

“The Hope of God in Death”

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Scriptural Foundation: 2 Samuel 12:15-23; 18:24-33, ESV

We will catch two stories in the life of David in these texts. We are nearing the end of this study. We have a couple of more passages to cover. These two passages represent the deaths of two of David's sons and we will consider our hope in God in the face of death.

The context, of course, is that Nathan has confronted David over his sin and David repents. These two texts offer us a contrast of David's mourning. On the one, he is comforted when the child dies and on the other, he is overwhelmed with grief. Some fifteen years passes between these two experiences for David.

David's Child Dies

^{12:15} And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. ¹⁶ David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. ¹⁷ And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. ¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, “Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm.” ¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” They said, “He is dead.” ²⁰ Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. ²¹ Then his servants said to him, “What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.” ²² He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’” ²³ But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

David Hears of Absalom's Death

^{18:24} Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. ²⁵ The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, “If he is alone, there is news in his mouth.” And he drew nearer and nearer. ²⁶ The watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the gate and said, “See, another man running alone!” The king said, “He also brings news.” ²⁷ The watchman said, “I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.” And the king said, “He is a good man and comes with good news.”

²⁸ Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, “All is well.” And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth and said, “Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king.” ²⁹ And the king said, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent the king's servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was.” ³⁰ And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still.

David's Grief

³¹ And behold, the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, “Good news for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you.” ³² The king said to the Cushite, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.” ³³ And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Death knocks at a time we do not know when. When it knocks it enters with force and devastation. Who can keep this frightening intruder out? Death is feared by kings and slaves, by rich and poor, by the famous and the unknown. No one escapes death's interest. It is said the French son-king, Louis XIV, so feared death he would not allow the word "death" to be uttered in his presence. Many attempt to cope with the fact of death in the same way. We refuse to talk about it; we will not think about it; and it is too terrible to contemplate.

The philosopher, Aristotle, wrote, "Death is a dreadful thing for it is the end." For Aristotle death is the end, the end of one's existence, the end of one's joy, the end of one's future, the end of love, the end of hope, the end of friendship, of family, of accomplishment. Is Aristotle right? Is death the end?

This past week Bev Burnham, the dear wife of a former elder, a precious friend, was taken to the hospital. Bev had been battling with pulmonary fibrosis and now she was fighting for breath. She had been in the hospital before because of this illness, but this time she and Jon knew she would not return to her earthy home. Instead, she would be transported by angels to her Eternal Home.

I had the joy of visiting Bev on Thursday. She went Home on Friday. She lay in her hospital bed with her family gathered around. She had a shining visage. Her eyes were clear blue and bright as we conversed and laughed and reminisced. She had this smile that anyone who knows her knows well because it is the same smile she has had in her life all the years God has given to her. It was a smile that lit up her whole face and the whole room. She radiated joy.

She knew what was coming. She would talk with medical staff of her hope in Jesus. I do not believe I will ever forget the love of Jesus that radiated from her and the hope of Christ that radiated from her in that hour. Bev knew something Aristotle did not know; she knew death was not the end, but rather the beginning of an entrance into God's very presence.

I asked her what Scripture she would like for me to read and she said John 14,

¹ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

Just two weeks ago, here in this sanctuary, Bev was sitting worshipping with us. Today she is worshipping in Heaven.

In this study, I want to talk about how we can be filled with hope in the face of death. We have a Savior from Heaven who came into this world to free us from the fear of death and to seal our future forever in Heaven. Hebrews 2 tells us,

¹⁴ Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. ¹⁵ Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.¹

One reason why Jesus Christ took on flesh and blood, Hebrews will tell us, is to set us free from the fear of death. When we read about the empty tomb we would recognize the power of death over us has been broken. In this study of the life of David, David knows the lost death brings him. We will consider the death of two of his sons who died roughly fifteen years apart. One of the sons died in infancy and the other died in sin.

