

SERMON NOTES
National Presbyterian Church
David Renwick, September 23, 2012

DEATH: IS THIS LIFE ALL THERE IS?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 30-34

Revelation 21:1-8, 22:1-5

1. Death Certain (*along with taxes!*)

Nouwen: Death, like birth, unites humanity. . . every single one of us.

2. Death Unspoken

More distant, less mentioned now, especially in the West than for most people in most times . . . because of

- Place: hospitals, cities,
- Time: too far off, power of the present
- Culture: changes in preaching, health

3. The Need for our End to be ‘Spoken’:

The Importance of “Keeping the End in Mind”

- For everyday living, business
- For a meaningful life: whether there is more beyond or not!
- “*Philip of Macedonia, remember that must die*”

4. Is there “More Beyond”?

Indications in Experience

- Near Death stories (Colton Burpo; or see Akiane Kramarik, CNN interview <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmm-0-Rdxo8>)
- New World
 - Columbus (*plus ultra* or *ne plus ultra*?)
 - Birth: from the womb to the world

The Message of the Bible

- Resolution for Evil: we all feel the the need for justice to win (The over-arching message of the Book of Revelation is “Despite all appearances, Jesus wins, justice prevails, evil is conquered in the end!!”)
- Resurrection of the Body: Individual identities and personalities not absorbed into the cosmos or into nothingness, but continue in a ‘new heaven and a new earth’ (1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 21, 22)
- Re-assurance and hope through a great promise:
“*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16)

5. The Difference it Makes to know the End is an Entrance!

Confidence and Power in the face of despair and adversity

(John 14:1-6; Romans 8:18-39)

Confidence and Power to live sacrificially, by giving.

(1 Corinthians 15:30-34)

Resources:

Ernest Boyer, Jr. *Finding God at Home*, 1984 (“Two Stories”)

Todd Burpo, *Heaven is For Real*, 2010

Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 1989, (“Begin with the End in Mind”)

Henri Nouwen, *Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring*, 1994

Mattie Stepanek, *Celebrate Through Heart Songs*, 2002.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler, *Life Lessons*, 2000 (“Happiness”)

Further resources are available at The National Presbyterian Church (Wm. S. Culbertson) library. Contact librarian, J. Theodore (Jim) Anderson. Or check the library catalog online at <http://library.nationalpres.org/surpass/>