

# THE NATURE OF DEATH

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery word, 29 August 2021  
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## Introduction

Hello, everyone. In this next season, we will again consider 'the new birth' as the Spirit continues to illuminate our understanding of this most important subject. Today we will focus on 'the nature of death' from which we are 'made alive' through the word of the cross.

This is the death that resulted from the fall of mankind and, for many of us, this will further clarify points that we are already quite familiar with.

## Dead in trespasses and sins

We will begin with the passage of Scripture this death. 'And you He made alive, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.' Eph 2:1-3.

It is important to note that the death identified by Paul in this passage is not a metaphor. It does not 'represent' something.

It is the death that belongs to a person who is *separated from God because of disobedience*, whether their mortal body is alive or not.

This is 'the death', and it is the same death that belongs to those who are alive in a mortal body. It is also the death that belongs to those whose body has perished, or expired.

How can that be the same death?

Unless a person is 'made alive' from this death – to be dead in trespasses and sins – when their mortality expires, this same death becomes their *eternal death*.

To understand this point, we need to understand the nature of mankind, and how this death entered through disobedience. So we will cover some ground that we have looked at before, but we will give a bit more detail today.

## Man was created body, soul and spirit; the heart of man

The Lord God created man with a body, a soul and a spirit. Or, we can say, 'A person is a body, soul and spirit.' 1Th 5:23.

Yahweh fashioned man's body from the dust of the earth and then breathed the breath of life into that body.

By this means, the spirit of man was formed in him – in this body – and he became a living, or spiritual, soul. His body was made out of the dust. Yahweh *Elohim* breathed into this body, and he became a spiritual soul, or a living soul.

The 'spirit' of the person refers to their identity. It is the essence of who they are.

Their 'soul' is an aspect of their identity, and it is the faculty of their person that gives them volition and consciousness, or awareness, of themselves.

So, they have a 'self', and their 'awareness of themselves' is the 'soul'.

And because they are aware of themselves, they can give yourself. That is the element of volition.

So, man has a spirit, which is a person's identity; and a soul, which is the faculty for volition and consciousness.

Together, the soul and the spirit of a person is called 'the inner man'.

Now, 'the outer man' refers to the *mortal* body of a person.

The 'heart' which the Scriptures refer to is the 'deepest centre' of a person. We can think of it as being the intersection of the body, soul and spirit. It is not only the spirit; and it is not only the soul.

The 'heart' of a person is expressed through how we live and act.

## Our eternal identity comes from God

Now, a living soul – a man, or woman; a person – has eternal identity, because that living soul has *come from God Himself*.

This is important for us to understand. A living soul is an eternal identity whose *expression* is dependent upon biological life.

### **Death – no capacity to express life**

If the biological body expires – it is not functioning anymore; it is dead - the spirit, the inner man, will exist forever, but will have no life, because it has no expression.

We can see that this is what 'death' is. Death is the absence of capacity to *express* 'life', or for an identity to have *expression*.

So, death is not the cessation of one's identity, or spirit, as though it doesn't exist anymore.

### **Death – disconnection from the life and fellowship of Yahweh**

It is *disconnection* from the life and fellowship of Yahweh, because He is the source of all life.

Before the Fall, Adam's mortality, or biological life, was sustained through his *daily fellowship* with Yahweh at the tree of life. This is important to note.

His mortal body was not *sustained* by the food that he ate. How do we know that?

We know that after mankind fell – remember Adam and Eve fell from fellowship with Yahweh; they were cast out of the garden of Eden where the tree of life was - Adam and Eve still ate food, but their bodies were now perishing.

So, their sustenance was not food; their connection to Yahweh sustained their mortal life.

### **The lie of Satan – 'You will not die'**

The Lord had said to Adam before the Fall that, in the day that he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die. He didn't say that to Eve; He said that to Adam.

Adam obviously communicated this foundational cultural statement to Eve, because that's exactly what she recounted to Satan when she was engaged in a discussion with him.

However, Satan endeavoured to deceive Eve with the lie that directly contradicted this implication of *disobedience*.

The way that Satan did this is interesting, because he addressed this issue of eternal existence, saying that she could have life because of her eternal identity.

And that is where the lie is!

'Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die".' Gen 3:4-5.

