

Learning How to Live

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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.

So if you would, look with me, Ecclesiastes 7, I'm going to read the first 14 verses. It says, a good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death better than the day of birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of the face the heart is made glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools.

[1 : 14] This also is vanity. Surely oppression drives the wise into madness, and a bribe corrupts the heart. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools. Say not, why were the former days better than these?

For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. Wisdom is good with an inheritance and advantage to those who see the sun.

For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money. And the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it. Consider the work of God.

Who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity, be joyful. In the day of adversity, consider God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

[2 : 37] This is the word of God. February 18th began like any other Sunday in the life of our church.

The set-up teams began arriving at 6.30 a.m. to lay out rows of chairs and ready this gym. Worship team arrived shortly thereafter to begin practicing to lead us in corporate worship.

I was at my office frantically putting last-minute touches to my sermon. And unbeknownst to us, for a few hours we learned that Matthew and Laura Peglow's youngest child, Hannah, had died during the night.

If you were there with us that day, you remember we made an announcement about Hannah's death, and then we wept and prayed. It was a hard week, one in which we unexpectedly found ourselves in a house of mourning to mourn Hannah's death.

It was a hard week. It was also a provoking week.

[3 : 58] We rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep. Scripture says, Thomas Watson says, Why does God bring his people together in affliction except to bring them together in affection?

Metals will unite in a furnace. If other Christians unite, it should be. It is. In the furnace of affliction.

Never seen metal in a fire. That seems to me to be the picture of our church. Hard week, a provoking week, and also a clarifying week.

Death has a way of putting everything in perspective, putting life in perspective, helping us realize that some things do not matter as much as we think.

This morning, if I could put it this way, I want us to linger in the house of mourning, so to speak, and learn how to live. At the beginning of Solomon's book that we studied, I don't know, 18 months ago, he began saying, you know, vanity of vanity, all is vanity.

[5 : 22] Not all is meaningless. He's saying all is ultimately senseless. It's unfruitful, unproductive. It doesn't pay off in the way you think it should. He says, what does man gain by all that he toils under the sun?

His way of living in this world. Verse 12 of chapter 6, he asks that same question. What is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life?

He says, it's the same type of thing. Who can tell man what will be after him under the sun? What is the advantage of life? This time, though, Solomon begins to answer the question.

Running through these verses, and you probably noticed as I read them, there are 11 uses of the word better or good. It's all the same word. All better or good.

What is the supremely valuable thing? Running through this, Solomon has shown us the only way to make sense of life in this world. The only way to live a good life in this world so disastrously crooked after the fall.

[6 : 35] So we're going to unpack it in three better than, four better than statements, actually. First, death is better than birth. Death is better than birth.

Up until this point, if you ever read the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon is mainly teaching, in his first five chapters, about his life. He's talking about what he experienced.

I walked and saw this or that. He's telling us about life from the vantage point of his experience. But now he begins to teach in Proverbs. And we have a whole book on Proverbs.

And we know Solomon was quite the author of Proverbs from Kings. And so these Proverbs are these pithy statements where two things are often put parallel. And so you learn their meaning by studying the parallel, the differences and similarities between the two.

And these verses include a string of Proverbs designed to show us the truly good life. And he begins, if you look at verse one, a good name is better than precious ointment.

[7 : 39] Now, fine oils and perfumes in a dry, hot climate with no indoor plumbing were quite the luxury. They made you smell good.

You know, like cool water cologne used to do for me in middle school. Oils and perfume and that culture made you feel good, gave you a sense of confidence. But a good name, he says, is better.

Now, this is very similar to what he says in Proverbs 22. One, a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches. And favor is better than silver or gold.

The meaning is very similar. The idea is precious ointments and great riches will be lost at death. But a good name will not. We'll continue to talk about the good name.

The aroma of Christ left by someone and by their name. Not merely their name, but by their life and what it represents. And so they're not lost like precious ointment and great riches.

[8 : 42] But he continues, look, the day of death is, and we should, it's an ellipsis there, but it is better than the day of death. Now the verse takes a turn.

We didn't expect a good name is better than precious ointment and great riches because it is not lost in death. That makes sense. But how can the day of death be better than the day of birth?

