

基督徒死亡觀

The Christian View of Death

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servants' tender care could not help him and the physician's medicine could not heal him. King David's child died just like the child of Israel's poorest peasant would have died under the same circumstances. Following the child's passing, David made a very wise statement, worthy of our notice: *"...Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me"* (2 Samuel 12:23 NIV). King David understood that it would be impossible for the dead child to come back to life, but David also knew that he himself would die at some point in the future, so he realized that he should prepare for that appointment by cultivating his moral character, drawing near to God and obeying God's commands. Yes, the death of a loved one should make us think of the future and to prepare for it.

All Christians believe in life after death. Paul the apostle, a writer of the New Testament, said, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10, NIV). Since we will all be judged, how important, therefore, it is for us to be prepared for our future existence. Think about it: on the Day of Judgment all we ever said and all we ever did will be exposed and will be judged by "the Great One on High," by him who created us. We should give the Day of Judgment some thought today and every day. While we have life and breath, let us prepare for the future.

Regarding the Day of Judgment, the Bible gives us some Good News! Jesus Christ said, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for 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. You know the way to the place where I am going."* Thomas said to him, *"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"* Jesus answered, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:1-6, NIV). What Jesus says here really is Good News! Through Jesus Christ, we can approach God and can prepare for our future lives.

Let's not avoid or be embarrassed to discuss death. After all, death is only a natural part of life, and who among us will not die? It's better to prepare for death than to avoid talking about it! And let's not wait until death is staring us in the face before we begin that preparation, by then it's too late! We'll be out of time! We'll reap what we have sown!

The passing of a beloved friend or relative is one of the best motivations we can have to make us think about death and to make us ask ourselves, "Am I ready?" As President Jackson said, let us live so as "to be prepared for death." But let's also remember that Jesus Christ has already sacrificed himself by being nailed to a cross in order to save us, give us hope and enable us to prepare for the life to come. I hope you'll soon accept the love and death of Jesus and become a Christian. Believe in Jesus as God's Son, repent of sins and be baptized into Jesus Christ.

能维持孩子的生命。大卫的孩子死了就好象以色列最贫穷的孩子在同样的情况会死一样。孩子断了气以后大卫王说了一句智慧话，值得我们注意的，他说：“我终究要到他 [孩子]那里去，他却不可能再回到我这里来了”（撒母耳记下 12:23）。大卫王明白，已经死去的孩子不能在复生，但是大卫也知道，将来他自己会死。所以他只能够为未来而预备～修身，亲近神，遵守神的诫命等。是的，亲人的死亡使得我们想到未来，为未来而预备。

基督徒都相信死后有来生。新约圣经的作者，保罗，说过：“我们都必须站在基督面前接受审判，每个人都将为自己活在尘世的身体里时所做的一切，或善或恶而得到报赏和惩罚”（哥林多后书 5:10）。因为是这样，因为我们每个人都要接受神的审判，所以我们最好为来生而准备。请想想看，在审判日，我们所做的每一件事，我们所说的每一句话都要显露出来，被那位高高在上者，创造宇宙的神审判。今天，每天我们应该想到审判日；参加朋友和亲戚的葬礼时，应该更加这样。有生之年，我们要为死亡而预备。

有关未来和审判日，圣经给我们一个很好的消息！耶稣基督说，“不要让内心感到忧愁，坚信上帝，坚信我吧。我父的家里有很多房间，（如果不是这样，我会告诉你们的），我就要去为你们准备好地方。我去为你们准备好地方后，还会再来，把你们接去和我同住，好让你们能到我所在的地方。你们知道我去哪个地方，要走哪条路。多马说，‘主，我们连您去哪儿都不知道，怎么能知道那条路呢？’”耶稣说‘我就是路，是真理，是生命，除非通过我，没人能到父那里去。’”（约翰福音 14:1-6）。朋友，请注意：耶稣说的话真是个好消息！通过耶稣我们可以为未来而准备。

我们不必要害怕或忌讳谈到死亡。死亡不过是生命的一部分而已，而且我们哪一个人不会死呢？所以我们只好为它预备。我们不要等到刚好面对死亡时才开始为它预备～那时候太晚了，已经来不及了！