So it is important it is for us to understand the nature of 'death', because this is where Satan deceived Eve.

Eve is a picture of the church, the bride of Christ. This is where the church also becomes deceived, because they do not understand the nature of death.

'Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil".'

So, Satan was saying that Eve would not cease to exist, but would be able to have an expressed life *through her knowledge of good and evil*.

She would have eternal identity, but Satan was saying that the expression of that identity was not dependent on her connection to God or to Adam. Rather, she would be able to express her eternal identity through her knowledge of good and evil.

The implication is that she did not need to receive life from God, which means that she needed neither the word of God to define her expression; nor fellowship with Yahweh as the context for that expression.

That's where the lie is!

Having given ear to this alternative word – even before she ate; having just engaged in the conversation with Satan – Eve had something happen to her 'sight'. Her sight started to get distorted even before she ate of the food.

Having 'given her ear' to this alternative word, Eve saw that the tree was 'good for food'; that it was 'pleasant to the eyes', and 'desirable to make one wise'.

### **Giving ear to an alternative conversation**

Now, remember, Eve was probably in the garden. She had probably been there for about 2000 years. That is a long time to look at the tree and to never have seen it like that before.

However, as soon as she gave her ear and her voice to this *alternative conversation*, all of a sudden the food looked different to her.

Satan enters when we give our ear to a conversation that is other than the conversation that comes from the tree of life through the

ministry of the presbytery-messenger administration.

Attending to this alternative conversation affected how Eve saw, or perceived, this alternative food.

All of a sudden, it looked like the 'right' thing to do; it would not only be 'right', but she thought that it would be *beneficial* to her and to her family.

Adam's perspective was also perverted as he turned his face away from Christ, and *received the word* calling him to eat the fruit, *from his wife*.

Adam's perspective was also perverted as he turned his face from Christ, his Head, to receive the fruit from his wife.

Consequently, Adam also viewed the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as being good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and *desirable* to make one wise.

### **Pursuing another food**

In our next session we will speak particularly about the corruption of 'desire'; about the specifics of that corruption for men and for women.

It is not that desire is 'bad'. In fact, the Scriptures teach us that we are to have certain desires.

Rather, by pursuing another 'food', that desire was *corrupted* and became an insatiable void within Adam and Eve. That is actually the nature of their death.

### **Receiving another word – rejecting the word and fellowship of Yahweh**

We will now focus on the implication of having received Satan's word, and then eating that fruit.

The implication of receiving the word of Satan and eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that they *rejected the word of Yahweh* – and fellowship with Him – because they both *turned their faces away from the order of headship* through which the grace of life was coming to them.

### **Uncleanness - rejecting His word**

They rejected His word; rejected His fellowship; and they were now 'unclean'.

Their uncleanness wasn't because they were 'naughty'; their uncleanness was because they had *rejected Yahweh's word*.

Actually, uncleanness has to do with the *word* that we engage with. Jesus teaches us.

Uncleanness is the outcome of rejecting the word and fellowship of Yahweh.

### **Being clean – receiving and believing His word; abiding in fellowship**

Jesus explained to His disciples that they were clean because they *received and believed His word*.

And the evidence of receiving and believing His word was that they were *abiding* in the Vine, or in the Son.

'Abiding' means that they *dwelt in fellowship with the Son and with the Father*.

And, as we have learned over many seasons, that fellowship is *the fellowship of the presbytery*.

So, that is what it means to 'be clean'.

It is to be connected to receive that word, and to be connected to that fellowship.

Obviously, to be 'unclean' is to reject that word in favour of a different word and a different conversation.

Jesus said, 'I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.' Joh 15:1-4.

'*You are already clean* because of the *word* that I have spoken to you, and the *evidence* that you are receiving that is that you are *abiding with Me*.'

He said nothing about their 'good' works or 'bad' works; just that they received that word and were abiding in Him.

### **Cleanness and uncleanness**

In contrast, Judas, into whom Satan entered, was 'unclean'. He did *not* receive and believe the words of Jesus, particularly concerning the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood as a participation in the true *agape* meal that belongs to Yahweh.

So, importantly, 'cleanness' or 'uncleanness' has to do with the 'food' that we eat because of the *word* that we hear.

The disciples were clean because they 'heard' Christ's word, and were abiding in the Son, and He in them.

