

## THE DEATH OF DEATH

(1 Corinthians 15:19-26)

Intro: Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Today we celebrate life.

-Resurrected life.

#For Jesus.

#For us.

-New life.

#For this world.

#For the world to come.

Today we also celebrate death.

-Death of death.

#"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

\*1 Corinthians 15:26.

### I. We Seem To Need Enemies.

#### A. Real Or Imagined.

##### 1. To unite us.

a. Against a common foe.

b. When has the United States been without an enemy?

##### 2. During World War II.

a. It was easy to identify our enemies.

-Germany.

-Japan.

-Italy.

b. I'm not old enough to have experienced WWII personally.

-Many of you did.

-But I can read.

#I have read all 39 volumes.

\*Time-Life series.

\*On World War II.

#I have read about places like:

- \*Midway.
- \*Guadalcanal.
- \*Iwo Jima.
- \*Okinawa.
- \*Hiroshima.
- \*Nagasaki.

+In the Pacific.

#HBO has a 10-part mini-series.

- \*On the Pacific.
- \*On Sunday evenings.

+Tonight is episode 4.

#I have read about places like:

- \*El Alamein.
- +In Africa.
- \*Normandy.
- \*Remagen.
- \*Salerno.
- \*Monte Casino.

+In Europe.

#I have visited places like:

- \*Pearl Harbor.
- \*USS Missouri.
- +On whose decks the Japanese:
  - =Signed the Articles of Surrender.
- +Now anchored in Pearl Harbor.
- \*Dachau.
- +One of Hitler's infamous death camps.

c. But those enemies.

-From 65 years ago.

-Now our:

#Friends.

#Allies.

3. For many years it was the Soviet Union and its allies.

a. President John Kennedy.

-Had a showdown with the Soviets over missiles in Cuba.

-Challenged us to be the first to the moon.

#If we couldn't be first.

\*Launching a human into space.

\*Placing a human in orbit around the earth.

#Then we would be the first to land a man on the moon.

\*Which we did.

+Then what?

- \*I recently finished reading a Time-Life trilogy.
    - +*A Man on the Moon*.
  - \*It was published.
    - +To celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
      - =Of the first moon landing.
    - +Last summer was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
      - =So I thought I had better catch up on my reading.
  - \*But remember when space exploration?
    - +Captured our imagination.
      - =Programs like:
        - Mercury.
        - Gemini.
        - Apollo.
      - =Names like:
        - Alan Shepard.
        - John Glenn.
        - Neil Armstrong.
    - +It was not just about:
      - =Technological advancement.
      - =Scientific know-how.
    - +It was about:
      - =Being first.
      - =Winning the race.
      - =Beating our enemies.
  - \*Now we hardly notice what NASA is doing.
    - +Did you know?
      - =There is a space shuttle launch.
        - Scheduled for tomorrow morning.
      - =It will be the 131<sup>st</sup> space shuttle mission.
        - There are only 3 more missions planned.
          - #Last is scheduled to fly in September.
    - +Unless there is a catastrophe.
      - =We pay little or no attention.
      - =There is no "enemy" there to be defeated.
- b. President Ronald Reagan.
    - Had his "evil empire."
    - But then:
      - #Soviet Union dissolved.
      - #Berlin Wall came down.
  4. For almost a decade we've had our War on Terror.
    - a. Enemies.
      - Hard to find.
      - Hard to fight.
    - b. But enemies nonetheless.

5. If the enemies aren't external, they're internal.
    - a. Tea Party.
    - b. Coffee Party.
    - c. Hot Chocolate Party.
      - I just made up that last one.
  6. We seem to have a need for enemies.
- B. We Seem To Have A Need To Defeat Our Enemies.
1. Spending billions of dollars.
    - a. To design a spacecraft.
    - b. To fly to the moon.
    - c. To set up some experiments.
    - d. To bring back some rocks.
    - e. To be able to say:
      - “We were first.”
  2. Killing millions of people, if need be.
    - a. Estimated 70-75 million people died.
      - In World War II.
    - b. Estimated 50 million of them civilians.
    - c. Some 6 million in Nazi death camps.
      - Jews.
      - Homosexuals.
      - Gypsies.
      - Anyone considered an “enemy of the state.”
    - d. We will defeat our enemies.
      - With death.
      - With the threat of death.