Isn't the day of death the moment when we lose everything? How can that be better? Shouldn't it be the opposite? The day of birth is better than the day of death because there's still time to make a good name for yourself.

To change your reputation. That's not the way it is. As startling and shocking as it is, death, the preacher says, is better than life.

Now he continues and he begins to become more clear. Look in verse 2. It's better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting. For this is the end of all mankind and the living will lay it to heart.

[9 : 49] It's becoming clear as he talks about what the living must lay to heart. He's saying that death is, and as we often think, death is a curse. It is rightly understood to be a curse.

It is a result of the fall. Genesis 5 just says, and they died again and again and again to say it's not meant to be this way. So we mourn death because it's a curse.

Now in one sense for the Christian, death is also a blessing. For the believer, it brings an end to suffering. That's what we long for. No more preaching so that we can see Christ face to face.

But what the preacher is telling us here is that death is also a teacher. Death is a preacher. Death has something to say to all of us.

David Gibson in his book on Ecclesiastes says, The day of death is better than the day of birth, not because death is better than life, but because a coffin preaches better sermons than a crib.

[10 : 52] Now the day of birth is a wonderful day. We revere and rejoice over the gift of life. We defend life. We love children, quite obviously.

They're all over the place here. They're nearly outnumbering us. They're taking over. You know, we celebrate the gift of life. We celebrate children are the heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward is what the scripture says.

But what do we really know when they're born? They may discover the cure of cancer. Or they may live in the basement their whole life.

You know, you never know. The point is, at birth we celebrate potential. But at death we celebrate outcome. That's what Solomon's getting at.

The day of death is better than the day of birth because the day of death forces the living to consider how they're spending their lives. Solomon is urging us to deal with death directly.

[12 : 01] Martin Luther once said, you have to invite death into your presence before it arrives. In order to learn. The living will lay it to heart.

Now, he's not saying the living will shed a tear or two at a funeral. He's saying the living, the truly living, will let death shape how they live.

What they say, what they pray for, what they dream about, what they work towards. Solomon is urging us to live a life now that matters on the day of death. You know, in our culture, and we've talked about this before, modern medicine and science have relieved us of so many of the causes of premature death.

And so death is often tucked out of view. Relegated to hospice and retirement homes.

But Solomon is urging us to consider our mortality in Puritan churches. They used to put the cemetery before you walked into the door of the sanctuary.

[13 : 11] So that you would walk the path through the cemetery to consider your mortality. I read recently of Trappist monks. Middle Ages, they had their own unique approach.

They would dig a grave. And every day they would go out as a group to the grave site, peer over the edge, and ponder their mortality. When one of their order would die, they would lower him down.

And then they would start the ritual again. Dig another grave. To consider it. What about you? Are you listening to what death has to say?

What will they say about you when you die? What will matter on the day of your death? Will you let death shape your life goals, your work schedule? Will you let it shift your weekend commitments?

Will you let it change the way you treat your wife, your difficult co-worker, your weird neighbor? Will you change the way you live now in anticipation of death?

[14 : 11] Death is better than life. Solomon continues another better than statement. Sorrow is better than laughter. Sorrow is better than laughter.

Look down there in verse 3. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. The first line, though, is shocking.

Sorrow is better. How can sorrow be better than laughter? Sorrow means something bad has happened. Laughter means something good. After all, we celebrate laughter.

You know, Sarah laughed at the unbelievable promise of God. Remember, the Lord said, you're going to conceive in a year. She just laughs. And then when she does conceive, she laughs again.

She names her son Isaac because he laughs. Everybody laughing, amazed at the promise of God. Proverbs 31 woman laughs at the days to come because she trusts in the Lord.

[15 : 07] But there's another side to laughter. That's what he's getting at. Laughter can be a cover. Laughter can be a show, a charade. Laughter can be a way of avoiding, of escaping the problems of this world.

The comedian Woody Allen famously tried to laugh off the reality of death when he said, I'm not afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens. It's almost a stereotype how these comedians are the very ones covering over with all their laughter the agony of their own depression, their own discouragement.

So sorrow is better than laughter. But is it always, now is it always better?

It can't be always better. What about when the innocent suffer? What about the gas chambers of Auschwitz or the destruction of tsunamis or the cascading losses of Alzheimer's?