And Jesus said, 'That is the evidence, or the fruit, of someone who eats His flesh and drinks His blood.'

Judas, on the other hand, was unclean. Satan had entered him. And his very point of disconnection or deviation from Christ was literally the crisis of Christ's call to them to 'eat His flesh and drink His blood'. Joh 6:61-64.

### **Joining the fellowship of Christ's *agape* meal**

We read the discussion about the necessity to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. 'When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"'

Offence was coming! This is an indication of how *the word of the cross* begins to impact upon us.

'What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life.'

So the words that come from that *fellowship* are Spirit and life.

Obviously, 'other' words lead to the opposite of that – to the flesh and to death.

' "The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.'

This was the first reference to Judas beginning to deviate from, or to reject, the word that Jesus was speaking. And it was all about the *agape* meal – the communion meal.

### **Not receiving His word**

Then we read, 'Jesus said to him, "He who bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you".' Joh 13:10-11.

They were already clean because they had *received His word*.

And now they needed to have their feet washed – but not all of their body.

'For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean".'

Now, cleanness or uncleanness has nothing to do with 'goodness' or 'badness'.

The Scriptures teach us that Judas was Jesus' closest friend. And Judas thought that he was doing Jesus a favour by bringing Him into proximity with the Jewish authorities, so that they would acknowledge Jesus as Melchizedek, and He would take up His rulership of the nation, and the disciples would rule on the twelve thrones.

He thought that he was doing Jesus a favour, but it was really for his own sake, wasn't it! He desired a life for himself that was from the basis of his knowledge of good and evil.

He rejected the word that Jesus has said, which is, 'You only find life if you live by My word, and eat and drink My body and blood', in favour of a different word which says, 'There is an expression and identity that you can have; a life that you can have; an expression of yourself that you can have according to your knowledge of good and evil.'

That is what made him unclean and resulted in betrayal.

### **Uncleanness leads to death**

This is my next point Uncleanness is the beginning point, and uncleanness leads to death.

Uncleanness became the principle of Adam and Eve's lives.

The first part of the uncleanness was actually to 'give ear' to a different word, wasn't it! That was the point that I made about Eve. As soon as she engaged in that conversation, all of a sudden her perception changed. So the mark of uncleanness is actually the nature of our sight.

When they 'ate', they were not unclean because they had listened to another word. That uncleanness now became *a principle of life* for them. We could say that it became 'the death' of them.

This uncleanness became the principle of Adam and Eve's fallen life, and the lives of all the sons of daughters who would be born after them. I know it is difficult to understand regarding the word 'life' in this context, but this principle became the course of this world, the way that they walked; and that way is called '*dead* in trespasses and sins'.

## **Living by the law of love or by the law of the flesh**

Paul described this principle of life as ‘another law’. This was now in their heart. The ‘other law’ is *other than the law of love* that describes the nature of fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life.

God is *love*, and that describes how He lives, and what it means to be joined to the fellowship of Their table. That is why it is called an ‘*agape*’, or ‘love’, feast.

The other law is life based on ‘another’ food. The other law was now a desire within them to know and express their identity according to their own knowledge of good and evil.

Remember, there is *eternal identity*, but the *life* of that identity is in biological life through the *expression* of that identity.

So now their life, which Paul called ‘a death’, is the desire to ‘define’ or to ‘know themselves’ through their actions, according to their knowledge of good and evil. That is the other law.

## **Clinging to the dust – self-definition through the senses**

The expression of this identity – who you are – is through the faculties of your body; what you do.

People define themselves, or know themselves, by what they can do or by what they train to do; what they become.

They also define themselves through the feedback that they get from the environment in which they live – social, environmental; all the different contexts, constantly deriving information to achieve some sense of who they are.

That is a ‘dead’ person is. That is the nature of death, driven by desire.

This self-definition is what it means for a person’s soul to ‘cling to the dust’. Remember that your soul is the faculty of your person, by which you are aware of yourself; it is your consciousness!

So, if your soul ‘clings to the dust’, it means that your awareness of yourself, or your consciousness, is being derived from everything that was *created from the dust*.

Adam’s body was created from the dust, wasn’t it? So a person whose soul ‘clings to the dust’ endeavours to know themselves through what their

body is doing; through the information that they draw through the senses of their bodies.