自食其果。朋友或亲戚逝世的时候是很好的机会使得我们想到死亡，使得我们问自己说，“我准备好了没有？”在那时候我们也应该想到耶稣基督。耶稣牺牲了自己，为我们被钉死，为的是拯救我们，带来希望给我们，使得我们能够为来生而准备。朋友，请您快一点相信耶稣，成为基督徒。

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谁都不能避免死亡

身为世人的我时常需要参加朋友的葬礼；身为传道人的我时常有责任在葬礼上演讲或讲道。朋友们和基督徒请我主持他们亲戚的葬礼时我感觉特别荣幸。对我来说，这是帮助他们的好机会，是让我在他们最难过的时候，为他们服务，带给他们鼓励，用神的爱和恩典安慰他们。一般来说，有人失去亲人时，他们很感谢这种教会的服务。

事实上，早晚我们每一个人都要面对死亡。困龙也有上天日。我们可以说死亡使得全世界的人平等，就好象英国作家傅勒 (Thomas Fuller) 说过：“面对死亡，人人都平等” (Death is the grand leveler)。又有人说，“皇帝有钱，难买万年。”新约圣经告诉我们说，“人人都有一死，死后必须受上帝的审判” (西伯来书 9:27)。无论是谁，男女，贫富，老少，读过书的，没读过书，健康的，时常生病的，高矮，胖瘦，都会死。人无贵贱，天生地埋。

但是我发现不同人对死亡有不同看法。古代希腊亚历山大大帝的父亲马其顿王飞利浦下命令让一个仆人每天站在他的面前提醒他说，“飞利浦，你必要死。”法国国王路易 14 氏也下了命令却说在他的面前，不可以提到死亡。您呢？朋友提到死，您因此而觉得不舒服吗？您是否同意西方作家 William Dunbar (威廉钝巴尔) 的看法，他说，“我因为怕死亡所以觉得很紧张。”

在这点基督徒和非基督徒的两个不同的观念就很显明。我不敢说基督徒完全不怕死，但是我敢说一般来说基督徒比较不怕死。面对死亡时，基督徒对来生有盼望，有把握。基督徒知道在断气以后还有一个新的生命，新的生活。

基督徒对死亡的看法不像非基督徒的看法是因为生死的权柄都在于耶稣。耶稣基督的朋友拉撒路死了以后，耶稣去他的家拜访和安慰拉撒路的两个姐妹。事实上，耶稣准备叫拉撒路复活，但是他的姐妹还不晓得。耶稣对马大说，“我就是复活，我就是生命，信仰我的人，死了也将会再生，任何活著并信仰我的人都永远不会死 ...” (约翰福音 11:25-26)。

说了这话以后，耶稣叫拉撒路复活，但是就算耶稣没有叫拉撒路复活，耶稣的话还是对了。耶稣是复活，耶稣是生命。耶稣自己也死了，但是第三天神使耶稣从坟墓里复活。因为耶稣胜过死亡所以他带来复活的盼望给万人。其实耶稣把复活的盼望带给基督徒，带给那些相信，顺服，并且对耶稣忠心的基督徒。

King David, king of ancient Israel, lost an infant son to death. Although "people of all ages walk the path to the netherworld," after the child passed away, David went "into the house of the LORD and worshiped" (2 Samuel 12:20, NIV). YOU see, even King David thought of God at the death of his little child; he was moved to prostrate himself before God in worship and to renew his allegiance to God. If, in the face of death, a great king must throw himself on God, how much more do we need to do the same? If a powerful potentate turns to God in worship, how much more do we need God?

So, what's the result? Do people who turn to God receive comfort and help from God? Certainly they do! Please listen to some phrases from the Bible: "The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalms 34:17-18 NIV). Note how King David deeply believes in God's presence and is confident that God will extend his grace and help him.

Listen to Jeremiah: "Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him" (Lamentations 3:22-24 NIV). Just like Jeremiah, we too can rely on God.