It is not always better, Solomon. One day, deep laughter will swallow up all the losses of sorrow forever.

[16 : 30] But this is the point. A sad face is not better than a happy face, but a sad face is better if a happy face is all it is. So sadness is not inherently better, but sadness is better if a happiness is just a charade, if just an avoidance, a sad face is better because you're seeing things as they truly are.

You're facing trouble. You're facing the fact that your life is fragile. And so he says, the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, the house of sadness. Sadness, but the heart of fools is in the heart of mirth.

That's where you find him. The preacher continues in telling us about the heart of mourning and the heart of mirth in verse 5 when he says it's better.

You see it again? It's better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of the fools. Better to hear a rebuke than a song. Now this could come right out of other pages of scripture.

The Psalms, I mean Proverbs, but also Psalm 141.5. The psalmist says, let a righteous man strike me. It is a kindness. Let him rebuke me.

[17 : 53] It is oil. That's that precious ointment we were talking about. It's oil for my head. Let my head not refuse it. That's what he's saying.

The rebuke of the wise is a kindness. Now, the kindness of rebuke is not the punch. That stings. The kindness of rebuke is the wake-up call.

The punch provides. So a rebuke is better than the song of fools because it tells you the truth. A rebuke is better. You are a jerk sometimes, you know?

I'll never forget. I was telling somebody the other night about being corrected for the very first time. I had a visceral reaction. I was a Christian for six months, corrected by somebody. Just what I mean by that.

Not lambasted, but they're just telling me in one way how my life was not walking and conforming with scripture. In this one particular area when I was talking bad about them, I just, I wanted to go take a shower, you know?

[18 : 57] It just stung so much and I felt so gross, but yet it was a precious word because it told me what was true. So rebuke is not, is better than the song of fools because it tells you the truth.

But rebuke is also better than the song of fools because the song, songs and laughter of fools are empty. They're empty.

Look in verse six. He continues, for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools. Now what is he talking about there?

You know, Ecclesiastes, the preacher, is famous for some of the strange things he brings to the table. What are the crackling of thorns? Well, like a, ever thrown a pine comb into a fire pit?

It's a great fire starter. It's pretty lousy after that. Well, that's what a thorn is in a fire. It flames up, makes a lot of noise and it dies out.

[20 : 05] Doesn't provide enough fire to cook. Doesn't provide enough heat to get things warm. The thorns are, they flame out, they're short lived.

That's what he's saying. In the song of fools and the laughter of fools are like that. Fools laugh. Their smirks and cackles say, we know what life is about.

We got it figured out. We're partying the night away. And yet, they're just a couple dopes who don't know anything about life under the sun. That's what Solomon is saying.

It's vanity. That's his phrase. It's chasing after the wind. It's herding cats. You know, it's wasting time. All this begs the question, what house do you live in?

Are you living in the house of mirth? Are you living in the house of the rising sun, partying down, burning the midnight oil, running from town, running from responsibility?

[21 : 05] It doesn't matter what your appearance is. Your appearance may be this cool collected guy and yet, you might be running. And you know it and God knows it. Are you always chasing a thrill, the next rush, the next high, the next adventure?

Do you have a secret lover, a mistress, a porn addiction, a credit card problem? Are you facing life head on?

It's what Solomon would want to say. He would want to pull up his chair and say to you, are you facing life head on? Are you all macho when it comes to working and making money and shooting guns but missing in action when it comes to carefully leading those you profess to love through this fragile world?

Is your heart, where is it? Is it in the heart of mirth? The heart of mourning. One of the most formative things that ever happened to me was my cousin dying when we were 13.

John was born, this is his name, John was born one month before me on March 8th. We were cousins. We lived in the same neighborhood.

[22 : 19] Teammates, the best of friends. My cousin John was riding his bike on the side of a road on a sunny afternoon, June 19th, 1993. He was struck by a drunk driver.

The next person on the scene was a family friend who stuck a finger to his neck to check his pulse. Confirmed he was dead.

John's death, nearly broke, it broke my heart.

How could this happen to him? How could this happen to me? How could all of what I expected be snatched away? John's death broke my heart and nearly broke my life.

pushed me into the heart of mourning as a seventh grader. I saw no meaning in life. I planned my funeral, picked my pallbearers, contemplated how I planned to die.

