moments later, Wallace rides up to several of his men that rode in with him. One of his Irish friends says, Fine speech.

But obviously looking at the army before him, said, Now what do we do? He said, Just be yourselves. Then he turned to ride off.

[6 : 50] He said, Where are you going? I'm going to pick a fight, William Wallace said. His Scottish friend immediately joined in. Well, we didn't get dressed up for nothing. And rides into the fight.

This morning, we come to the end of Solomon's teaching in this wonderful book. It's not quite the end of the book, but it's the end of the core of what he has to say.

It's the core of his message. It's the end of it here. Solomon has warned us that everything is crooked now. Money, success, and approval do not satisfy. Friends fail.

Accidents happen. Tragedy strikes. Godliness does not always make things better. And wisdom doesn't answer all the questions. But again and again, Solomon's been saying, There are still good things.

Life is still worth living. And in this final passage, much like William Wallace, the preacher makes his most provoking point. He says, Essentially, What will you do with your freedom?

[7 : 54] What will you do with your life? Will you live? With all the risk, will you put it on the line? Will you love and serve and share and give?

Or will you run? Will you play it safe? Will you withdraw to protect your heart and protect your life? Will you spend your life trying not to die?

In so many ways is what he has to say. And the main point where we're going, Don't spend your life trying not to die. Spend your life living for Christ with all your might.

Don't spend your life trying not to die. Spend your life living for Christ with all your might. We're going to break this out in three points. The first one is spend life.

Expend it. Throw it out on the table. Dish it out. Use it up. Lay it down. Spend your life. That's what he's coming to say. But before Solomon tells us why we must spend our life, he warns us of the tendency to not spend it.

[9 : 02] Look in verse 3. He says, If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth. And if a tree falls to the south or the north in the place where the tree falls, there it will die.

He's using pictures, but he's saying certain things in life are inevitable. If the clouds are full of rain, you know, crowds fill with rain because storms are inevitable.

And so you see the clouds gather. You know the storm is about to fall. So he says life is filled with many inevitable things. There's a rhythm, Solomon said in chapter 3, of inevitable things in this life.

Sowing and reaping, weeping and laughing, war and peace, birth and death. There's a rhythm of inevitable things. And so don't be surprised.

And he continued, If a tree falls to the south or the north in the place where the tree falls, there it will be. So there's inevitable things in life. There's also unpredictable things.

[10 : 02] When the storm comes upon a tree that's about to fall, you don't know where it's going to land. What Solomon has said and what we've heard again and again, that life is filled with uncertainties.

With things unpredictable. Life is filled with side turns and sideways movements. So too, life is shot through these things.

Look in verse 5, he says, And you don't know the Spirit when it comes on the bones of a woman with child. So you don't know the work of God who makes everything. So some things are inevitable and unpredictable.

Some things are beyond our knowledge. Who knows how a baby comes to life? Obviously the Lord.

But we haven't scratched any depth on that miracle. Who knows why things happen the way they do in this world? Who knows how the world is crooked? What I'm trying to say, what he's trying to say, There's so much you don't know.

[11 : 09] Three times in these first six verses, verse 2 and 5 and 6, He says, You don't know. You don't know. You don't know. We don't know much about life.

And when we don't know much about what's ahead, We tend to hold back. When confronted with so many things we don't know, As we have been throughout this series, The tendency is to hold back.

The tendency is to withdraw. To stop working. To wait for the right time. Look at verse 4. He says, So the storm's going on. You see the trees and the rain. He who observes the wind will not sow.

He who regards the clouds will not reap. The tendency is to spend all our time watching the clouds. Now is not the right time to sow.

If I sow now, the storm comes and blows all of my seed all over the place. Nothing will bear fruit. So Solomon says, He warns. He who watches or observes the wind will not sow.

[12 : 15] Now you might say, That's not true. He's just trying to be cautious. He's going to sow. He's going to sow when it's the right time. He's bound to sow. He's someone watching the wind.

But Solomon is saying, The one who waits for the right time to sow will never sow, Because it will never be the perfectly right time. Not under this heaven. You'll never know enough about the market to know when to invest.

