

Shadows

Week 3 — The Shadow of Death

November 6th, 2019

Big Series Idea: You are not alone in the dark moments.

Big Idea of Week 3: Death is common and happens to every human being, but where you go when you die is determined by your choices now.

Intended Outcome: Heaven and Hell are real places, there is an answer to “What happens after you die...?” Death shouldn’t be a misery thing; it should be openly and truthfully talked about

INTRODUCTION [\(ME\)](#)

What’s up, guys! My name is Robert Brazile, if you don’t know me, I am the middle school pastor here — which only means I studied the Bible in college, it doesn’t mean I am perfect, it doesn’t mean I have all the answers, I am here learning just like you. Walking through life looking for answers. And this series has certainly caused me to search for more and more.

We are in a series called *Shadows* and this is week three! I know the last two weeks of the series have been tough and difficult — but they are the harsh reality that we live in. These topics are hard, but need to be talked about so we are jumping into another hard topic today... **Death**.

We know its a reality we live in. It’s hard. It causes us to question. It causes us to doubt. Trust me, I know and a few leaders in the room have dealt with this very, very recently.

Transition [\(WE\)](#)

But if we look at the Bible, death doesn’t necessarily represent something that is awful, but rather something that is **inevitable (WHITE BOARD)** and something to actually look forward to... The concept can be a huge mystery, but I hope that today you can walk away with a better understanding of death, how to cope with is, why it happens, and where we go when we die. I don’t promise all the answers, but I can promise you I am going to attempt to open your eyes to something that we deal with everyday and hopefully, help you understand it a bit more.

Would you pray with me?

PRAY

MAIN BODY [\(ME/GOD\)](#)

People deal with death in very different ways. Me and my wife are a perfect example of that. I personally suffered a lot of loss in my late high school and early college years, I think, (and my parents are back there and correct me if I'm wrong actually) — I think I lost all my grandparents in less than 5 years. Two while I was in HS and two while I was in college.

However, my wife, Kaylee, the one you saw singing up here with the beautiful voice. Killing it with her gifts given from the Lord. She has never lost a family member till January this year, when her grandma Karen passed away. Then again last month when her Grandpa Phil passed away.

And here's the thing about Kaylee and I. I am very okay to talk about death, be around moments of death, funerals, whatever it is. However, Kaylee until something happens won't even want to talk about it. She actually avoids reading Revelation because she doesn't want to think about the end times.

No matter where you land on this, it is okay.

There is a frustration that comes with death.

The loss.

The pain.

The why.

Many people just don't want to think about or even talk about death, and that's okay. But I think as Christians, we need to have an understanding of it. We need to have a clear understanding of a few questions. Three questions actually that we are going to land on today.

What about you? Have you experienced the loss of someone you really love?

Ever lost someone unexpectedly?

Ever questioned why they had to die?

Ever questioned what the point of death is?

Ever just been angry and not know what to do?

I think we all have been there at some point.

I think we all have questions, we all want answers about this mysterious topic. So for the remainder of the time, I want to talk to you about it, with one another, through the eyes of God.

So let's start with this question. The first of 3.

What Is Death? (WHITE BOARD)

Lot's of speculation surrounding this.

Is death reincarnation — coming back as something else?

Is death purgatory — an in between destiny that helps us get right?

Is death annihilation — when we cease to exist? It's just over?

God has actually revealed to us what death is... In the Bible, **death means separation.** (WHITE BOARD) Separation and death became part of our life because of sin. This sin actually led to a few kinds of deaths. One spiritual and one physical.

Physically speaking look at this verse.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

“For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

There was death of our physically body. Your body is merely a vessel, a holding tank if you will, for your soul which is who you really are. When God created Adam, Genesis tells us he gave him the breath of life — something no other living creature had — a soul.

So when we say a physical death took place, we are saying that our body and soul were separated.

But spiritually speaking look at this.

Isaiah 59:2

“It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.”

In the garden of Eden, at the creation of the world, when Adam and Eve sinned, they were separated from God because God cannot be around sin. Therefore, a spiritual separation came from that. But then Jesus came to earth, and his life/death/resurrection gave each of us a chance to actually have a relationship of God and overcome that spiritual death — which is kind of what the Bible says when it means those in Jesus won't die. It doesn't mean we don't die here on earth, but it does mean that spiritual separation is overcome — that spiritual death is no longer.

So with that settled, let's keep going. Here's where it gets tough.

**Death is UNCERTAIN and UNKNOWN, yet INESCAPABLE and INEVITABLE.
(WHITE BOARD)**

So how do we deal with it?

How do we COPE with the loss of a loved one? (WHITE BOARD)

When you lose someone you are close to, it's heart breaking and devastating... I am not an expert, but I think two parts need to happen in you.

First — **it sucks**. I hate that we have to go through this, but again there is no way around it. It is the way of life. We have to acknowledge that death here on earth is just no fun.

Second — the best advice I can give you is — **LEAN IN**. You are going to feel tons of emotions and feelings — many people say their are five stages to grief — **Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and finally, Acceptance (WHITE BOARD)** — FEEL THOSE STAGES.