[23 : 29] Over the years, for the next eight years, tried to silence my aches with everything I could get my hands on as a teenager. Alcohol, marijuana, opium, cocaine, mushrooms, acid.

And so on. But after the music fade, the laughter ceased. After the party was over, my pain always remained. In so many ways, John's death opened my life, opened my eyes to a problem I could not unsee.

All of this world was dust and ashes. All of its riches were hollow. All of its joys were empty. All of its parties ended in broken glasses and broken hearts.

All of the sorrows of my heart drove me to find the only meaning in life under the sun in the sorrows of Jesus Christ. When Jesus canceled the debt of sin and handed us the down payment for the world that we long for, when all, where all things, we finally be right, all the sorrows will finally give way to everlasting joy.

The costs were high. I so wish. John, we're here. But I'm so thankful God pushed me into the heart of mourning to teach me how to live.

[24 : 54] You might be here this morning. You might be in a world where, in a life where, where you're experiencing a cascading of losses right now. Something that's going on and brought you into this assembly this morning.

And I believe God is wanting to rid your heart of resting in anything else except Jesus Christ and Him crucified that all these sorrows might lead you to His sorrow and to His suffering and to His substitutionary death.

He says, I am the way to the Father. I am the way to truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me. That's the truth of the Gospel. So don't just laugh.

Mourn. Blessed are those who mourn. Go to the house of mourning. Weep with those who weep.

There is a time to mourn. There is a time to grieve. Grief is not a problem that's eliminated with careful reasons or a pain that's remedied by medicine.

[26 : 10] It's not an unbelief that's put to rest with the Bible verse. It's a loss that takes time to heal. It teaches you how to live.

Sorrow is better than laughter. Point three, the end is better than the beginning. The end is better than the beginning. Again, the preacher follows the previous verses driving home this point.

Look at verse 8. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning. And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

with some reflection. The connection between these two lines can be found. It's apparent. The patient in spirit is better because they wait to the end.

It's always better to wait to the end not rip open Christmas presents before Christmas Day. It's always better to wait to the end but the proud in spirit cannot wait. They demand answers right now. But it's not from wisdom is what Solomon's saying.

[27 : 15] What he's saying is while we wait to see what God is doing with our lives we must watch out for impatience. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning.

Better is the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. And so look at verse 9. He kind of applies that second half by saying be not quick in your spirit to become angry. So the patient in spirit is better.

So be not quick in your spirit to become angry for anger lodges in the bosom in the heart of fools. Why? Impatience in anger.

Why is it impatience in anger so tempting? Well, because it's so easy to not wait to the end. It's so easy to make our own conclusions. It's so easy to decide what we think God has done with our life and to begin simmering in anger.

That's what he's saying. The challenge in suffering always or one of the main challenges in suffering is always to suspend judgment.

[28 : 17] To suspend judgment. To refuse to draw the conclusion that you might be tempted to draw. Oz Guinness in his book on doubt says in suffering as nowhere else is the supreme challenge to suspend judgment.

The pressure is great. Why? Why? Where is your God? Why is he not listening? Why have you been singled out? Why do others have it so much easier than you?

The pressure is great for you to draw a conclusion. For you to say I know what God is doing in my life but it's not from wisdom is what Solomon is saying. Biblically we suffer for many different reasons.

Sometimes we suffer because of our sin. Sin brings consequences and the judgment of God. Sometimes we suffer because of immaturity because we need to grow.

We say you made the bed now go sleep in it. You know but why? Because we suffer because of immaturity. God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

[29 : 31] Sometimes we suffer because of spiritual warfare and persecution. That's what we saw in the book of Acts and see all throughout the world because of who we follow and who we confess.

But what Solomon is helping us see sometimes we suffer for no apparent reason. You understand that?

Sometimes it appears completely random. Why was my cousin mowed down? It was random.

That's what happens in the book of Job. Job's a righteous man. That means he has a sincere faith in God. Disaster strikes his house.

Kills all his children. Takes away so much of his possessions. He suffers on the ashly but he does not suffer because of his sin.