Facing distress, the prophet Habakkuk said: "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (Habakkuk 3:17-19, NIV).

Here is the point: Even when we face death, God will extend his grace to us and enable us "to go on the heights." We can't avoid illness and death, but the Good News of the Bible is that God loves us and wants to help us. When we face death and all other difficulties that life sends our way, let us think of God, draw near to God and rely on him, and God will draw near to us through his Son Jesus Christ and his Word the Bible.

Death Causes Us To Look Toward the Future

The seventh President of the United States, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, made a very wise statement regarding life when he spoke of death and said, "When death comes he respects neither age nor merit. He sweeps from this earthly existence the sick and the strong, the rich and poor, and [this] should teach us to live to be prepared for death." What President Jackson said is quite correct, death makes us think of the future and helps prepare us for it.

While David was king of ancient Israel, his tiny son was taken by death. Even though David was king and the power of Israel's military was at his disposal, numerous servants awaited his beck and call, and the doctors gladly would use whatever medicine they had at that period of history, nothing could save the child. The military's might could not protect him, the

Christian View of Death

As a citizen of the world I'm often called upon to attend funerals of relatives and friends; as a minister of the gospel I'm frequently asked to speak at such occasions. I am highly honored when Christians and other friends ask me to officiate at funerals, as it gives me an opportunity to help and serve people during the time of their deepest distress. This service provides encouragement to the bereaved as I comfort them with the love and grace of God. After someone has lost a loved one they are ever grateful to the church for this ministry.

Actually, everyone will need this ministry sooner or later, as all of us will die, as an old Chinese saying goes, "Even fatigued dragons pass away." At death all people are equal, so we can say, with the English author Thomas Fuller, that "death is the grand leveler." "Though the emperor has wealth, he cannot buy longevity," said the ancient people of China. The New Testament Scriptures tell us that "Every person must die once. After a person dies, he is judged" (Hebrews 9:27 ETRV). No matter who it is, man or woman, rich or poor, elderly or young, educated or uneducated, healthy or ill, tall or short, overweight or slim, all must die. An old Chinese proverb says that "there's no difference between the noble and the base; heaven gives life and earth provides the burial place."

I have observed however that different people view death in different ways. Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, commissioned a servant to stand in his presence each day and say, "Philip, you will die." Louis the 14th of France, on the other hand, ordered that the word "death" not be uttered in his presence. What about you? Are you uncomfortable whenever a friend mentions death? Do you agree with William Dunbar, the English novelist who said, "the fear of death troubles me?"

It is just at this point that the differences between the Christian and non-Christian concepts of death are very evident. While I dare not say that Christians don't fear death at all, I do dare to assert that in general Christians are not as fearful of death. Christians have hope and assurance in the face of death, because Christians know that after the cessation of human life there is yet another life, a new type of living.

The reason that Christians look at death differently from non-Christians is because Jesus holds the power of life and death. After Jesus' friend Lazarus died, Jesus went to Lazarus' home to visit and comfort Lazarus' two sisters. In fact, Jesus planned to raise Lazarus from the dead, but the sisters didn't know that. Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26 NIV).

After saying these things Jesus called Lazarus forth from the grave, but even if Jesus had not resurrected Lazarus, Jesus' words would have still been true. Jesus is resurrection and Jesus is life. Jesus himself died and on the third day God raised him from the grave, and in thus giving Jesus victory over death, he brings the hope of resurrection to all men. Actually it is to Christians that Jesus gives the hope of resurrection—to those Christians who believe, obey and are faithful to him.

