

Life and Immortality Through the Gospel

From chapter 2 (“Do Not Be Ashamed”) from Michael Youssef’s new book, *Never Give Up*

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked the Father, “Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will” (Mark 14:36). He prayed three times for some way to escape the cross. Each time, the Father’s answer was silence—which was the same as “No.” (This is an important lesson to remember when our own prayers are met with silence. If God said “No” to the prayers of His Son, we should not feel it’s unfair when God says “No” to our petitions.)

Jesus was obedient and willing to bear the shame of a criminal’s death, the shame of bearing all the sins of the human race. Jesus was willing to undergo a depth of humiliation, suffering, and shame that you and I cannot begin to understand.

But Peter, the most bold and outspoken of the twelve disciples of Jesus, was unwilling to taste of the cup that Jesus drank. While Jesus was on trial, Peter warmed himself by the fire in the courtyard of Caiaphas’ house. A servant girl confronted Peter and said, “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus.” Peter was ashamed to be identified with Christ. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said (Mark 14:67-68).

The servant girl wouldn’t let up. She continued to accuse him of being a follower of Jesus. Three times Peter denied knowing him.

On the night before the crucifixion, Peter was ashamed to acknowledge that he was a follower of Jesus Christ. After the

resurrection, Peter would become the boldest and bravest of all the apostles. Tradition tells us that Peter died on a cross, crucified upside down because he declared himself unworthy to die in the same manner as the Lord.

No matter what the world does to us, we must never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we suffer for the gospel, we are not alone. As Peter and Paul would tell us, the worst they can do is kill us—and once that's over, we'll be in the presence of our Lord.

That's why Paul, in verses 9 and 10, says to Timothy, "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." In other words, do not be afraid of death. Why? Because God saved us, called us, and has brought us from death to life. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has abolished death for all believers.

Three Kinds of Death

The Bible speaks of death in three different ways. First, there is physical death, in which the soul is separated from the body. Second, there is spiritual death, in which the soul of the nonbeliever is separated from God. Third, there is eternal death, the separation of both body and soul of nonbelievers from God forever and ever.

All three forms of death are the result of sin. All three forms of death are sin's reward. But are you ready for the wonderful news? Are you ready to jump up and shout?

For those who believe in him, Jesus has abolished eternal death!

He has not abolished physical death—even believers die physically. But physical death is a very different experience

for the believer than for the nonbeliever. We who have placed our trust in Christ will live forever with him. Though we all physically die, the believer has the authority to taunt and mock death, as Paul himself wrote: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55).

The grim specter of death, which has haunted humanity since Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden, holds no terror for those who belong to Jesus. After Lazarus died and was laid in the tomb, Jesus said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (John 11:25–26). Jesus is saying that those who put their trust in Him:

Shall never die.

Shall never be separated from him.

Shall never experience the second death.

Shall live forever in the presence of the Lord.

Because of this truth, Paul could say to Timothy, "My spiritual son, what are you afraid of? The worst they can do is kill you. And that is not the end of life. That is not the end of the world. That is the beginning!" Paul, writing from a Roman dungeon, is telling Timothy, "The reason I have victory in this prison, the reason I have victory in the final days before my execution, the reason I am not afraid of what they can do to me, the reason I am not ashamed of the gospel, no matter how much opposition or persecution I face is because I know I have already passed from death to life. I know that, whether my physical body is dead or alive, I am already seated in the heavenly realms with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." (See Ephesians 2:6.)

Many people, including many Christians, do not understand what the Bible teaches about our eternal life with Him. Many have

been fooled by ridiculous images in movies and cartoons, which depict heaven as a place where we sit on clouds, strumming harps and wearing halos and angel wings. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The moment we die, we go immediately into the presence of the Lord and receive our glorified bodies. As Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). And as Paul wrote, “For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53).

“But our citizenship is in heaven,” writes Paul. “And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:20-21). When this body gives up on me, I have a superior physical and supernatural body ready for me.

For the believer, the only consequence of death is that you move from the basement to the penthouse. It will be a day of rejoicing and blessing.

For more information on Never Give Up, check out [. {eo}](#)

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.