It is told for us in our texts, we will consider the hope of God in the death of an infant and soberly the hopelessness of one who dies in rebellion toward God, for that is Absalom. **Let us consider, first, the hope of God in the death of an infant.**

David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. He then had Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, killed in battle. He then marries Bathsheba as she has conceived a child and he hopes to live happily ever after, but that is not what happens. He is living in misery because his fellowship, his communion, with God is broken. That is evident in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51.

¹ New Living Translation (NLT)

Approximately one year later, after the sin, God sends Nathan to David and Nathan confronts David in a truly artful way in the first part of Chapter 12. David, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is convicted of his sin and he says,

¹³ Then David confessed to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you won’t die for this sin.”

David is broken and he knows sin needs to be forgiven in order for him to be able to have communion with God. He also knows he has opened the door to sin’s power and its enslaving force over his life. In Psalm 51, David prays for both of those things to be broken and for him to be made clean and forgiven and for sin to be rooted out,

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice... ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me... ¹² Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.²

David recognizes the Lord has afflicted him this past year and He had kept quiet. David recognizes his heart has been muddled because he has opened the door to all the sewage and filth in his life.

He had been given the first, the forgiveness, but the second, a clean heart, is a process which is often painful and wrought by the discipling hand of God. David trusts God in the process, first, of bringing forgiveness and what a pleasant process that is. It is announced and given to us on the basis of the blood of Jesus. But, he also trusts God with the painful process of bringing restoration to his soul. David asks God not to just cleanse him from the guilt of his sin but also to cleanse him and free him from the control of sin over his life, a control he has yielded over. He knows becoming free from sin’s power is going to hurt.

Nathan continues,

¹⁴ Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.”

Nathan tells David the discipling hand of God will fall heavy upon him. God loves David but God must use the sharp scalpel of trial to bring healing to David’s soul and to bring restoration. David willingly receives God’s sovereign discipline with sorrow, for sure, but also with faith; he believes God.

Notice, upon this announce, what David does not do. He does not rage against God when he hears Nathan tell him of God’s discipline upon his life. Instead, David trusts. He believes God is acting out of love and mercy toward him and, indeed, God is. The principle we learn is the Lord’s ways are not always easy to understand and accept, but God’s ways are always motivated by His love for His own children.

Sometimes that love is a discipling love, such as we see with David. Other times it is merely a discipling love, a love used by God as God’s instrument in our life. I believe that is what happens in Job’s life. He also lost children and he had done nothing wrong. It was not as though God was discipling him for something he had done, but it was simply a trial and test God brought to strengthen his faith and ready him for his joy in eternity. We read of the story of Job in Job 1. He loses all of his possessions and one messenger after another is coming in telling of one calamity after another. The last messenger comes and says,

¹⁸ “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

² Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Job came into this world without sons and daughters; they were a gift from God's hand. Job trusted in God. He did not sin by charging God, which is tempting in this situation, with doing wrong, being unrighteous, unfair, and unloving.

Our acceptance of God's sovereign will does not mean we are stoic or passive in our approach to sorrowful trials. Righteous Job tore his robe and he mourned. Faith is always active. Faith moves us toward worship. In our grief and in our sorrow it still moves us toward trust.

We return to our text,

¹⁵ Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick.

God did what God said He was going to do,

¹⁶ David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. ¹⁷ And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

David asked God for mercy. Fewer earthly sorrows run deeper than desperate illness in a son or a daughter, even, indeed, in the death of a son or a daughter. Death never seems quite natural to us and I believe that is true because we were not created for death. When God created us, He did not create us with death in view. It was man who sinned and brought death in. That was not a part of God's specific, good design for this world. But, the death of a child seems truly out of place.

It brings a sorrow that strikes against our most cherished dreams and hopes for the future. I know some of you are bearing that sorrow this day. It is difficult to describe the ache inside of one. How does faith respond in such a trial? The response of faith is not one of giddy denial, "Ah, everything is well. Praise the Lord!" with a happy, little smile on the face. Faith responds with genuine sorrow; it is a good thing. God gives sorrow to us.