You'll never know enough about the future to know when you won't get hurt again. You'll never know enough about the community group for when to be honest. Richard Belcher says, The right time to act always remains uncertain from the human standpoint.

That's what he's getting at. The right time to act. The right time to sow. The right time to go out into the field. There's a tendency towards a paralysis of analysis.

One of my friends, he had a 65% rule. He said, You know, once you get to 65%, You should just make a decision. Because there's always this paralysis.

[13 : 16] When do I get to 90% or 95%? You don't need to be there. Just 65% and roll with it and go out. And I thought it's such a helpful rule to protect you from the paralysis of analysis.

Because he who observes the wind and only observes, never casting his lot, will not sow. He who watches the wind won't reap. You have to sow to reap.

And so he's saying, failing to take the step of sowing means we'll never have the joy of reaping. So what do we do? Look in verse 6, he says, In the morning sow your seed.

At evening withhold not your hand. For you do not know which will prosper, this or that, and whether both alike will be good.

What he's saying is, even though labor does not always profit, even though the righteous sometimes suffer, even though the wicked sometimes prosper, even though the battle does not always go to the strong, even though riches do not always flow to the intelligent, even though time and chance happen to all under the sun, sow your seed.

[14 : 31] Sow it in the morning, when you would think you'd sow. Sow it in the evening too, because you don't know what seed. Sow it in season, out of season, always sowing your seed.

You don't know what is going to prosper. The preacher is calling us to a buoyancy of spirit. You know, the preacher is calling us to a spirit that refuses to sink underneath life's uncertainty, that keeps rising up like a buoy.

So that's what buoyancy means. A buoyancy of spirit that refuses to give in. What's a seed? The preacher hasn't been talking about farming.

A seed is a new beginning. A new plant. A new tree. A new harvest.

A new life. You don't know what will happen with what you sow, but you know what will happen with what you do not sow.

[15 : 32] Nothing. Nothing. In a book about Midwest pioneers, one author captures this buoyancy of spirit among Midwest farmers.

It's a fiction book, but it captures this point so well. He said, with what zest, talking about a farmer, he broke the tough fibered prairie sod, which had never been broken since the beginning of time.

And with what reverence, he held out the beautiful seed, which he was to sow on the ground. The plump kernels appeared to glow with some inner golden light as the warm rays of sun struck full across them.

They seemed to be squirming in the hand that grasped them as they were charged with a life, suddenly aroused from slumber that was seeking to release there.

That's what a seed is. A little life. A little kernel bursting with life. What Solomon is saying, sow your seed. He's saying, your life is not over.

[16 : 39] There's seed in your hand. And as long as there's seed in your hand, you must not sink under life's uncertainties. Your life still matters. Right now, still matters.

You still have the attention of the Lord of the universe. Indy Wilson says this very well in his book, Death by Living. He says, clear your throat and open your eyes. You are on stage.

The lights are on. It's only natural if you're sweating because this isn't make-believe. This theater is for keeps. Yes, it's a massive stage and there's millions of others on stage around you.

Yes, you can try to shake the fright by blending in, but it won't work. You have the creator God's full attention, as much attention as he gave, ever gave Napoleon or Churchill or even Moses, or billions of others who lived and died unknown, or a grain of sand, or one spike of one snowflake.

You are spoken. You are seen. It is your turn to participate in creation. Like a kindergartner shoved out from behind the curtain during his first play, you might not know which scene you're in or what comes next.

[17 : 52] That's the way life feels, isn't it? Might not know which scene you're in, what comes next, but God is far less patronizing than we are. You are his art. He has no trouble stooping.

You can even ask for lines. So the preacher's calling us to a buoyancy of spirit, a belief that this life, with all its crookedness and all its certainties, is worth living and throwing our lives into it.

So sow your seed now. There's no time to hang up the spurs. You're stamped to the Lord's image. You have the Creator's full attention.

You're the only you the world will ever see. So go on the date. Have the hard conversation. Book an adventure. Build a zip line. Jump in the water.

Start the business. Make a million dollars. Give it all away. Commit to the community. Date your spouse. Read a book to your kids. Adopt a child. Learn a language. Give your heart away again and again and again.