古代以色列国王大卫失去了一位新生儿。孩子死了以后，大卫前往神的圣殿敬拜神（撒母耳记下 12:20）。小孩子的死亡使得大卫想到神，敬拜神，重新立下决定要服事神。如果伟大的国王能够依靠天上的神，何况我们呢？如果又强又高的国王要向神敬拜，何况我们呢？

那么，面对死亡时想到神的人有没有从神获得什么安慰或帮助呢？有了！请听圣经的话：“主倾听善良人的呼求，救他们脱离苦难；主亲近遭受挫折的人，他把希望带给这些万念俱灰的人”（诗篇 34:17-18）。请注意，作者大卫王很相信神的同在，知道神会施恩，帮助他。

请再听耶利米先知的哀歌：“主的慈爱肯定不会终结，主的怜悯肯定不会止息，它们每天早晨都有新的内容；他的信实没有止境。我的灵魂说：‘主是我所拥有的和需要的一切。因此我只信靠他’”（耶利米哀歌 3:22-24）。我们跟耶利米一样可以仰望神。

另外一位先知名叫哈巴谷说道：“即使无花果树不开花结果，葡萄树上一无所有；即使橄榄树的果实枯干，田地里不生五谷；即使羊圈空空，牛棚里没有牛，我也要因为所做的一切而欢喜，要为拯救我们的上帝而欢庆。至高的主啊，求你使我坚强！他使我的脚步稳如母鹿，安然行走在高山之上”（哈巴谷书 3:17-19）。

朋友，连在面对死亡时，耶和華神还要施恩给我们，好让我们“安然行走在高山之上。”没有人能够避免生老病死，但是圣经的好消息是天上的神爱我们，要帮助我们。面对死亡和各种困难时，我们要想到神，仰望神，亲近神。神愿意藉着耶稣基督和圣经亲近我们。

死亡叫我们考虑未来

美国第七任总统，田纳西州人 Andrew Jackson（杰克逊），说了一句智慧话，主题是死亡，他说：“死亡来临时，它不尊重年龄或地位。它一样地把生病的，健康的，贫穷的，富贵的人从这个世界带走。这个事实应该教导我们在过日子时，时时刻刻为死亡作准备。”杰克逊总统说的不错！死亡使得我们想到未来，为未来而预备。

古代以色列国王大卫统治以色列时，他的孩子死了。虽然大卫是国王，虽然国家的军队都在他的权势之下，虽然许许多多的仆人都等待他的命令，虽然大夫们很想用当时最好的医学医治这位新生儿，但是都没有用。军队不能保卫他；仆人再好的服务不能帮助他；大夫的良药不

朋友，您和我一样会死，只是时间问题。路易 14 氏死了。马其顿王飞利浦死了。古代的秦始皇追求吃长生不老的药，但是最后连他都死了。以后您和我也会死。好消息是耶稣基督已经为我们死；他为我们复活了；他为我们胜过死亡，带给我们复活和永生的盼望。我请您快一点学习圣经，得知怎么样寻找和接受耶稣要赐给您的永生。

死亡令我们回想过去

在美国因为大家都很忙，所以很难见到老朋友。并且为了找到好工作，朋友时常搬家。美国地大，所以我们与亲朋戚友隔著千山万水。这样看来，那么什么场合能够给美国人好机会看见一些很久没有见过的亲戚和朋友呢？想想看。是不是学校同学团聚的时候？不是～亲戚不会来。是不是过圣诞节吃大餐的时候？不是～同学不会来。是不是在公司或机关开会的时候？也不是。是什么时候呢？差不多只在两个场合～不是婚礼就是葬礼。亲戚朋友逝世时，很多人都要前往殡仪口或教堂，看看去世那人的家属，表示心里如何的难过，鼓励他们，安慰他们等。刚好，在殡仪口时，也会看到许多老朋友，同学，亲戚，同事等。自然而然地和他们会话，回想到过去的事情，回想到在过去跟这位逝世的人彼此之间的关系。

我想我这里所描述的不只是在美国，我想在全世界差不多是这样。是的，死亡会让很多人聚集在一块，会让很多很久没有见过面的老朋友见面。而且在一块时他们会想到“过去。”大家会回想到这位死人所说的话，所做的事，他的优点，他的为人，他的成就。在这种场合敢提到他缺点的人比较少。无论如何，我们一定会想到“过去。”

在新约圣经使徒行传第 9 章，有一位妇女名叫『多加』去世。寡妇把多加还在世时所给他们缝制的衣服拿来给彼得看（39 节）。他们一定谈话有关多加跟他们在一块的事情，她是怎么样善良，喜欢帮助穷人的一位。

