

# *Life is Short. Death is Certain. Eternity is Forever.*

## **I Peter 1:17-21**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **All Stand and Read Scripture**

1 Peter 1:17-21 (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*. <sup>20</sup> For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> 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.

#### **Prayer**

Benjamin Franklin once said "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except **death** and **taxes**."

Will Rogers said "The only difference between **death** and **taxes** is that **death** doesn't get worse every time Congress meets."

I would like to add another truism concerning the lessons in life. It is all wrapped-up in three short statements:

**Life is short. Death is certain. Eternity is forever. (Pause and REPEAT)**

For some, life may seem like an extremely long time. But everyone would agree that our life here on earth, when compared to eternity, would be shorter than a "strike of lightning".

Peter tells us that understanding the realities of this truism... "**Life is short. Death is certain. Eternity is forever.**"...is the key to understanding the purpose of your life.

Our **Life** on earth is ended by physical **Death** .....and **Death** is followed by **Judgment** .....and **Judgment** by **Eternal Life**.

And folks.....Judgment will not be same for all.

You often hear people contend ....that spiritual matters are not really all that important.... because we are all headed .....to the same place.

Those who make that claim ....are at least .....partly right.

We are all headed to the same place.... The judgment of God!..... We will **ALL** face God in judgment. When that time arrives, it will be too late to change how we lived on this earth.

At that point, you would do **anything** to have the chance to **relive your life** and **correctly** deal with the truism "**Life is short. Death is certain. Eternity is forever.**"

## **BODY:**

### **I. Understand Who Your Heavenly Father Is!**

**Do we just appear for a short time, pay taxes, and die?** How can the complexities of our human bodies and the universe have just happened by accident?

Humans are inquisitive. We examine our life and wonder how we got here and what the purpose is for our lives.

I believe that way down deep within us we KNOW that there must be a creator. With all of the knowledge that we have as humans, we cannot create a single **living** thing from scratch. How then can we expect for it to have happened accidentally?

God chose to use the written Word to reveal to man the mysteries of life. The scriptures were written by man through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

#### 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup>You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

It is when we study God's Word that we begin to see the consistent theme throughout the scriptures and begin to understand **Who our Heavenly Father is** and how we got here.

The scriptures tell us that we were created by God. We were created after His image. We were created to be inquisitive!

God the Father created a perfect world. He created man and woman and placed them in "The Garden of Eden". God commanded them not to eat of "**the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**". God warned Adam that if he did, he would surely die.

Satan, a fallen angel of God who wanted to become God himself, came in the form of a serpent and tempted Eve testing her inquisitive nature.

#### Genesis 3:4-6 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup>The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! <sup>5</sup>For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Adam failed the test, and from that very moment death and decay came into the perfect world that God had given man. Because of this sin, man became a mortal and the body

began to age. Now Adam and Eve would now die. Not only physically, but their sin caused them to also die spiritually and be separated from God. For this reason we are guilty sinners as well.

### Romans 5:12 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Satan thought he had won the battle. He thought he had condemned man to be permanently separated from God because God, by His nature, cannot be in the presence of sin and disobedience. And there is a penalty for sin and it is punishable by spiritual death.

### Genesis 3:13-15 (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,  
Cursed are you more than all cattle,  
And more than every beast of the field;  
On your belly you will go,  
And dust you will eat  
All the days of your life;  
<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Even as early as the creation story, God was beginning to reveal His Son, our Redeemer. Satan thought that he had won the battle, but God told him that He had only bruised Christ's head and that his "victory" was to be short-lived.

## **II. Understand the Price Your Father Paid!**

God knew that we would need a redeemer even before the fall of man in the Garden. In fact He knew this "**before the foundation of the world**".

### 1 Peter 1:18-21 (NASB)

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

<sup>20</sup> For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> 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.

We needed a Redeemer to remove the curse. We needed a Savior to reconcile us back to God. God Himself gave us that redeemer in the person of His only Son Jesus Christ.

### John 3:16-17 (NASB)

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

### ILLUSTRATION:

A story is told of a boy who built a toy boat. One day he placed it in a river and watched it float away. After a short while, he realized that it had floated out of his reach and he could not retrieve it back out of the water. After several minutes it finally floated out of his sight. He spent hours trying to find his boat, but to no avail.

One day he was walking by the local pawn shop and saw his boat in the window. He told the owner that it was his boat and that he had lost it in the river. The owner told him he was sorry, but the boat could only be his again if he would pay a dollar for it. So the boy went home and shook a dollar's worth of change out of his piggy bank and bought it back. He was heard saying as he walked out of the pawn shop, "This boat is doubly mine. "I built it and I bought it".

Like the toy boat, I owe my life twice to the same person. My Heavenly Father created me and **gave me life** and then He **purchased my sins with Christ's blood and gave me eternal life with HIM in Heaven!**

Redemption is defined as - the process of buying back someone from bondage by the payment of a price; to set free by paying a ransom. More specifically it is the price Jesus paid to free us from the bondage of sin.

Redemption made a lot of sense to the Christians Peter was writing to. There were millions of slaves in the Roman empire. Some were born that way and some had been enslaved when Rome conquered their land. A slave had no freedom. He was another person's property. Redemption was something they all longed for. There was nothing that they desired more than to be "redeemed" and set free from their bondage.

Before we become a Christian, we are in the bondage of sin. Gold or silver could not save mankind from the wrath of God. No material goods are sufficient to redeem our souls. Our works on earth, no matter how great or moral can redeem us from our sins. In Old Testament times, God's people offered animal sacrifice for their sin. The blood of an animal could cover the sin for a year. It did not clear the conscience of the sinner, nor do away with his sin. The Old Testament sacrifice was merely a picture of the ultimate sacrifice that would come in the person of God's Son. The blood of Jesus is the only thing powerful enough to completely remove sin! Because of sin there was an immense debt owed to God. We were not able to pay that sin debt that condemned us and there was NOTHING that we could do to change that. We were destined to face the wrath of Almighty God.