[18 : 57] What are you saying? You must not retreat. You have seed you must sow. You have life you must spend. Create. Don't destroy. So much of what's going on in our culture, just people sitting on the sidelines, criticizing people that are trying to build something.

Build something. Don't criticize. Sow your seed. And don't just sow your seed for yourself. Sow it for others. I love the way he says, look in verse 1.

He says, Cast your bread upon the water. You'll find it after many days. Give a portion to seven or eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on the earth. Cast your, literally send out your bread.

Bread, as we know, is the staff of life. Vital for life. But it must not be kept for ourselves. That's what he's saying. Cast it on the water. Give it away.

Don't you remember the story of the rich fool? Your money's not safe in a barn. Your money's safe in the hands of others where moth and rust and thieves can't take it and destroy it.

[19 : 57] Give a portion. You remember again and again he said, this is your portion in life. Eat and drink and be merry. Well, here's a portion that to be given away. We have a portion. We have a lot. We have a hand we've been dealt.

It's not meant to be for ourselves. Give our, spend your life. Throw it on the water. Throw it into somebody's hand.

Point two, enjoy life. Enjoy life. The second thing Solomon tells us is to enjoy life. Look at verse seven.

He says, light is sweet. It's pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. Light. Light. I love it.

Light is sweet. Light's not merely good. Light is sweet. Same word he uses in numbers for honey. Though unpredictable and uncertainty, though filled with storms, there are days when we see the sun and it's sweet.

[20 : 55] When the sun shines in our life, we should enjoy it now. What he's saying is, you know, in the midst of all this, the dark clouds of life, there's, there's, there's light.

There's things to enjoy, to receive from his hand. The dark, look at verse eight. He says, see if a person, if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all. Let him remember that dark days will be many and all that comes is vanity.

The dark days are coming. All of life will be vanity. It won't be as fruitful as we hope or as profitable as we plan, as satisfying as we dream.

But he says, nevertheless, let him rejoice in them all. Let him rejoice in every day. Let him rejoice when he sees the light to savor the gift of God.

He continues in verse nine. Rejoice, oh young man, in your youth. Let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. This is the last of the seven refrains on joy in this book.

[22 : 00] It's filled with joy. Here he says rejoice. It's a better translation would be enjoy life. Again, returning to that theme, enjoy life.

Celebration, as one commentator said, is to be the prominent tone of our life. Celebration. That's why Jesus didn't come fasting.

He came feasting. One person said he just ate his way through the gospels. I think that's about right. Jesus came rejoicing. Rejoice, he says.

Enjoy your life. Let your heart cheer you. That's a curious phrase. Let the things of life cheer your heart, cheer your life. Don't be super spiritual.

Don't be a killjoy. Be a joy fueler. Wherever you go, pouring more and more gasoline on the joy of those around you. He continues, walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

[23 : 02] The heart and the sight of the inlets of delight. That's where we enjoy so many things. But this doesn't seem wise. Moses said, don't walk in the ways of your heart or in the ways of your eyes.

So which one is it? We know from experience, following your heart often does not lead to good places. Solomon's saying, enjoy as much life as possible.

Obviously avoiding sin. Enjoy it. Gifts not gain is the motto. The new motto for the new man is, and so enjoy it.

According to Ecclesiastes, enjoy food and drink. Enjoy cleaning up and dressing up. Enjoy your spouse. Enjoy the sun. Enjoy rest. Enjoy dancing, embracing peace, laughter, and love.

Enjoy money and the things it helps you do. Enjoy music and art and gardens and so many things. Life is broken, but there's so many things to enjoy. Let us be a people that are known for joy.

[24 : 04] To not enjoy life is a sin. This is a command. Talk about ten commandments.

Well, here's a command. Rejoice. It's a repeating of the first sin. The first sin in the garden was not eating the forbidden thing.

The first sin in the garden was failing to enjoy the many things. The many things that fill the gardens. It happens so easy. Instead of rejoicing with all the things that God has placed in our life, we begin to believe that He's withholding something good from us.

Derek Kidner helpfully says, this was the nerve the serpent touched in Eden to make even paradise appear as an insult. That would solve so many riddles in our life.