[30 : 50] He does not suffer because God's trying to make him grow. That's not what God is after. That's what his friends get wrong. You know, his friends are really great until they start talking.

You know, sometimes we can be that way with suffering. You know, the best thing we can often do with suffering is to shut our mouth. obviously we need to talk at some point but Job is not being punished for something he did.

Job is not being disciplined so that he can grow. That's not it. We must remember this. So often we can think what is God doing in your life as if every form of suffering is transactional.

Like God is doing something like that. It's not the way it is. But Job does sin in his suffering. So Job does not suffer because he sinned but Job does sin in his suffering.

He sins by failing to suspend judgment. He becomes angry. He begins to charge God with wrong.

[31 : 59] Now you got to remember this is that most acute temptation suspending judgment and suffering is not only hard it seems ridiculous. How do you suffer without answers?

How do you suffer without a response? How do you suffer without knowing the meaning? Who can do that? That's why it's the main temptation.

But it's not hard to see what happens as a result. We fail to suspend judgment. We begin to draw the conclusion God doesn't care. God has abandoned me.

God's left me on my own and anger lodges in the heart. Anger at family. Anger at some wrong. Anger at the loss we're facing. Anger at the consequences of it.

Anger at the circumstances that never seem to change. You know sometimes that's the way we feel. We just pigeonhole in this circumstance that's never going to change. And so we're angry. when we care for those who suffer.

[33 : 02] When they're challenged to suspend judgment. We begin by weeping with them. We listen more than we talk. We don't try to fix them. We don't have to rush in to give our perspective.

But we also don't stay away. We move in close. While they're being challenged to suspend judgment while they're waiting our goal is not to fix them but to point them continually to God.

To wait. It is good to wait quietly on the Lord. Lamentations 3. While we wait so we must watch out for impatience we must also watch out for nostalgia.

Nostalgia. Verse 10. Look at verse 10. He says he's kind of applying the first part of verse 8. So better is the end of a thing than it's beginning. Look at verse 10. Say not why were the former days better for it's not from wisdom that you asked us.

So while we're waiting we're tempted to reflect on the good old days. To go back and there are times to remember the good old days.

[34 : 07] Perhaps seeing a friend from high school or we hear a song that reminds us of a certain season of life. We visit an old home or a place we grew up. It's unavoidable.

It can be so good to remember how things were and who you were in order to cultivate gratefulness to God but sometimes it's not good. It's not always good.

Why? Because we can think I want to go back. I want to go back. It's not sinister to think that but it's not from wisdom either.

I want to go back. I want that old life back. The danger comes when we compare the bad of our present circumstances with the good of our past circumstances. We become like the Israelites who want to go back to slavery wishing they had fish, cucumbers, melons, and onions and chains.

It's not from wisdom. It's better not to rush conclusions. It's better not to search out the reasons. It's better not to color in the future. It's better to wait until the end.

[35 : 16] Maybe the word that you need from the Lord is to wait. Wait on the Lord. Do not draw the conclusion that you feel like you must draw. It's better to wait and see what God is doing into your life.

It's better to let God be God. One pastor tells the story of his three year old son Ben and how he loved the moon. He said his son would often say, look dad, the moon.

So they began to talk about the moon together. The father explained that the moon is always round. But you can't always see all of it.

Sometimes you see a full moon. My grandmother loved a full moon. Kept her moon calendar or whatever. Wrote it down to go see the moon. Other times you just see a part.

A crescent moon. A half moon. A gibbous moon. He began to teach his son about that the purposes of God are like that.

[36 : 19] Sometimes you see the whole moon. A day of celebration. You see the purpose of God. You see the full moon.

Other times you just see a part. He taught him a simple catechism. He said, Ben, what is the shape of the moon tonight? Ben would answer, well the moon is crescent or half or gibbous or full.

He said, what is the shape of the moon always? The moon is always round. What does that mean? God is always good. Just like the moon is always round even though you see a part of it.

God is always good even though you see a part of it. Sometimes you don't see any. Literally, no, this catechism would prove to be so important in his life and Ben's.

Sometime later, Ben's younger sister died at 39 weeks in her mother's womb. Four days later, just a couple years ago, she was still born.