## **Revival from the death by His word**

‘My soul clings to the dust.’ The psalmist wrote about this, saying, ‘My soul clings to the dust; *revive* me according to Your word.’

Why do we need revival?

It is because the soul of a person who is clinging to the dust is dead.

So ‘reviving’ is ‘from the dead’ – according to what? It is according to His word which is Spirit and life. This is straightforward.

## **The pursuit of life according to our own desire is a lie; it is death**

This *pursuit of life*, or expression of identity according to one’s own knowledge of good and evil, is based on a lie.

Satan said, ‘You will not die, but you can be like God and have life if you eat this fruit.’ That was a complete lie, because God, who is true, said, ‘If you eat this fruit, you will die.’

So the pursuit of this desire, which is now right in the identity of a person – right in their heart – is actually the pursuit of something that is a complete fallacy; a complete delusion; a complete fabrication. You can never get there, because it’s not actually true.

But people who have this desire in their heart do not believe that it is not true. This pursuit is based on a lie. There is no substance, or reality, to it.

This lie and the impact that it has on a person is extraordinary.

*God is the only source of all life.*

And the pursuit of life, apart from obedience to His word which is Spirit and life, is death.

So we see that the desire for life, based on Satan’s lie, is death, because it constantly drives a person away from where the life is – it is the pursuit of something that is not true, or real.

And, because it is not substantial, but the drive within us to have it is so strong – we can liken this desire to a void within us; a space within us that is like a vacuum – it can never be filled, because the desire to fill it is based on something that is not true, or real.

The desire for life, based on the lie of Satan, is death.

### **Death - a void of life and self-knowledge**

We can describe the nature of death as 'a void of life and true self-knowledge' within the sons and daughters of Adam.

This yearning, this ache, within mankind to know themselves and to find life through what they think or perceive to be good for themselves, and to avoid what is evil, is eternal death. That is what it means to be 'dead'.

### **The drive to fill this void - desire**

The sons and daughters of Adam are now driven to fill this void through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. 1Jn 2:16.

John picked up what happened to the sight of Adam and Eve when they gave ear to Satan's word. What did it look like? It was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise.

That 'desire' becomes the drive to fill the void; to look for anything to fill the void. Mankind is now driven to fill that void through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

However, the void can never be filled, because it is not based on anything substantial. It is like being sucked into 'nothing'.

The Scriptures provide some helpful details about this. This 'void' principle may be a little abstract to you, so we will look at the Scriptures, and you will see that it is 'as plain as day' there.

We register that ache that is in fallen human beings. That is the death from which we are being 'made alive' in Christ!

### **Four elements of desire**

'There are three things that are never satisfied.' Pro 30:15. Remember, that the void can never be filled. It is like being sucked in, and the drive to fill that void is insatiable.

'There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, "enough!" ' Pro 30:16.

Another way of reading that passage is to look at three elements, or three expressions, of this insatiable desire; and then it is summed up in a fourth.

### *The grave*

The first element is 'the grave', which literally means 'death'.

We connect that void, which is the insatiable desire to have life through our knowledge of good and evil, with 'death'. It is a grave.

### *A barren womb*

The second element is 'a barren womb'. A barren womb is the inability to bring anything to life. It is the inability to actually birth anything.

So, a church that does not have the gospel of sonship and is proclaiming a gospel that appeals to the flesh cannot bring anything to *birth!* It causes absolute distress.

### *Not satisfied*

'The earth that is not satisfied with water.' That is an 'earth' that is a wilderness. It is a desert, a howling wilderness. That is 'the wilderness of the peoples'.

### *Perpetual death*

Then these are summed up a fourth element., 'The fire never says, "enough!" ' It all culminates in a lake of fire. That is where death ends – or ends up - because it becomes a perpetual death. This is an amazing passage.

### **Never satisfied - distress**

We read, 'Hell [or Sheol] and destruction', referring to Abaddon. Pro 27:20.

So there is an eschatological implication here. Abaddon is referred to in the book of Revelation.

'Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of a man are never satisfied.' This is 'the lust of the eyes', isn't it - driven to try to fill this void, but it can never be filled.

We read in Habakkuk, 'Behold, as for the proud one.' This refers to 'desirable to make one wise', as though a person has knowledge and they know how to proceed in life.

'Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him.' Hab 2:4-5. We see the aspect of distress here. There is an aberration in his soul; and that is a soul that is 'clinging to the dust' - trying to know himself through what he does, and through the information which he derives through his body.

### **The righteous lives by faith**

'Behold, as for the proud one [referring to his identity], his soul is not right within him; but *the righteous will live by his faith.*'

Where did he get that faith? He got it by *hearing God's word.*

And what does faith look like? It looks like *a conversation in the midst of a congregation.* It looks like participation in an *agape* meal.

How do we know that? It is because 'faith works by love'.

### **Death - seeking 'mixed wine'**

'As for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith. Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man.'

This is amazing! We have taught a number of sessions looking at the nature of 'mixed wine'.

Those who are engaged in this death actually are looking for 'wine'. We could say that the wine that they have engaged with is the 'other conversation' that makes them unclean, leading to pride, which is 'the pride of life which is desirable to make one wise'.

### **Evidence of the void - not focused on the place to which God has called us**

'Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, so that he does not stay at home.'

This person is not actually focused on the place where the Lord has appointed him where his blessing is to be. His eyes are constantly outwards; never satisfied at home.

### **The void - never satisfied**

'He enlarges his appetite like Sheol.'

This 'appetite' is the desire, or void, which can never be satisfied. It is always hungry for more.

'He is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations and collects to himself all peoples.'

A person who is dead in trespasses and sins can never find satisfaction. This is the point, isn't it! This is the evidence of the void, or of death. They always want more.

And, as Paul said, even when they do arrive at what they think is their 'happy place', 'It is a passing pleasure.' They always want more; want bigger; want better.

They become enraged, depressed, anxious when what they think they have attained is taken from them. Their satisfaction is in how they *feel.*

### **The law of sin is the principle of the spirit of Satan**

Satan, who is 'the father of lies', birthed this law within mankind to keep them in bondage to himself. Rom 7.

'I find in myself another law in my members, keeping me, or bringing me into bondage to the law of sin.'

The law of sin is the principle of the spirit of Satan.

### **Rejecting the word of truth; unclean – vulnerable to the oppression of Satan**

This raises an important point. Mankind was not unclean because of the oppression of Satan.

Mankind was unclean because they gave 'ear' to his word and, when they did, that desire was conceived in them, and they came in bondage to him.

It is our uncleanness, our rejection of the word of truth, that makes us vulnerable to the oppression of Satan.

Because of the uncleanness of their desires, Adam and Eve opened themselves to demonic oppression.

A key point to note is that a person is not unclean because of their unclean and familiar spirits.

Rather, their uncleanness makes them *vulnerable* to these demonic spirits.

Every person in the whole world who is unclean is 'dead' because of the void within them.

And we know that uncleanness becomes the principle of their life, and they are oppressed by unclean spirits.

Now, you might say, 'That's a bit "out there". I'm not sure that I am all that aware of the unclean spirits that are in, and around me; or in my family, or the broader community.'

That's why the Scriptures call them '*familiar spirits!*'

We think that that oppressive effect of unclean spirits because of the uncleanness associated with giving our ear to that alternative word is normal. It is not normal.

### **Dealing with uncleanness**

There is 'a fountain for sin and uncleanness' so that the unclean spirits can be taken out of the 'land'.

Zechariah dealt with the uncleanness first, so that all that idolatry and uncleanness could be taken out.

### **The void of death - disconnection**

Now, Adam and Eve, obviously, did not physically drop dead at the moment when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus said to them, 'The day that you eat of this, you will die.' Now, that is absolutely true. That death was in them as 'the void'.

But, mercifully, their physical bodies did not die at that moment – they didn't expire.

However, they were 'dead' because the *void* was now within them.

Furthermore, their bodies began to deteriorate because of their *disconnection from the life and fellowship of Yahweh*.

Paul said that their body – and this is true for every person who is dead in trespasses and sins – became 'a body of death'.

Their failing bodies now provoked them to *the fear of death*, and drove them further to fill the void of life and self-knowledge.

Do you see the point? As your body fails, you tend to do more and more to try to *preserve your life*, which is the desire to fill the void.

### **His mercy - time to repent; a pathway of recovery**

Now, the reason why they did not drop dead immediately is that God, in His mercy, gave mankind time to *repent*.