Looking over the fence, believing over the fence is where it comes and so before too long, before long, if we're not careful, we can begin to view the many undeserved gifts we have in our life not as blessings, but as insults.

[25 : 13] Consolation prizes. In a biography about pastor and author John Stott, one of his study aides and just happens to be his nephew tells a fascinating story about how Mr. Stott sought to enjoy all of life.

Quote in the biography now, he said, every afternoon at 4.30 p.m. I bring Uncle John a cup of coffee. As soon as I set the cup on his desk, he almost always says, somewhat playfully, I'm not worthy, usually, without moving his bowed head from his papers.

Now, Stott wrote dozens of books. He's a fascinating man. One afternoon last week, I felt that it was particularly silly for him to equate worthiness with a cup of coffee. When he said, I'm not worthy, I responded, sure you are.

After a few moments, he said, you haven't got your theology of grace, right? I said back, it's only a cup of coffee, Uncle John. As I went into his kitchen and began putting things away, I heard him mutter, still with his head bowed to his papers, it's just the thin, thin end of the wedge.

Just the thin end of the wedge. What he's saying is when we begin to believe and begin to assume that we deserve the little things, we become ungrateful for everything.

[26 : 48] As we get older, far too often, we don't become more and more grateful, we become more and more grumpy. That's why the movie Grumpy Old Men was a box office hit because it's, we've seen him, we know him.

Grumpiness is a sin. A sin which seems especially common among men. Preacher continues with two qualifications for enjoying life.

Some joys, he said, are just for specific seasons. Three times in verse 9, he references youth. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth.

Let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Now this is a bit of an odd command, right? Does a youth need to be encouraged to enjoy their youth? Is that like a fisherman being encouraged to enjoy his catch?

Or a thirsty man being told to enjoy his water? But the adage is true, youth is wasted on the young. They don't know what they have. They waste it wishing they could be older, wishing they could be free, wishing they could be on their own.

[27 : 56] Solomon says, rejoice in it. Look at verse 10, he says, remove vexation from your heart, put away pain from your body, for your youth and the dawn of life are vanity. He's saying, don't be anxious about the future.

Don't fritter away the days you have. Don't waste your youth because it's going to pass. Life is filled with seasons and youth is one of those seasons that passes quickly. I graduated high school back 20 plus years ago in 1999.

Went through all the festivities of graduation. The cap and the gown and the pictures and the commencement service. I don't remember much from those days but I do remember a song that was playing on the radio literally after the commencements I got in my car and this song was playing on the radio but it was playing all the time during those days.

Song by Green Day. But it captures this point very well. Another turning point a fork stuck in the road.

Time grabs you by the wrist directs you where to go. So make the best of the test. Don't ask why. It's not a question but a lesson learned in time.

[29 : 17] It's something unpredictable but in the end this right. I hope you had the time of your life. Green Day will probably never be quoted again.

But that's about right. Don't ask why. Life's unpredictable. Don't be anxious.

Have the time of your life. Don't be anxious. Enjoy the season. Enjoy each season. John Piper says it well.

Chapters in life are divided by various things. Age, strength, singleness, marriage, employment, children at home, children in college, grandchildren, retirement, etc. No chapter has all the joys.

Finite life is a series of trade-offs. Finding God's will and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success. Not whether it reads like someone else's chapter or whether it has in it what only another chapter will bring.

[30 : 28] That is wisdom. Finite life is a series of trade-offs. That's what Solomon is trying to tell us. Some joys are just for certain season. All joys and every season are for God.

Solomon says enjoy your life and the joys of your life. Look at verse 9. That final clause in the verse, final sentence. He says, but no. So rejoice, but no.

And for all these things God will bring you into judgment. At first sight, a reminder of judgment seems to ruin all the joy. You know, nothing like a trip to the dentist to ruin a good lunch.

How can we enjoy life when judgment's around the corner? But that's not what he means at all. That's not the idea. What he's saying is your life matters to God. Everything you do matters to God.

You're not slow dancing on the Titanic. You're living before the face of God. You have his eye. You have his heart. You are striving to hear, well done, good and faithful servant.