## II. But How Do We Destroy Death?

- A. Lord Knows, We Try.
1. Pre-natal care for pregnant women.
  2. Immunizations.
  3. Clean water.
  4. Safe food supplies.
  5. Exercise.
  6. Health education.
  7. Medical research.
  8. Medical care.
  9. Warning labels on cigarettes.
  10. Bio-engineering.
  11. Cryogenics.
  12. Diplomatic peace talks.

## B. Time After Time We Fail.

1. There are:
  - a. Miscarriages.
  - b. Stillbirths.
  - c. Accidents.
  - d. Acts of:
    - War.
    - Violence.
  - e. Illness.
  - f. Old age.
2. Medical people use the language of defeat.
  - a. We lost that one.
  - b. She didn't make it.
3. Death defeats us.
  - a. It's not just a medical problem.
  - b. It's a sin problem.
    - “Wages of sin is death.”
    - #Romans 6:23.
    - That's a battle we can't win.

## C. But Jesus Can. Jesus Has.

1. Jesus has been raised from the dead.
  - a. Jesus has defeated death.
    - Not just for himself.
    - But for us.
  - b. He is the:
    - First fruits.
    - Down payment.
    - Guarantee.
      - #Death will not have the last word.
      - #Resurrection.
2. Listen to St. Paul's chronology.
  - a. Christ has been raised.
  - b. Those who belong to Christ will be raised.
  - c. Then comes the end.
    - Destruction of every:
      - #Ruler.
      - #Authority.
      - #Power.
    - \*Paul is not talking here about:
      - +Mayor.
      - +Governor.
      - +President.
      - +Congress.

= "Throw the rascals out."

= "Get some new rascals in."

\*Paul is talking about:

+Spiritual.

+Cosmic.

+Supernatural.

=Rulers.

=Authorities.

=Powers.

-Forces of evil.

#All destroyed.

-Last enemy to be destroyed is death.

#Today we celebrate:

\*Death of death.

3. Therein lies our hope.

a. "If it is for this life only that we have hoped in Christ,"

"We are of all people most to be pitied."

-1 Corinthians 15:19.

b. Do we hope?

-Because of what we lack.

-Or because of what we have.

c. If we hope because of what we lack:

-I hope I get a good grade on this paper.

-I hope I do well on this test.

-I hope my team wins.

-I hope I get this job interview.

-I hope this medicine/surgery/treatment will make me better.

-I hope the church budget deficit doesn't get too big.

-I hope I win the lottery.

#That's pitiful.

#What kind of hope is that?

\*Wishful thinking.

d. But if we hope because of what we do have:

-Christ raised from the dead.

#First fruits.

#Down payment.

#Guarantee.

\*Our resurrection.

\*Death of death.

-That's not pitiful at all.

4. Death is no longer our enemy.
  - a. There are some people who are ready to die.
    - I've heard that sentiment expressed:
      - #By my dad.
      - #By some members of this congregation.
    - Nobody's going to call Dr. Kevorkian.
  - b. Not simply because folks are sick and tired.
    - Being sick and tired.
    - Pain.
    - Weakness.
    - Loss of independence.
    - Hopelessness.
  - c. They are ready to die because they do have hope.
    - Christ raised from the dead.
      - #First fruits.
      - #Down payment.
      - #Guarantee.
        - \*Resurrection.
        - \*Death of death.

Concl: *Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer.*  
 -When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
 Bid my anxious fears subside;  
 Death of death and hell's destruction,  
 Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
 #Hymn 618.  
 #Verse 3.

Today we celebrate:  
 -Easter.  
 -Death of death.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
 Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!