This is why what we hear, and how we respond to the word while we are in our mortal bodies, is so critical to salvation. It is the time that has been given to us to be restored, or made alive, from this death, and to be restored to God's predestination for us. That is a great mercy, isn't it?

So, while we do touch that death, we are being 'made alive' from it, so that, in this time, in our mortal bodies, we have the opportunity to be recovered to God's predestination for us.

The reason why they did not drop dead immediately is that God, in His mercy, gave mankind time to repent. And, through the offering of Christ, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit established a *pathway of recovery* for each person to their predestination.

Through these steps of salvation, they are made alive from the death of sin, and are established in the life and fellowship of Yahweh Himself.

### **Having not been made alive, the void remains**

However, if a person rejects the word of the cross – when the word comes, they say, 'No, I don't believe that. I am believing that my perception of the way to life is true' – and then they physically die in this condition, the *expression* of their identity ceases.

Remember that we said that everyone has an eternal identity, and its expression is through a physical body. When that physical body ceases, their identity continues to exist, but that void remains within them.

They have *not* been made alive from that death.

So the void within their heart endures within their identity. They are forgotten by God as they are condemned to reside forever in the lake of fire. Their spirit remains in a completely dysfunctional, and eternally corrupting, corpse.

This is an amazing point, and I know it's a tad morbid but, hopefully, it just highlights how great our salvation is.

### **Resurrected to eternal corruption with no expression**

So, after the judgement, the wicked, or the ungodly, or those who are not redeemed to God by being 'born again' and joined to Their fellowship, have their physical bodies resurrected.

However, they are not resurrected to *life*; they are merely resurrected to *eternal corruption*!

And their inner man, their soul and spirit, which still has the void, remains in a corrupting, dead corpse.

So, if you think about a dead body, nothing of it functions. It cannot move; it cannot hear; it cannot see; it cannot speak – nothing functions.

But the *spirit*, or the inner man, of the person still functions. The soul still has awareness, and still

has volition – wanting to fill the void, which is death in them – but has no capacity to take action on that. That is eternal death.

That is terrible, isn't it? That is much worse than any of the popular ideas of hell.

So their spirit remains in a completely dysfunctional and eternally corrupting corpse. Consequently, they are unable to take any initiative to fill the void that continues as torment within them.

They still have a drive for life, but now their body is completely dysfunctional. You can imagine that 'the wilderness', which becomes a lake of fire, is full of these dead bodies.

And those who are there will be in proximity to each other, but will have no ability to communicate or to engage with one another.

It is complete isolation. They are left with only the cry of torment and the *desire* to be filled with life.

They are not able even to *express* that cry.

Consequently, they are unable to take any initiative to fill the void that continues as a torment within them. They cannot even communicate, or express, their distress, which Jesus described as 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'.

Imagine the angst of weeping and gnashing within your very heart, and not being able even to grind your teeth. Isaiah called this 'the worm that does not die'.

' "For as the new heavens and earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord, "so shall your descendants and your name remain".' Isa 66:22.

If you are dead in trespasses and sins, you are driven to find life through your own view of good and evil.

### **Life is the expression of our sonship name**

But those who are born of God are not driven that way, because they are receiving their name – and that name, by the capacity of the Holy Spirit, is the expression of their identity.

Life is not just 'existence'. Life is *expression*, and that expression is according to our name

predestined by the Father, in Christ, enabled by the Holy Spirit. That is a 'born again' son of God.

' "For as the new heavens and new earth which I will make shall remain before Me ... so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord.'

This is coming up for an *agape* meal with the Lord, isn't it! There is a company, a multitude.

'And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men [dead bodies] who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.' Isa 66:24.

The death that is within a person while they live becomes eternal death when their mortal body expires. That is the lake of fire.

But we are receiving a word, the gospel of our sonship, which is delivering us to our hope – which is the resurrection; it is our citizenship in the new heavens and earth.

That hope belongs to every person, but God gives us the dignity of that *choice*.

So we will give our ear to hear what the Spirit is saying, and will respond in simple obedience – joyful obedience – because hell is a great thing to be delivered from, isn't it?

And the torment that people experience even while they are alive is a foretaste of that judgement upon them. Thanks, everyone, we will leave it there for today.