[31 : 39] That's what life is all about. So yes, God is going to judge because life is his. It belongs to him. So knowing the Lord is watching means we should not pursue joy in some things.

But this warning of judgment robs joy of nothing but its hollowness. But of wasting it on foolish things. Point three, commit your life to God.

Commit your life to God. Spend life, enjoy life, commit your life to God. The final thing Solomon tells us is to commit your life to God.

Look in verse 1. It begins with a command. Remember also the Creator in the days of your youth. This reference to Creator. Some guys say, where's this come from?

This first reference to the Creator in the whole book. Why? Doesn't seem to fit. I don't think so at all. All good gifts we enjoy in creation are gifts.

[32 : 39] Everything we enjoy are gifts and all these good gifts point back to a Creator who rules over all. He's the one who set eternity in the heart of men. He's the one who says there's a time for everything under the sun.

And so there's a God who reigns over all, who gives good things for everyone to enjoy. So He says, remember your Creator. What He's saying is drop the pretense of being strong, of being in control, of being on your own.

Stop trying to solve life out. Live before the Lord's face. Remember who you are, who God is, and where life is going such that nothing else matters. Remember, to remember is to commit yourself to the Lord, to cling to the Lord, to purpose and promise to love Him and live for Him all the days of your life regardless of how dark they become.

Then Solomon concludes with a breathtaking poem. I don't know if you heard it as we're going through it, but it's just an incredible poem with so many images coming in.

The book of Ecclesiastes begins with a poem. It ends now with this poem as well. It seems to me the best explanation for what ties this poem and all these images together is that of a storm.

[34 : 02] What he's saying is commit your life to God because there's a storm coming. Look in verse 2. He says, Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened.

So there was storms early in chapter 11 and there was light and now it's dark again. The clouds return after the rain.

The clouds that parted for us to live, to see God's good gifts and enjoy them have returned and they are dark. The storm is coming. It's going to fall on all people, rich and poor, men and women.

All must prepare to be shaken. That's what he's saying. Look in verse 3. He continues with these images. In the day when the keepers of the house tremble and the strong men are bent.

So he's talking about the keepers of the house, just the estate servants, the one maintaining the ground, the men maintaining the ground, the strong men, their backs are bent, the grinders, the women working and grinding food, grinding for bread, cease because they are few and those who look through the windows are dim.

[35 : 09] Everyone's preparing for the storm is what he's saying. Everyone's preparing to be shaken by the storm. The doors now are shut and the streets are empty. Look in verse 4.

He says, And the doors of the street are shut when the sound of the grinding is low and one rises up at the sound of a bird and all the daughters of song are brought low.

They're afraid of what is high and terrors are in the way. It's the calm before the storm. That's what's going on. Everybody deserted into their houses, kind of like we did in quarantine.

Everybody ran away into the house. Everything was quiet. Everything's waiting for the foot to drop. Everything's coming. The storm of life comes in. It's going to wreck everything you know.

The storm of life falls in with the dark days of old age. Look in verse B or 5B. He says, The almond tree blossoms.

[36 : 09] The grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails. Life slows down.

Life gets quiet. Life gets hard. Life gets empty. Old age is an avalanche of losses. You lose your job. You lose your spouse.

You lose your friends. You lose your independence. You lose your money. You lose your health. If you live long enough, you lose your mind. Then you lose it all.

Derek Kidner says on this verse, In one's early years and for the greater part of life, troubles and illnesses are chiefly setbacks, not disasters. One expects the sky to clear eventually.

It's hard to adjust to the closing of that long chapter to know that now in the final stretch there will be no improvement. The clouds will always gather again.

[37 : 10] And time will no longer heal but kill. that's what's going on. That's what he's saying.

The storm of life finally falls with the dark day of death. Look in verse 5 again. Man is going to his eternal home and the mourners go about in the streets.

Verse 6, Before the silver cord is snapped or the golden bowl is broken or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

What are these images? Tons of theories of the silver cord being snapped, golden bowl broken, pitcher shattered, a wheel broken.

They're images saying that life is over. At some point life breaks beyond repair. like a cord cut, like a bowl smashed, like a pitcher shattered, like a wheel at the well is broken because no one comes for water anymore.