When we are coming along side those who are in sorrow, as believers, when other believers are weeping because of the painful trouble afflicting them, we do not come along side and say, "It is okay. Do not cry." It is not ours to attempt to prevent tears. God tells us to weep with those who weep.³ Instead of coming along side someone and patting them and hoping their tears will stop, we need to come along side of them and cry with them. Pray with them. Do not preach at them, but open Scripture and say, "Can I share with you a verse God has given to me?" Scripture is so helpful. It brings hope.

Faith's response is not one of giddy denial, but it is one of submission to God, "God, I trust you." It is right to be grieved and confused, but faith clings to God and says, "I humble myself before You. I trust You and I worship You."

If our trials cause us to shake our fist in anger at God and we say, "I refuse to worship a God who would allow something like this into my life." When we do that we cast ourselves outside of His help and outside of His goodness. Do not sin that way because it brings greater grief. Isaiah 55 says,

⁷ ...let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

David cherishes his newborn son. He is fasting and praying in hopes God will relent of His decision to take this child's life. He knows we most often do not absolutely know the final decree of God. David is thinking maybe God will do something else and he pleads to preserve his son's life. I believe he is right in this and I believe he is doing that which the Centurion did in Luke 7, when his beloved servant, his son-like servant, fell ill. He pleaded with Jesus to heal him and Jesus did that. Sometimes that is the outcome of our prayers. God hears; He always hears. God answers; He always answers. Sometimes He answers in the way we desire Him to answer.

³ Romans 12:15

It is right for us to plead with God. The Apostle Peter will tell us, “Cast all your cares upon Him. He cares for you.”⁴ The Apostle Paul will tell us, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known.”⁵ Let God know. You may say, “I thought God already knows.” He does, but He wants to hear it from you so He can minister to you. Prayer opens our heart to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.⁶

In our text we read,

¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, “Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm.”¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” They said, “He is dead.”²⁰ Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.

David did exactly what Job did.

I want to discuss **the comfort of a future reunion** I believe David has. God heard and God answered David’s prayer, not according to David’s flawed will but according to His perfect and kind will. David understands that and he trusts God for that.

He worships and then he takes some food. The servants are looking at David and scratching their heads, wondering, “What has happened?” They may be thinking David is a man who cannot get in touch with his feelings and maybe he is in denial and deciding to close himself off from the painful reality of this. David is not of that nature, however. When we read his psalms, we know his nature and we know he is very connected to his emotions and very real in his responses.

David’s response is that of a deep, connected, hopeful heart of faith and David explains to the servants why he is responding the way he is,

²² He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’”²³ But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

That last comment is such a great word of faith. This is a statement of hope which strengthens David. Some say this means David is admitting he is going to die also and he will be buried in the same grave as his son. It is his loss so there is no sense in bemoaning reality. I find that explanation truly silly. The reality of an eventual grave for both will not cause a person to wash themselves, begin to eat, and rise and carry on the way David does.

When David says, “I shall go to him,” he tells them he will see his son again. Contrast this, in 2 Samuel 12, with David’s response to the rebellion’s son’s death, Absalom, in 2 Samuel 18. When Absalom dies, David does not wash himself. He receives the news and he is concerned about his son, Absalom. We can tell this by the two messengers who come to David to give a report. The first questions David does not ask, “How are the men doing? How is the battle doing? Is my kingdom going to be intact? Am I about ready to die?” Those are real questions because the rebellion was a strong and prevailing one. The first question is David’s heart is, “What about my son, Absalom?” even as Absalom is knifing him with his rebellion.

When the second messenger confirms Absalom is dead, what does David do? How contrasting is his response with what he does in 2 Samuel 12. He cries out in a grief that is inconsolable. In fact, later Joab is going to have to come to him and tell him, “David, stop mourning. It is not good for the nation. You have had people put their lives on the line. You have had twenty thousand men die because of Absalom’s rebellion. It is not right for you, as the king, to mourn

⁴ 1 Peter 5:7

⁵ Philippians 4:6

⁶ Philippians 4:7

in such a way because you are going to make this people who are loyal and devoted to you believe you do not love them.”⁷ His grief was inconsolable,

^{33b} “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

David is not comforted in Absalom’s death. Why? It is because he knows he will not ever again see his rebellious son. Absalom dies in the righteous judgment of God and there is no more.