在旧约圣经，以色列人时常想到过去的，获得信心和力量面对现时和未来。先知和领袖常常提醒以色列人神在过去如何的解救他们，带领他们从埃及作埃及人奴隶的地方出来。神为他们施行神迹，保护他们；打战时为他们打胜战。同样，我们心感到很难过时，譬如我们参加朋友和亲戚的葬礼时，我们应该想到神的作为，大能，慈爱和同在，从此获得帮助，力量和安慰。我们可以回想一下我们与刚刚离开我们这一位朋

The final conclusion of Ecclesiastes is quite different from the opening lines. Solomon says, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (12:13-14, NIV). This is very serious, isn't it? It makes us do some introspection, to think about ourselves and the way we live. Today I attend my friend's funeral; tomorrow my friends may attend my funeral. The important question is not, "When will I die?" but, "Am I ready to die?" "Am I the person that God wants me to be? Do I obey God's commandments? Is there consistency between what I say and what I do? Do I set a good example for my children? Do I reflect the light and love of God in all I do? When someone offends me, do I forgive him? When someone is jealous of me or hates me, do I exhibit the mind of Christ and pray for him and hope that he will repent?"

If you and I will live like this, we'll soon realize that the meaning of life is very clear. We, with the author of Ecclesiastes, will turn 180 degrees from "Meaningless! Meaningless!... Everything is meaningless!" to "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man."

Death Causes Us To Look At God

Confucius, the famous sage of China who died in 479 H.C., said, "Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honors depend on Heaven" (*Analects*, bk. 12, ch. 5, vs. 3). I don't know why Confucius put "death" and "Heaven" together in the same sentence, but I think a lot of people connect these two concepts; so often when we think of death we immediately think of heaven also. Do you agree? When Jesus Christ was on the cross and breathed his last breath, the Roman military officer who witnessed it all said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39 NIV). At the death of Jesus, even this hardened military officer, to whom death was no stranger, wagged his head and thought of God, and concluded that Jesus was the Son of God. What about you? Whenever you think of death, does it prompt you to think of God, of heaven, of eternity?

If your closest friend or relative were to die, would his passing cause you to consider whether there is life after death, whether there is a heaven or whether or not we all possess souls which are eternal? The death of a loved one causes some people to question God or to doubt his existence or his love. "My husband was a good man and he wasn't even old; why did he die?" "Our child wasn't even 15 years old yet, and he never did anything bad; why did he have to die?" People who ask questions such as these direct them to "God," no matter who or what they conceive God to be. This is because down deep in our hearts we all know that man cannot answer these questions. Only a being who is greater than man, is wiser than man, is outside the limitations of humanity, but who, at the same time is deeply concerned for humankind, can answer these questions. In other words, when we face death, down deep within ourselves, we confess God's existence and seek his guidance. Yes, death causes us to think about God.

传道书最后的结论和它开头的那句话大不相同。“一切的话都说完了，总结一句：要敬畏上帝，谨守他的命令，因为这是人人应尽的义务。我们所做的一切，或善或恶，连那最隐秘的事，上帝都要审判”（12:13-14）。朋友，这句话很严肃。这句话使得我们反省，使得我们想到自己和自己的所作所为。今天我参加朋友的葬礼；不久的将来我朋友们会参加我的葬礼。主要的问题不是“什么时候？”乃是“我准备好了没有？”我是不是神所要的那人？我有没有遵守神的诫命？我有没有言行一致地活出基督耶稣的爱来，凡事给我孩子很好的榜样？我的生命有没有反射神的光辉和爱？人家得罪我时，我有没有原谅他呢？人家嫉妒我，恨我时，我有没有以耶稣基督的心为心，为他祷告，希望他也能够悔改归正？

如果您和我这样作，我们就会发现生命的意义很大，生命的目的很明显。我们就会跟传道书的作者一样，将人生观从“空虚，空虚，人生空虚，一切都是空虚”转为“要敬畏上帝，谨守他的命令，因为这是人人应尽的义务。”