[38 : 27] Dust returns to dust. The spirit returns to God who gave it and who will render judgment. Death means judgment.

Your spirit returns to God. I already said the Lord will render judgment. Hebrews 9.27 says it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment.

Solomon has been warning us all along everything in life is like sand passing through your fingers. It's through an hourglass too but it's through your fingers too because you came into life with nothing.

You're going out with nothing. You can't hold on to sand and so you can't hold on to life. You're going home empty handed is what he's saying and there you'll face the judgment of God.

You'll face the judgment of God for everything you did with the sand. Everything you did with your life. Will you be spared in the judgment? Will you be ready for the judgment? Romans 2 says there's wrath and fury reserved for all who have rebelled against God and rebelled against Jesus Christ.

[39 : 34] The only rescue from the judgment is his mercy. Death though means there's judgment but it also means there's a reason to live.

The preacher's not telling us about death so that we can prepare to die. I mean that's good. You should do that with your accountants and people in your life. Prepare to die but that's not the preacher's point. He's prepared. He tells us about death to prepare us to live.

Earlier this week I watched Doctor Strange and yeah I watched some of those movies and I don't know what's going on. I'm so confused the whole time.

So lost. Essentially the movie's about an extraordinary physician and a very arrogant physician named Stephen Strange. Injured in a car wreck he can't find healing so he turns to the voodoo forces or something the supernatural forces trying to figure out what's going on with him so he can get back to surgery.

He's brought into an unseen battle with dark forces trying to kill reality. I don't know what that means but he must step in to fight at one point.

[40 : 45] He's scared and afraid to face Dormammu and he says to the ancient one this kind of soothsayer type of wise person in the movie he says I'm not ready.

She says no one is. We don't get to choose our time. She takes him by the hand and says death is what gives life meaning.

To know your days are numbered your time is short. That's exactly what Ecclesiastes is trying to say. Death gives life meaning.

Death means that there will not always be a tomorrow so today's worth living. Death means that there's a fight to fight a race to run a faith to keep an eternal life to take hold of.

Death means that there's a conclusion a finish line a final rolling of the credits. Death is a grace. Death is a gift. Death is telling us to get dirty now to get blisters now to make our bones and muscles strain now because nothing because death is coming soon.

[41 : 52] Death is pushing us to live now. Death means there's a wife to love children to cherish friends to build up communities to create businesses to build good works to do and cake to be eaten and wonderfully when we do die when the cord is finally snapped when the golden bowl is broken when the pitcher is shattered when the wheel is broken we will sow for one last time.

We will not sow a seed but we ourselves will be sown as what scripture says we will be sown dust to dust into the earth we will not die we will be planted.

1 Corinthians 15 says because the Lord is coming and all that's imperishable that's planted will be raised to imperishable life. He's coming to judge the living and the dead. He's coming to bring in the harvest.

He's coming to raise us from the dead. He will not let the pangs of death hold on to us. He will commend us. Those who deserve his wrath will say well done good and faithful servant. He'll clothe us with white and take us into the feast.

A feast celebrating the end of suffering and sin and death. So don't spend your life trying not to die. Spend your life living for Christ with all your might.

[43 : 05] Near the end of the movie Braveheart William Wallace is in prison preparing for execution. He's offered a narcotic by the princess of France to numb his pain of this coming torture and his death but he refuses.

She says you will die. It will be horrible. He says every man dies. Not every man really lives.

Ecclesiastes saying will you live? Will you live? Or will you join the masses trying not to die trying to find the fountain of youth? Will you put it on the line?

Will you spend life? Will you dish it out use it up and lay it down? May God help us. Father in heaven we offer ourselves to you sincerely and completely.

We humbly commit ourselves and submit ourselves and fall down before your majesty asking you from the bottom of our hearts that this seed of your word would be sown in our hearts.

[44 : 19] Take deep root that not persecution cause it to wither the thorny cares of this life to choke it out but as seed sown on good ground that it would bring forth thirty and sixty and a hundredfold as your wisdom appoints.

Let us be a people that live while we live with all our might with all our heart soul mind and strength for you and for your glory. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander Lead Pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at