The principle we learn from 2 Samuel 12 is: infants who sleep in death awaken to the joy of Heaven. That is the confidence we have. These little ones die and they open their eyes and they see God face-to-face. I am indebted to a book John MacArthur wrote titled, Safe in the Arms of God. I encourage you to read it. It is available in the church library.

We do not believe infants who die go to Heaven because we emotionally want to believe that. We do not say, “This is what I wish would happen so that is the reason why I am going to believe that.” We never base what we believe upon what we emotionally desire to believe. That is a horrible place to root and ground one’s life. We believe what we believe because God communicates to us what is true about the world beyond us. What God communicates to us in this passage is infants who die enter into the joy of Heaven.

Some may wonder, “What are some other Scriptures that teach this truth?” Let me give two other witnesses, Job and Jesus. First, Job goes through a hard time and there is a time when he is so discouraged he asked this question, in Job 3,

¹⁶ “Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ¹⁷ There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.”

Job talks about a place: there. In the place the stillborn infants and children are, “there” there are no wicked people troubling them and the weary are at rest and at peace. He describes a place of comfort and joy. Job believes little ones who die before they are born are in a better place because they are free from the temporal troubles, pains, and evils of this life, but also because they are with their Redeemer. Job writes of his own confidence in this in Job 19,

²⁶ “And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God...”

This truth is held onto through the centuries by Christians in times of great grief. John Newton, the hymn writer who wrote “Amazing Grace”, perhaps the most well-known hymn in the English language, wrote a letter to dear friends who lost a little child in death. Consider what he writes, “I hope you are both well reconciled to the death of your child. I cannot be sorry for the death of infants. How many storms do they escape? Nor can I doubt they are included in the election of grace.”

Jesus also points to the truth, I believe, in sections such as Matthew 18 and 19. He called little children to Himself and He put Himself in the midst of them and said,

^{18:2} And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, “*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*”

Later He gathered little children around Himself and the disciples said, “No, get away little children. You are bothering the Master.” He rebukes the disciples by saying,

^{19:14} “*Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.*”

While these passages are not directly saying infants who die go to Heaven, they indicate the heart of God regarding children and they also indicate the kind of heart of a child God receives.

⁷ 2 Samuel 19:1-8

David fully anticipates a joyful reunion with his son. Death for the Christian is never, “Good-bye,” it is always, “Until we meet again.” For David, in order for this reunion to happen, two things had to happen. First, the child must be in Heaven. Second, David must be in Heaven and David has that as a confidence. He writes, in Psalm 23,

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Let me ask you, is this your confidence? Do you know, when you die, you have a home in Heaven? That is David’s confidence and I believe it is the confidence God intends for everyone of His own to possess. How can we have such confidence? It is through the resurrected Savior.

When Jesus talked to Martha at the funeral of Lazarus, Martha’s brother and Jesus’ friend, He said,

John 11:25 *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. ²⁶ And everyone who believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

Beloved, our confidence of our future rests not in our worthiness or in our goodness, but our confidence rests in the One who took on human flesh and died to experience our sin’s punishment so we would never be touched by the judgment of God. Do you have Jesus as your own? God calls you to come to Him.

We are also **comforted by the purposeful life** God gives to little ones. I believe David had this sense of the purpose of his son’s life. He was not asking the question, “Why?” because he recognized his son fulfilled God’s purpose. David wrote Psalm 139 and it is a beautiful psalm regarding his own birth. I believe he understands this is true because he understood it was true of himself and of his son who died,

¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

David is telling us, when he was being knitted, He had a design for a specific number of days he would live and a specific purpose for his life. He knew his beginning days and before he took one breath He knew and established his ending date. He is sovereign over all of life and David understood that about this little child; as He was knitting this child in Bathsheba’s womb, the Lord had a specific, eternal, meaningful, and powerful purpose and God completed His purpose.