[37 : 26] Ben, little three year old, came to the hospital to meet her. He brought a stuffed giraffe. He said goodbye. The father tells the story and I quote, as I drove him home that night, he asked, Daddy, will mommy ever grow a baby that wakes up?

I told him, I don't know. He asked, why isn't Lila coming home with us? I told him, because she's gone to be with Jesus. He asked, why has she gone to be with Jesus?

I told him, because Jesus called her name and she went to him. He asked, will Lila come come to us after a day with Jesus in heaven? I told him that when you meet Jesus, you don't want to go anywhere else.

He asked, why? I told him, because he's such a wonderful person. He asked, did Lila not like us? I told him that she does like us.

She just likes Jesus more. He asked again, but why isn't Lila coming home with us? I said, Ben, I don't really know why.

[38 : 44] He continued. And then I recalled our catechism, so I started to talk to him about the moon. We talked about how it was sometimes we look up at the moon, we see a crescent or a half moon or a gibbous moon or a full moon.

And then I asked him, Ben, what shape is the moon? He said, the moon is always round. I said, what does that mean? God is always good.

That's right, he said. And I drove on in silence, tears streaming down my face. That's what it means. That's what it means to let God be God.

Take our hands off the wheel. And say, you have the final say of my life. The verdict of my life is in your hands.

fourthly, wisdom is best of all.

[40 : 15] Again, the Proverbs follow closely behind the last several. The contrast between wisdom and folly gives way to focus on the great advantage of wisdom. Look in verse 11.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. It's a protection like the protection of money. The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves life.

Do you want to know what is good? The few days of your life. Wisdom. Wisdom means you choose not, you choose to not to live in the house of mirth or the memories of the past.

It means you choose not to run from the problems you have. It means you live in the present and you live day by day. Wisdom is good with an inheritance. It's like a protection of money.

What's he saying? It's an advantage to those who see the sun. To see the sun means you're alive. And so he's saying wisdom is good because it helps you embrace life.

[41 : 13] Like you don't understand life. You don't understand where life is going but you embrace it as God's gift. So you embrace today and that's the way wisdom protects and preserves life.

Look in verse 13. He says consider the wisdom of God. Who made straight, who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful. In the day of adversity consider God has made the one as well as the other.

Wisdom doesn't protect you from trouble. It doesn't take the crookedness out of life. It doesn't take away your bad days. The world is what it is. There's a time to be born, a time to die, a time to weep, a time to laugh, a time for peace and a time for war.

It is God's world. That's what he's saying. Wisdom is best because it pushes the world back to God. It's God's world. Let God be God. Becoming wise means you take your hands off the wheel.

You leave the crookedness of your life in his hands. grace. And then you put one foot in front of the other. And you walk while you see the sun.

[42 : 24] In actuality, the good life that Solomon has laid out is a life that only makes sense because of the gospel. Death is better than birth. You know, we join with the angels and rejoice at the birth of Jesus Christ.

But how much better is the day of his death? How much better? I mean, it looks like the great end. You know, it looks like the great waste.

And yet it is the day of his triumph over sin and death. How much better is the day of his death when he offers a single sacrifice to save sinners?

When he breaks the power of canceled sin forever? How much better is the day of his death? Well, sorrow too is better than joy. Yes, Jesus came eating and drinking and did not fast like the religious leaders and it ticked a lot of people off.

But then for the joy set before him, he took all the sorrows and sins of this world onto his back so that sorrows might not prevail forever but might give way to everlasting joy.

[43 : 30] Indeed, what the scriptures tell us again and again is the end is better than the beginning. The beginning was wonderful. Angels from the presence of God fill in the sky but the end will be so much better.

Sinners from every tribe, tongue, and nation with their robes freshly washed by the blood will walk into the presence of he who is everlasting joy. So for now, wisdom is best.

Winston Churchill once said, when you're going through hell, keep walking. That's what we must do. Keep walking.

Consider your mortality. Weep. There's time to weep. Wait.

Let God be God. And entrust your hopes and fears continually then. That's what we do. That's what we must do.

[44 : 36] Father in heaven, we hide ourselves in you this day. There is a time to rejoice, time to mourn, time to laugh, time to weep.

Oh Lord, make us wise as we walk through this life, we pray. In Jesus' name.

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 trinitygraceathens.com.

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