死亡使得我们深思神

孔子有名的一句话是：“死生有命，富贵在天”（论语 12.5.3）。不知道孔子为什么把【死】和【天】用在同一句话里面，但是我认为很多人都会把死和天联结起来～想到死亡马上也想到【天】。您认为呢？耶稣基督在十字架上断气时，罗马军队的百人队长站在十字架前目睹了所发生的这一切，也把死亡和天联结起来，说，‘这个人真是上帝的儿子啊！’（马可福音 15:39）。这位军官目睹耶稣受难时，连他都摇著头，想到上帝，最后承认耶稣是神的儿子。请问，当您想到死亡时，会不会因此而想到【天】或永恒呢？（我所说的天就是神或上帝的意思。）

如果您最好的朋友或亲戚去世，他的死亡可能令您思考死后是否有来生，是否有天堂，是否有灵魂存在。也有人失去亲人后就开始疑问神或怀疑神的爱或存在。“我的丈夫是个好人，年岁也不大；他为什么要死呢？”“我的孩子还没有 15 岁，没有做过任何坏事；他为什么要死呢？”问这样问题的人时常向“天”问这些问题。不管怎么样称呼他～上帝，老天爷，天主，神，我们心中的深处知道人不能回答这些问题。能够回答这样的问题必须是一位比人类大，在人类的范围之外，超过人类的智慧，同时也很关心人类的。换句话说，我们面对死亡时，我们心中深处还是承认和仰望神的。是的，死亡使得我们想到神。

My friend, you and I both will die someday; it is only a matter of time. Louis the 14th died. Philip of Macedon died. Even he who searched for the elixir of life, China's famous emperor, Chin Shi Huang, died (in 210 B.C.). Eventually you and I will also die. The good news is that Jesus Christ already died on our behalf and was resurrected for us; Jesus overcame death and brought us the hope of resurrection and everlasting life. I hope you'll study the Bible and determine how to search for and receive the eternal life that Jesus wants to give to you.

Death Causes Us To Look At the Past

In the USA our lives are very busy, thus it is difficult to spend time with or even see old friends. Moreover in order to acquire good and better paying jobs, friends move away. The American continent is large, so we're often separated from friends and relatives by several state lines. In such a society, under what circumstances can we see old friends and loved ones whom we've not seen in a long time? Think about it. At school reunions? No, because relatives would not be there. At our large annual Christmas dinners? No, because school mates would not be there. At company seminars or government meetings? No, not there either. Where then? Really at only two places—at weddings and funerals. Whenever friends or relatives pass away many people gather at the funeral home or church building to see the family of the deceased, to express sympathy and bereavement, and to offer encouragement and comfort. At the same time, we also see many old friends, school mates, co-workers, relatives and others at the funeral home. We spend time talking with them and reminiscing about the past, about the deceased and our relationship with him or her.

I think the situation I've described here is true not only of Americans, but is true many places in the world. Yes, death brings people together and enables people to see others they've not seen in a long time, and while together they think about "the past." They remember things the deceased said, deeds he performed, the good points of his life, and his accomplishments. Under these circumstances few people will say anything negative about the deceased, but no matter what is or is not said, we definitely will think of "the past."

In the Bible, the New Testament book of Acts, we read of a lady named Dorcas who had just died. In her honor, the local widows displayed *the robes and other clothing which Dorcas had made while she was still with them* (9:39). I'm confident that they also talked about all she said and did while she was alive, about the many good works which she showered on the poor.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites often thought about the past and stories of their past (their history) provided them the faith and strength they needed to face the present and the future. The prophets and other leaders reminded the Israelites how God had intervened in the lives of their ancestors and saved them, especially how God had taken them from Egypt where they were slaves. God performed miracles and protected them, and

