



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – August 25, 2019

To Know Christ...

Have you heard this before? Death is sweet when there is life-giving hope. When our friends, neighbors, and enemies come to die with Jesus to their old self, is it not sweet? It is sweet because of their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus since they are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins and united with Him. They have engaged the covenant of Jesus to be raised up in LIFE from spiritual death. On a separate plane, when a faithful saint dies, at any age, is their physical death encouraging news? We do miss those of encouraging faith, but we should enjoy the thoughts of their soul being with the Lord having Eternal Life. Death is sweet, because of Jesus being their life-giving Savior.

When Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to bury the slain Savior, Nicodemus brought about a hundred-pound mixture of myrrh and aloes. (John 19:39) Myrrh has a bitter, pungent smell, strong enough to overpower the smell of death, but aloe is a fragrant soothing clean aroma. This aloe is not from an aloe plant, like we think of putting aloe gel on our skin after a burn. This aloe came from “eagle-wood.” In order to harvest the sweet-smelling aloe resin, the logs are buried in the ground. Then after many days, the outer wood decays and the resin retreats into the heart of the wood. The wood is dug up (or raised up) from the earth. The outer decayed wood is stripped away, leaving the beautiful smell of the aloe resin/oil. The burial is made sweet by the resurrection of LIFE that abides in the heart of the wood.

We spend our days living out the sweet aroma of Christ after being raised up from the dead with Him. We strive to constantly strip the dead ways of the old self away from our character by His Spirit, seeking to reveal the sweet savor of Jesus that is in our blood-cleansed heart. We find life to be pleasing because of knowing we have Eternal Life through Jesus. Then when the day of our physical death comes, we rejoice in death for we know that it is time for this mortal body to be swallowed up in the victory that only Christ Jesus can give. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57) The mortal to put on immortality; the perishable to put on imperishable; the dishonor to be raised in

glory; and the natural to put on the spiritual eternal body. (v42-44) Death will be sweet because Jesus became the life-giving spirit for us. (v45)

Since we know these principles, what now? Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:58, “**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.**” The life we live in Christ now that is motivated by our Lord is not in vain, it’s not an empty promise. The continual putting aside of the old self has great value and benefit to the Lord. Paul encourages us to be steadfast, staying seated with Christ, and never to move or change from being with Him (knowing that even physical death will not move us away from Christ). Meanwhile as we give ourselves to sinking deeper into the heart of our Lord, which will show itself in the overflowing work of the Lord. Death is sweet with Jesus! By faith we have nothing to fear in physical death, and hope abounds in looking beyond the grave in view of Eternal Life.

- Carey Terry