

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – November 18, 2009

My ministry role has been impacted by two very premature deaths in recent days. Both of these families are grieving the loss of their respective loved ones. These sobering times serve to remind us that death is a reality for all of us. There is hope, however, even in death, as the Psalmist reminds us in today's Templates of Truth.

Psalm 116:15 states: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.* When we are going through the experience of death, it certainly doesn't feel very precious. It hurts with an emotional pain so great that at times it seems it will rob us of our own life. But inspired Scripture gives us the assurance that God places a high value on both life and death. The Hebrew word the Psalmist uses for *precious* in this verse means rare, costly, splendid or glorious. What could there possibly be about the death of our loved ones that is considered so precious and valuable to God? Four thoughts come to mind.

First, it is the occasion when God brings His godly ones home to be with Him. Solomon taught that when we die our body *returns to the earth as it was, but our spirit returns to God who gave it* (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Paul affirmed this truth when he emphasized that *while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.* That is why Paul stressed, *I prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord* (II Corinthians 5:6,8). There is no question that when believers in Christ die (*His godly ones*), our spirit immediately moves into the presence of God.

Second, death is when God fulfills His promise to us for eternal life. It is literally the first day of the rest of our eternal life. Jesus promised: *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life* (John 3:16). He later reiterated this truth: *he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die* (John 11:25-26). God never makes a promise He doesn't keep. It is precious to Him when He can make good on His promises. The death of *His godly ones* is one such occasion. Our death is the beginning of eternal life where we will never feel the sting of death again.

Third, God uses death to bring an end to our human suffering and aging. In describing heaven, John declared: *God wipes every tear from their eyes; and there is no longer any death; there is no longer any mourning or crying, or pain; (for all these things) have passed away* (Revelation 21:4). Our loved ones no longer feel pain, weakness from aging, sickness & disease, heartache from affliction & oppression; or sadness, loneliness, depression or fear. They are completely encompassed through-in and through-out with unadulterated joy, happiness, peace and satisfaction. They are in a place that defies all human understanding, as Paul proclaimed: *things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him* (I Corinthians 2:9).

Finally and foremost, the death of believers is precious to God because of the tremendous price He paid for their salvation. We are able to enter into a personal relationship with God, becoming one of *His godly ones*, only because of the death of God's Son, Jesus Christ. *The wages of sin is*

death (Romans 6:23), but the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross met the requirement of our death penalty. His very blood purchased our forgiveness and our eternal salvation. The value of a single splatter of the blood of Jesus that was shed for our sins cannot be appraised with even the world's total sum of gold, silver, diamonds, precious stones and wealth. It is priceless what God paid to redeem us to Himself. Our death and entrance into His presence finalizes that purchase.

While feeling the hurt and pain of overwhelming grief, it is a comfort to know that death will one day be precious for us as well. Not only will we gain the reality of these infinite truths, but we will also see our loved ones again at the moment when we pass from life into death. Death, therefore, is not "goodbye," just simply, "see you later" for those of us who are *His godly ones*.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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