友彼此之间的关系，也应该想一想天上的神在过去为我们做了些什么，让这些事实使得我们有信心。这种信心使得我们祈求神在以后的日子继续地带领我们平安地度过难关。

死亡让我们想到自己

“生命有意义吗？”“生命的目的是什么？”“人活著在这个世界上是为了什么呢？”身为传道人的我，不知道已有多少人问过我这些问题或类似的问题。或许很多人不常常想到这些问题，但是有一时刻，有一件事使得我们想到生命问题，那就是死亡。亲戚，朋友，伟人去世时，我们大部份人都会思考一下比较严肃的事情。是的，死亡应该让我们反省～应该让我们想到生命问题，特别是自己的生命。

圣经传道书是有名的国王所罗门写的。传道书一开头就说，“空虚，空虚，人生空虚，一切都是空虚” (1:2)。不知道您同意不同意传道书的看法。当以色列王大卫失去他小孩子时，或许在那时候他会同意“空虚，空虚，人生空虚，一切都是空虚”这句话。您和我都见过不少人，因为过放荡不羁的生活，所以也许他认为人生空虚。有时候学生，因为考不上他认为理想的大学，所以他说人生空虚。有时候男孩子因为女方拒绝跟他结婚所以他说“空虚，空虚，人生空虚，一切都是空虚。”

但是传道书接着说比较乐观的话：“天下万事都有定期，都有上帝特定的时间。生有时，死有时；栽种有时，拔除有时；杀害有时，医治有时；拆毁有时，建造有时；悲伤有时，欢乐有时；哀恸有时，舞蹈有时... (3:1-4)。大卫的孩子病的很严重时，那就是大卫悲伤哀恸的时候。我们失去亲戚朋友时，也是我们悲伤哀恸的时刻。但是，因为基督徒拥有神的应许说他要保护，看顾，施恩，帮助我们，并且因为神应许我们将来对神忠心的基督徒有天堂等待，所以从另外一个观点来看，一旦有神在身边时，哀恸可以变为平安，悲伤可以变成欢乐。大卫王的孩子去世后，大卫的之所以能够平安地度日是大卫知道神与他同在。大卫从神获得安慰，鼓励，力量和宽恕。

he gave them victory in battle. In the same way, when we are saddened, such as at the funeral of a relative or friend, we should think of the past, of God's deeds, power, love and presence, and thus obtain help, strength and comfort. In the face of death we can reminisce about the one who has just departed from this life, but at the same time we should also think of all that God has done for us in the past, and from such we can gain faith and strength. This faith in turn calls us to pray to God and ask him to continue to lead us safely through this and other difficult situations.

Death Causes Us To Look At Ourselves

"Is there meaning to life?" "What is the purpose of life?" "Why do we live on this earth?" As a gospel minister I don't know how many people have asked me these or similar questions. Perhaps a lot of people don't think about these things very often, but there is one situation which forces us to consider the questions of life; that situation is death. When friends, relatives or famous people pass from this life, most of us spend a while thinking about the serious side of life. Yes, death should cause each person to examine self and consider questions of life, especially of his/her/your/my own life.

The Biblical book of Ecclesiastes was written by a famous king named Solomon. As the book opens, Solomon writes, "*Meaningless! Meaningless!... Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!*" (1:2, NIV). I don't know whether you agree with the viewpoint of Ecclesiastes or not, but when the Israelite King David lost his child to death, perhaps at that time King David would have agreed with Ecclesiastes that life was "*Meaningless! Meaningless!... Utterly meaningless!*" Both you and I have seen people who wander through life with no purpose, no goal and no restraints, and so they eventually conclude that life is meaningless. Or sometimes students who fail to pass the entrance examinations to a national university will say that life is without meaning. Or a young man whose marriage proposal is rebuffed by the lady of his dreams may well conclude that life is "*Meaningless! Meaningless!... Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!*"

Ecclesiastes goes on, however, to express a more optimistic view of life. Solomon says, "*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance" (3:1-4 NIV). While King David's child was extremely sick he was weeping and mourning, just like whenever we lose relatives and friends to death, we also mourn and weep. But Christians have the promise from God that he will protect, extend grace and help us, and God also promises Christians that heaven is waiting for those who follow him faithfully. Consequently, from another perspective, when God is at our side, mourning can turn into dancing, and weeping to laughing. King David took great consolation in the presence of God after the death of his child.*