What purpose does a little child who only lives a week have in this world? It is the same purpose you and I have: it is to make God known. We are discovering more about God because of this little child. Can we say this child does not have a purpose when we are still talking about it 3,000 years later? This child helps us to understand who God is.

How does the life of an infant bring glory to God? First, they help us to recognize the brevity of this life and the infinite nature of Heaven.

Second, their life makes us yearn all the more for Heaven. When they are gone, do we not think more about Heaven? I have not talked to any mother or father who has lost a little one, whether stillborn or as a child, who does not think much, much more about Heaven and much, much more about God. That little child purpose is fulfilled by causing us to know the reality of God.

Third, their life makes us come to the end of our strength and to know the sufficiency of God’s grace. Who could bear such a deep, painful wound on their own? Thankfully we are never on our own. God comes along side of us and His grace becomes sufficient for us.

Fourth, their life makes us embrace more dearly the preciousness of the Gospel because it is the Gospel of Jesus which gives us hope from death. Without the Gospel there would not be hope for infants or hope for adults.

Let's jump ahead fifteen years and briefly look at **the hopelessness of the one who dies in rebellion to God**. First, we look at **the rebellion of a son who had been given much**. How much had Absalom been given in life? He had been given a physical beauty, a physical leadership ability, intelligence, respect, and a family, yet he rebels. He kills his half-brother Amnon. He revolts against his father, openly lying with his father's concubines, and 20,000 Jewish soldiers die as a result of his sin.

Then he comes to ruin, the ruin rebellion brings to life. His life becomes a wreck and he ultimately meets an untimely death as a result of it. His life is ruined. His life could have been so great, so long, so lasting, and so blessed, but it becomes absolute ruin. He believed rebellion and sin would lead to him to life, but rebellion against God never leads to joy. What needless ruin it is. If only Absalom had submitted himself to God.

Finally, there is **the retribution that awaits those who refuse to submit to God as King**. Absalom dies and David weeps,

^{33b} And as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

How awful is the death of one who is in rebellion against God. So much space is given to Absalom. We did not read all of his story, but from Chapter 13 on Absalom will appear. I believe God wants us to read Absalom and see ourselves in the mirror. We are Absalom. We rebel against a King who is rightful and on the throne, who has given to us so much. In our rebellion, our lives come to utter ruin and if nothing changes we await certain retribution. We must become reconciled to the King or all will be lost for all of eternity.

Absalom never reconciled with David. David was not like Jesus, the next David. He did treat Absalom with grace and mercy and wisdom. He allowed his bitterness toward Absalom to become an isolation and a wall between himself and his son. I believe that is a big part of David's grief over his son, not only that he would never see his son again, but he recognized he took a great deal of fault and responsibility in that.

Fathers, and mothers, too, if there is anything raising a wall between you and a child, a child who has been in rebellion against you, ask God to break it down. God intends you to be an instrument of mercy and grace and love toward you children. I know it is hard and I know there is a sense of rightness about holding onto that wall, but that wall is not the Gospel. God is the God of reconciliation and He would have us in as much as it depends upon us to be an instrument of mercy and grace. David was not that and when he died, I believe he realized there were no more opportunities for him to be that.

In 2 Corinthians 5, we read,

¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

No one escapes God's justice, not apart from God's gracious work of reconciliation. That is the reason why the Apostle Paul is making his appeal and he implores us because he does not want this hopelessness that comes to everyone who is in rebellion against the King to fall upon us and it will. We are implored, in view of God's mercy be reconciled and do not die in hopeless despair. God opens His arms to receive us through Jesus Christ. Believe in Him. Trust in Him. Receive Him.

Aristotle wrote, "Death is a dreadful thing for it is the end."

Jesus says,

John 11:25 *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. ²⁶ And everyone who believes in me will never die..."*

And that is the Truth!