

“Precious In The Sight Of The Lord” Delivered by E A Terry 11 05 17
1st Peter 1:13 – 25; 2nd Corinthians 5: 1 - 10; John 14: 1 - 6; **Psalm 116: 1 – 19 (Sermon)**

Today is All Saints Sunday.

All Saints Day is when we remember and thank God for the lives of our loved ones The Lord called home during the past 12 months.

Therefore it is appropriate for us to look at Psalm 116:15 which says; *“Precious in the sight of The Lord is the death of His saints.”*

At first glance this verse is startling and this verse should cause us to stop and reflect on it.

“Precious in the sight of The Lord is the death of His saints.”

While this verse provides a measure of comfort and assurance it also raises a big question.

To us death never seems under any circumstances, a precious thing.

What could be precious about death?

What can be precious about the departure of a loved one?

Those are real questions I have asked and I am sure you have asked them also.

Before I attempt to answer those questions, I need to point out one very important thing.

This verse is **not** universal.

This verse does not apply to every death or to every person.

Only the saints of The Lord are precious to The Lord!

This verse says, *“Precious in the sight of The Lord is the death of His saints.”*

Saints are not angels and saints are not perfect people.

A saint is anyone who belongs to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

All Christians are saints. The death of an unbeliever is not precious in the sight of The Lord.

Saints are the only people whose death is precious to The Lord.

The word precious means valuable or costly.

The lives of our loved ones are precious to us.

All life is precious to God because God is the one who gives us life.

Humans are the crown jewel of God’s creation. God designed each and every one of us.

You are a unique person. God also made us in his own image so we could be with Him and have fellowship with Him.

We are precious to our God in life and in death.

Our God values us and loves us regardless of who we are, where we live, what we have, or what we have done.

The life of a Christian is especially precious to Jesus because He suffered and died on the cross to pay the price for our sins so that we could have eternal life.

So for us to understand how God can say that the death of His saints is precious we must attempt to see things through God's eyes.

We see things as they appear to be, but God sees everything from His eternal order and purpose.

This morning I would like for you to consider some ways in which the death of a Christian is precious to The Lord.

First the death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because physical death is the vehicle that provides entrance into Heaven.

For the Christian physical death is the transition from earth to heaven; from the physical to the spiritual.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words: *“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”* (2nd Corinthians 5:6- 8)

You see physical death is not the end for a Christian.

Physical death is the beginning of eternal life in heaven.

Physical death is a transfer of residence and a change from the physical to the spiritual.

The death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because there is no more sickness, no more suffering, no more sorrow, and no more death for that person.

We all have experienced sickness.

And our physical bodies wear down and finally wear out due to the curse of sin.

Suffering is a fact of life. In sickness and disease, we experience physical suffering.

In trials and tribulations, we experience mental and emotional suffering. In sin, we experience spiritual sufferings.

No one is immune to suffering.

We all sin and we all make mistakes and errors that we regret.

In John 16: 33 Jesus said, ***“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”***

In Revelation 21:4 we read these comforting words ***“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”***

We can be at peace knowing that in heaven all the sorrows and the disappointments of this life are replaced with unspeakable joys.

For Christians physical death is the end of all types of all types of suffering.

However, for those people who refused or neglected to believe in Jesus Christ their suffering has just begun.

The death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because we will be in His presence throughout eternity.

Jesus tells us the reason why our hearts should not be troubled.

Jesus said; *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”* (John 14: 2 & 3)

Jesus told the thief on the cross *“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”*. (Luke 23:43)

It is wonderful and comforting to know that as Christians, the moment that we close our eyes in physical death, in the twinkling of an eye, we are transported into the presence of God.

In Heaven we will experience complete fellowship with The Lord throughout eternity.

Jesus suffered and died on the cross so we could have fellowship with Him.

The physical death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because we will be in His presence throughout eternity.

The death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because it is the fulfillment of God commitment to all who believe in Him and trust Him for their salvation.

When we accept Jesus as our savior we agree to follow Him, to love Him, to obey Him, to serve Him, and to live for Him.

Jesus promised believers many things but Jesus’ greatest promise of all is to save us from the penalty of our sins.

Romans 10:9 – 10 states: ***“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”***

The physical death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because this is when Jesus fulfills His ultimate promise to His saints.

The death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because it is the time when Jesus rewards His faithful servants.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words in 2nd Timothy 4: 6 - 8: *“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, The Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*

None of us became a Christian for earthly payment or recognition.

Christian work is often hard with little pay, little recognition, and / or little earthly rewards.

But when we get to heaven we will receive eternal rewards for faithful service.

Luke 6:23 says; *“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in Heaven.”*

And Matthew 19:21 tells us Jesus’ faithful servants will have treasure in Heaven.

Revelation 20:4 tells us that those who remain faithful will reign with Christ during the millennium.

A Christian’s death is precious to The Lord because that is when we receive eternal rewards *“where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal”* (Matthew 6:20)

The death of a Christian is precious to The Lord because it is the beginning of a heavenly celebration.

Luke 15:7 Jesus said; *“there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who does not need to repent.”*

All Christians fit into that category of ones who need to repent because Romans 3:10 tells us; *“There is no one righteous, not even one.”*

And as you know the only way we can be saved is to repent and to ask Jesus to save us from the penalty of our sins.

When we get to heaven we will be reunited with all of the saints who have gone on before us.

The celebration in heaven will last through out eternity.

The celebration will not only be renewing relationships of loved ones who have gone on before us but there we will celebrate because we have made it home safely.

When we look at the context of Psalm 116 we see that this psalm is really about life not death.

The psalmist speaks of the protection The Lord provides in times of trouble and danger.

This Psalm is a reminder about how much God values us in life and death.

Physical death is not a penalty, it is not destruction, it is not even a loss; physical death for the Christian is all about what we gain.

Listen again to how Psalm 116 begins. ***“I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: “O LORD, save me!” The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.”***

So today as we celebrate All Saints Day we all need ask ourselves; *“am I prepared to stand before Almighty God and give an account of my life?”*

The Bible is crystal clear we will all face physical death and we will all stand before Almighty God and give an account of our life.(Romans 14:12)

If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your savior and made Jesus The Lord of your life you are not adequately prepared to meet physical death.

Can you say with confidence ***“Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever”?*** (Psalm 23:6)

The death of a loved one is a hard thing for anyone.

We mourn because we love and because we care.

That is as it should be. Caring like that is a part of the way God made us.

But this All Saints Day when we remember all of our loved ones who have departed and who were saints our tears should be tinted with the hope, the joy, and the peace of the resurrection.

AMEN