

Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).

There is a great scene in the movie *The Lord Rings, The Return of the King* where Pippin looks up at Gandalf with fear in his eyes and says, "I didn't think it would end this way." And Gandalf responds, "End? No, the journey doesn't end here. Death is just another path. One that we all must take. The grey rain-curtain of this world rolls back, and all turns to silver glass... then you see it!" Gandalf looks away from Pippin toward a beautiful distant land, and Pippin, no longer afraid, says, "What? Gandalf? See what?" Gandalf, still looking at the distant land says, "White shores... and beyond. A far green country, under a swift sunrise." Relieved, Pippin says, "Well, that isn't so bad." Gandalf looks back at Pippin, smiles and says, "No... no, it isn't."

Today our speakers shared three views of how death is just the beginning. First, when we receive Christ and make Him Lord and Savior, He puts our sin to death, and we begin a new life in Christ. Second, when we understand that if God is for us and no one can stand against God, then we can put our fears to death and live a full life free of fear. Finally, every follower of Jesus who dies a physical death, will begin eternal life with Jesus in heaven. The picture of white shores and a green country from *The Lord of the Rings*, is a beautiful picture of what it will be like when we die. But let me tell you, this picture pales in comparison to what happens to every follower of Jesus who dies. 2 Corinthians 5 teaches us when we are absent from the body, we will be in the presence of Christ. Pause for a moment and consider this: when the journey of this life ends, if you are a follower of Jesus, you will immediately enter His presence, you will immediately enter the presence of the maker and creator of the entire universe. As the songs says, I can only imagine.

Have you decided to follow Jesus? What are you waiting for? God loves you so much that He gave His only Son for you. Today is your day of salvation! Give your life to Jesus. Believe in your heart and declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and begin a new life with Him today.

When you give your life to Jesus, the promise in Romans 8:35-39 is yours forever more. Let's look at this promise again:

"Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword? Yet

amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.” (Romans 8:35 & 37)

The question here is rhetorical. Who shall separate us from Christ’s love? NO ONE! And if we go through affliction and troubles, which we all do, still amid the troubles, God’s love for us is there, and He gives us power through Christ to overcome! Consider the language here. God promises that not only will you overcome, not only will you conquer, in Christ you already have. You ARE more than a conqueror. The words here do not indicate this is something you are working your way toward. No, the words here mean, in Christ and because of His love for you, you already are more than a conqueror. In Christ you already are empowered to have complete and utter domination over the thing or things that you think or feel might separate you from His love.

These thoughts we have and these emotions we have that make us believe the lie that somehow God can’t or won’t love us are rubbish. GOD LOVES YOU ABSOLUTELY AND COMPLETELY! You must choose to put the lies of the enemy about who you were behind you. Submit to God, resist the devil and he must flee from you. (James 4:7) Remember, when you gave your life to Christ, He gave you a new beginning! And as Paul closes out Romans 8 (and I agree with Paul), I am persuaded beyond doubt, I am absolutely sure, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

The promises here in Romans 8 are yours in Christ Jesus our Lord. They are irrevocable and unbelievable promises God gave you when you received His love in the person of Jesus Christ His Son. In that moment, your old self died and the death of your old self was just the beginning.

- As a follower of Jesus, do you believe that He began something new in you when you received Him and made Jesus Lord of your life? If not, what lies are you listening to that keep you from living life as more than a conqueror?
- How does the knowledge that God is for you give you courage to live life?
- What are you afraid of? God has commanded us over and over, “Do not be afraid!” Share with your small group or a trusted friend what you are afraid of, then bring that fear to God and ask him to put it to death so you can live a full life. Remember, in Christ, you ARE more than a conqueror.

- When you think of physical death, what emotions do you experience? How does knowing as a follower of Jesus, when you die, you will be in His presence change your thoughts about death?