God understood our predicament God in His abundant mercy sought me and bought me with the precious blood of His Son. This payment was an imperishable payment that is good for all time.

### III. Understand How to Live for God!

1 Peter 1:17 (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;**

Peter says that if we are now dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus then we must "**conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth**".

What does Peter mean when he says "conduct yourselves in fear"?

It means that we were bought with a price, Christ's death on the cross, therefore we are no longer our own. We now belong to God. So we should respect Him as our Father and obey Him.

I have used this illustration before, but I believe it describes well how we are to **LIVE FOR GOD**.

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

If you were a dedicated football player for a high school team, your ultimate goal would be to win all of your football games and win the state championship. Think of all the things that you are willing to do in order to have a successful football season. You have to spend many hours in the training room lifting weights to build up muscle mass and running to build endurance. You would have to spend hours learning the offensive plays and defensive schemes. You would have to constantly be aware of what you eat and avoid activities that could downgrade your conditioning. You will also have to spend hours in running drills and practice on the football field. More hours would be spent watching videos of opposing teams to learn their offensive play trends and defensive patterns. This means you would have to sacrifice time that could be spent driving around town, dating, watching movies, and being a "normal teenager". You spend all of this time and energy in order that you can win football games. You enjoy willingly sacrificing that time, energy, and discomfort because you know that it is the only way that you can possibly realize your goal of attaining a state championship.

We must have the same dedication for Christ as the football player has in his conditioning for the football season.

There is another element though to winning. No matter how well you are prepared, you still cannot win in football unless everyone on the team has the same attitude and dedication.

In order for a football team to win they must also have a good coach. His past successes can create confidence among the players. He must be able to instill a "team" mentality and have everyone working cohesively together. The coach will also have to have a good sense of talent. Each person being assigned to the position that he is most skilled in respect to all of the other players on the team. A good coach will know everyone's strengths and weaknesses and will place each player in the game where he will provide the most benefit for the team.

Jesus is the perfect coach. He has proven that He is Lord and has laid out a plan before us by which we can win in the game of life. It is by following His example and living our lives based upon His instruction that we can learn how to love one another and build each other up in Christ.

Our first step is to join His "team". We do this by believing in Christ and accepting His plan of salvation.

### Romans 6:3-4 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Once we have joined the "team" we start learning how Christ wants us to live for Him. As we start learning Christ's "playbook" through Bible studies, sermons, Christian interaction and personal Bible study, we become "rooted" in Christ.

### Colossians 2:6-7 (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, <sup>7</sup> having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and overflowing with gratitude.*

In the New Testament, Christians are often represented as Christ's body or as branches to a vine. So, just like each person is a part of a football team, each Christian is part of a "team. Each believer is a part of the Kingdom of God.

This is absolutely critical to understand and to apply. We sometimes make the mistake of emphasizing our individual relationship with God and we think we can be a Christian on our own. But we can't. Following Jesus means being a **child** of the Father which means that you're **part of a family**. That family is an integral part of what it means to be **"in Christ."**

Just like the football team that is practicing everyday to learn the plays and defensive schemes, we are building every moment of every day. As we grow in the Lord we are able to live effectively for him, improve our ability to love him and love others with his love, and face the stress of each day.

This is one of the places where our analogy to a football team falls apart. As you know, in football we aren't guaranteed victory. Only one team can win. We may have prepared 100 times more than the opposing team and have the best coach on the planet, but sometimes their talent and strength will exceed ours despite our preparedness.

However, in Christ, we are guaranteed a VICTORY!

Perhaps now more than ever we need to set aside a few minutes each day to count our blessings rather than worrying about our problems. And, when we find something to be thankful for, we can give the praise and glory to Jesus.

THANK GOD FOR WHAT YOU HAVE. TRUST HIM FOR WHAT YOU NEED!

May we never forget this important message!

## **CONCLUSION:**

**LIFE IS SHORT.** The purpose of our life is to get right with God and then live a dedicated life for him. The window of opportunity for our salvation only exists during our short stay on earth. Once we die it is eternally too late.

**DEATH IS CERTAIN.** We will all die. How we live this life will determine how we will face God at judgment. If you die in sin, you will have to give account of your life in sin and you will be condemned to live for eternity in torment separated from God.

The saved no longer fears death. In fact, we see death as the stepping stone to the day that our bodies can be transformed into eternal beings. We will face God in judgment and be found righteous before him because our sins have been wiped away by the blood of Christ. Christ will have restored our relationship with God that we lost through the sin of Adam and we will live for eternity with our creator and redeemer.

Regardless of whether you believed in God during your life on earth, you will believe in Him when you face Him in judgment. And you **WILL** bow before Him and praise Him then.

Romans 14:10b-12 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup>...For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup> For it is written,

“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,

AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”

<sup>12</sup> So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

On judgment day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. I pray that when you bow, it will be with great JOY!

**ETERNITY IS FOREVER.** Whether you realize it or not, you will live for eternity after your time on earth. Your soul is an eternal. You will either be with your Father in Heaven or you will have to face an eternity separated from Him.

Your window of opportunity is now while you are still alive on earth. God has given you the choice to either accept or deny His Son. The choice is yours. Your eternity depends on it

You cannot offer yourself to the Father as a perfect sinless person, therefore, you accept the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on your behalf.” When you do, God washes away your sins with the blood of Jesus Christ and makes you righteous before Him.

**God Be with You till We Meet Again**

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,  
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.  
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.