Let the emotions in, let yourself feel them, and then let other people in also. They are hurting too. It's crazy because even though Jesus was God, he still went through emotions. Jesus had lost one of his closest friends, a family friend, and the shortest verse in the Bible says, "Jesus wept." Jesus cried. Such a HUMAN thing to do, he let those emotions in, he felt the pain and the loss.

But then he surrounded himself with other people. His disciples. Mary and Martha. Tons of people because he know that the only way to get through those hard times is by the arms of those around us lifting us up. Being a shoulder to cry on.

Losing someone you love is HARD. Sometimes unbearable — but it is inevitable, we can't stop it, but we are also NOT ALONE in the process.

If you are in this spot, please talk to a leader about it. Talk to a friend about it. Vocalize the pain and anger and the emotion — let it in and let's learn from it together and become even better and stronger friends together here with each other.

This leads us to the third question — if my Aunt Ruth was here yesterday, but now today she's not here anymore... where did she go?

What happens when you die and where do you go? (WHITE BOARD)

SOLID question. So if death is a separation, the soul leaving the body. Where does the soul go? It goes to one of two places. To be with God or to be without God. Let me clarify... it goes to Heaven... or it goes to ****WHISPERS**** Hell.

Transition [\(YOU\)](#)

I think the connotations around “Hell” are funny — it’s like we don’t wanna talk about it, but it’s a reality we need to talk about.

CONCLUSION [\(YOU/WE\)](#)

I want to conclude with this question and a story from the scripture that actually Jesus told.

Let’s look at this story. I want you to really focus in. It’ll be on the screen or you can just close your eyes and listen and imagine, whatever you gotta do! Here we go:

Luke 16:19-25

“Jesus said, ‘There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.’

Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’

But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm [or space] separating us. No one can cross to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’”

Okay. Dang.

This story is key to understanding Heaven and Hell. Notice something, both men continued their lives AFTER their death... Our lives continue to somewhere, but what and where are those places?

HEAVEN (WHITE BOARD) — location number 1 was but Abrahams side and the heavenly banquet. He was in Heaven. This is a place of safety. This is a place of rest and relaxation. That is how heaven is described here.

Place number two: **HELL (WHITE BOARD)** — location number 2 is a place of the dead and torment. He was asking for just a little bit of pity from Abraham and Lazarus. This man understand that he is not in a good place. This man can fully see what is going on in Heaven. He sees the good, but all he knows is Hell. He only knows the bad. Pain. Flames. Fear.

This story shows us a harsh truth — once this rich mans soul was in hell, there was no way for him to get to heaven...

But the poor man on the other hand is in a place of GOD'S PRESENCE. He is in a place called Heaven. And Heaven is the eternal (never-ending) resting place for those who put their faith and lives in Jesus. Only perfection exists in Heaven. No pain. No sin. No suffering. Heaven is an AWESOME place.

The Bible describes it as **MAJESTIC (WHITE BOARD) — BEAUTIFUL — TAKES OUR BREATH AWAY** — Paul on of the writers in the New Testament actually mentioned he couldn't wait to die because he wanted to be in Heaven.

No more sorrow. No more pain. No more crying. We simply enjoy the perfection and beauty of being in the presence of Jesus. Sitting at his feet. Worshipping him. It's hard to describe in human terms because the greatness, beauty, and glory is indescribable. It's so amazing, we can't understand and put it into words. But we know that it is a place we want to be because God is there. We want to be with Him.

So **where do we go when we die?** Here's the thing — although heaven is for real, heaven will not be for everyone... That's harsh but its true. God gives us a clear choice here on earth. If we choose him, when we die or when a loved one dies, our souls go to be with him.

This is the truth that gives me a little peace and satisfaction when I know Christians are dying all around the world. Or my loved ones die. They are gone — yes — but WOW. They aren't worried about ANYTHING anymore because they are sitting at the feet of Jesus, and I cannot wait to be there with them.

This gives me some peace and comfort moving forward... Death is a hard thing to grasp and it is not fun BUT when we know Jesus and have chosen to follow him, we are in good hands.

The best hands.

The hands of the creator.

What does that mean for you? Let's recap quickly.

1. Death is a known concept in the Bible.
2. Death and loss hurt.
3. When you deal with it, open up about how you feel — its normal.
4. Learn to be open, talk about it, ask for help.
5. You choose your eternal destination.

See #5 is the important and main thing tonight.

Here me out...

YOU choose where you end up... (WHITE BOARD)

There is a common MISunderstanding about death and it is that God decides who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell. That's not true.

In this life, if we choose to reject God and say we don't need him now, we choose eternal separate from him.

HOWEVER, if we choose Jesus in this life — we will spend eternal life with him.

No one is sending anyone anywhere. We get a choice. We live now with him and continue to do that when we die. Or we choose to live without him and continue to do that after we die.

Death isn't meant to be defeat — death is actually something that we as Christians should always look forward to because it brings us into the forever presence of our God.

Listen.

We know this can be a lot, and you know you might want to chat more about this with me or a leader. Please do.

We don't promise all the answers but we do promise sound biblical teachings to help you understand the mysterious topic that is death. 7

Let's pray.