



Lesson 10 Spirit of Life

**We all will die someday.
Mortality rates remain at
100% and nobody among us
is getting any younger.**

Among the Spirit's many essential movements in our lives is this: to prepare us for the end of our lives, without fear.

Many of us are afraid to even think about death, much less speak of it. That fear can enslave us and can rob us of so much aliveness. The Spirit moves within us to help us face death with hope, not fear...with quiet confidence, not anxiety.

Romans 8:2: The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Here is a way to think about death. We often speak of God as the one Who Was, Who Is and Who Is To Come. The God who WAS holds all our past; the God who IS surrounds us now and the God who IS TO COME will be there for us beyond this life as we know it.

Through death we join God in the vast, forever-expanding future, into which both past and present are forever taken up.

Read: Luke 20:27-38.

The Sadducees, conservative religious leaders did not believe in a resurrection of the dead because they could find no mention of it on the Pentateuch – Genesis through to Deuteronomy. They wanted to trick Jesus with their question. Jesus answered their question about marriage.

However, Jesus' statement does not mean that people will not recognize their spouses in heaven. It simply means that we must not think about heaven as an extension of life as we now know it. Relationships will be different from what we are used to here and now.

On the other side we can expect to experience as never before the unimaginable light or energy of God's presence. We will enter into a goodness so good, a richness so rich, a holiness so holy, a mercy and love so strong and true that all of our evil, pride, lust, greed, resentment and fear will be instantly melted out of us.

We can expect to feel a sense of reunion – yes, with loved ones who have died, but also with our great-great-great-great-grandparents and our cousins a thousand times removed whose names we've never known but to whom we are in fact related.

We can expect to feel a sense of oneness, a sense of belonging and connection that we have never felt before.

We can expect to feel differently about our sufferings. We will recognize the enduring virtue, courage and compassion that grew in us through each episode of pain.

We can expect to see what we longed for, reached for, touched but couldn't grasp and knew in part but now can be seen clearly.

Wouldn't it be great to be liberated from the fear of death?

Think of how that would change your values, perspectives and actions. To believe that no good thing is lost, but that all goodness will be taken up and consummated in God – think of how that frees you to do good without reservation. Think of how that would make every person matter and how it would free you to live with boundless, loving aliveness.

Read: Philippians 1:20-30

To those who don't believe in God, life on earth is all there is and so it is natural for them to strive for this world's values, money, popularity, power, pleasure and prestige.

For Paul, however, to live meant to develop eternal values and to tell others about Christ, who alone could help them see life from an eternal perspective.

If you are not ready to die – then you are not ready to live. Make certain of your eternal destiny, then you will be free to serve – devoting your life to what really counts, without fear of death.

You can imagine that dying will be like diving or falling or stepping into a big wave at the beach; you will feel yourself lifted off your feet and taken up into a swirl and curl and spin more powerful than you can now imagine.

There will be no fear because the motion and flow will be the dance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the rising tide will be life and joy; the understanding will be love and you will be drawn deeper and deeper in.

As we walk this road, we not only remember the past, we also anticipate the future, which is described as a great banquet around God's table of joy. When you pass from this life, do not be afraid. You will not pass into death. You will pass through death into a greater aliveness still – the banquet of God. Trust God and live.

Read: Revelation 21:1-7

Have you ever wondered what eternity will be like? The earth as we know it will not last forever, but after God's great judgement, He will create a new earth. God has promised, that He will remove all sorrows –

there will be no death, sorrow, crying or pain. What a wonderful truth. No matter what we are going through at the moment, it is not the last word.

God has written the final chapter and it is about the fulfillment and eternal joy for those who love Him.

We don't know what the new earth will look like or where it will be, but God and His followers – those whose names are written in the Book of Life – will be united to live there forever.

Will you be there?

Engage:

What one thought or idea from today's lesson intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenged, encouraged or helped you?

Can you recall any significant encounters you have had with death?

How do you respond to the idea that people are enslaved by the fear of death?

Activate:

Set a time this week to meet with a family member or friend. Create a safe space to freely talk about your own deaths, in light of this lesson.

Meditate:

We will share in a 5 min meditation again.

On your own, perhaps with soft music playing, take one of the images of death from today's lesson such as – being caught up in a wave, falling through this life into deeper life, waking up, birth, passing through a doorway – and hold it in God's presence until you feel death can be your friend, not your enemy.