

March 27, 2016

## Your Destiny James 4:13-17

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

You have a soul that will \_\_\_\_\_ beyond this life. What is your destiny? The Bible says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things \_\_\_\_\_ belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). God doesn't answer every \_\_\_\_\_ that we can ask, but God does give us everything that we \_\_\_\_\_ to know, everything that pertains to life and godliness. If you wish to live with God eternally, you can do nothing more valuable than to \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.

Hebrews 9:27 says, "it's appointed for men to \_\_\_\_\_ once and after this *comes* judgment." From our earliest days we've heard about the Day of Judgment. We've heard about \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We know something exists \_\_\_\_\_ this life, but we don't know everything we'd like to know. Movies and television stimulate our imagination, but they only provide someone's \_\_\_\_\_ about what lies beyond. We want to know what God says will \_\_\_\_\_ when we die. That's why we go to God's inspired Word for \_\_\_\_\_.

Today, we're going to talk about a very \_\_\_\_\_ subject, so I want to speak to you personally. I hope that this time will be like two \_\_\_\_\_ having a heart-to-heart conversation. Life is \_\_\_\_\_, and death is \_\_\_\_\_. Even if you're young and healthy, you can't \_\_\_\_\_ reality. Your death will either open the \_\_\_\_\_ to the most wonderful experience that you've ever enjoyed or the worst experience that anyone could have. God wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you, and the Bible gives us the information we need to \_\_\_\_\_ that blessing.

### **Our reading today comes from the letter of James 4:13-17.**

The word "death" occurs \_\_\_\_\_ times in the Old Testament and \_\_\_\_\_ times in the New Testament. Death signifies \_\_\_\_\_. Physical death separates the \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_. Spiritual death separates people from \_\_\_\_\_ and His blessing. The good news is that while death is a separation, it is not the \_\_\_\_\_ of our existence.

The Bible describes death in James 2:26, "For as the \_\_\_\_\_ apart from the spirit is dead, so also \_\_\_\_\_ apart from works is dead." The body is dead without the spirit. But, we're \_\_\_\_\_ than a fleshly body. We are body and spirit. The body \_\_\_\_\_ but the spirit still exists. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "the dust returns to the \_\_\_\_\_ as it was, and the spirit returns to \_\_\_\_\_ who gave it." God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of spirits according to Hebrews 12:9. Your spirit is not physical or material, and it's not destroyed by a physical \_\_\_\_\_.

On the cross, Jesus told the thief, "Truly, I say to you, \_\_\_\_\_ you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The Lord clearly says that we'll survive and be conscious \_\_\_\_\_ this

life. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ to see the thief in Paradise. There's an \_\_\_\_\_ spirit that survives death and is conscious. Life here and now is not \_\_\_\_\_ there is; there's \_\_\_\_\_.

Yes, it's appointed for men to die once, and then comes \_\_\_\_\_. Death holds a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ for us. The \_\_\_\_\_, especially judgment, is frightening. We worry whether our after life will be one of \_\_\_\_\_ or not. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14.** This surprises many who think nearly \_\_\_\_\_ will be saved and only a few of the worst will be lost, but that's not what Jesus says.

We must consider the afterlife. How we live will determine \_\_\_\_\_ we will spend eternity. What are we saved by? The shed \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. What are we saved from? The \_\_\_\_\_ of sin. **Read what Jesus warned in Matthew 5:29-30.**

The Lord Jesus gives us a \_\_\_\_\_ of what happens after death in Luke 16:19-31. Let's listen to what He says. "Now there was a \_\_\_\_\_ man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a \_\_\_\_\_ man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was \_\_\_\_\_. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in \_\_\_\_\_, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and he said, 'Father Abraham, have \_\_\_\_\_ on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and \_\_\_\_\_ off my tongue, for I am in \_\_\_\_\_ in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your \_\_\_\_\_ things, and likewise Lazarus \_\_\_\_\_ things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great \_\_\_\_\_ fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—in order that he may \_\_\_\_\_ them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them \_\_\_\_\_ them.' But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not \_\_\_\_\_ to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Many think this story is a \_\_\_\_\_ or some kind of fanciful story and for that reason shouldn't be taken seriously. But Jesus never speaks about \_\_\_\_\_ matters. When Jesus uses a figure of speech like a parable, He does so to \_\_\_\_\_ a point, not to trivialize it.

However one takes this story, people will face \_\_\_\_\_ very different destinies after they die. One destiny is \_\_\_\_\_ with comfort and the other with agony. Lazarus and the rich man both \_\_\_\_\_ where they were. Both could reason and have intelligent conversations. Both could \_\_\_\_\_ the lives that they lived back on earth.

Sometimes the Bible speaks of death as "\_\_\_\_\_." This is likely because the physical body after death \_\_\_\_\_ to be sleeping. This, however, doesn't mean that our \_\_\_\_\_ are

unconscious or in a stupor. Moses and Elijah, though they had been dead for many \_\_\_\_\_, had a conversation with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5). Death happens to the \_\_\_\_\_, but death doesn't make our spirits unconscious.

The lives that we live now, whether we're right with the Lord will determine our future \_\_\_\_\_. The story of Lazarus and the rich man \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ to what happens when our spirits leave this world. After we die, the angels will come for us to take us to the \_\_\_\_\_ God has assigned for us. After death comes judgment. This may be a place of \_\_\_\_\_ or a place of \_\_\_\_\_.

Scripture uses the word "Hades" to describe the \_\_\_\_\_. "Hades" literally means "unseen." Hades shouldn't be confused with \_\_\_\_\_. Hades is a \_\_\_\_\_ place, where the spirits reside until the Judgment Day; but hell is \_\_\_\_\_. No one will enter the promised heaven or the eternal hell until \_\_\_\_\_ the resurrection. Hades is the place where only \_\_\_\_\_ of dead people reside. At the resurrection, our spirits will return to earth and will be joined to \_\_\_\_\_, imperishable bodies. Death is the separation of the body and spirit. Resurrection takes place when our spirits are \_\_\_\_\_ with a changed, imperishable body.

While Hades usually refers to that place of torment, the word can also be applied to the \_\_\_\_\_ realm, which is divided into both a place of torment and a place of comfort. In Acts 2:27 the apostle Peter \_\_\_\_\_ David's prophecy in Psalm 16:10 about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He noted that Jesus' soul was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh suffer \_\_\_\_\_. When Jesus died, his soul went to Paradise according to His statement to the thief on the cross. He said "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

The word Paradise is used \_\_\_\_\_ times in Scripture and each time refers to that heavenly realm where the righteous go after death. Second Corinthians 12:2-4 says Paradise is equated to the third heaven, that is the place where God \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus went to that \_\_\_\_\_ place of righteous spirits where God dwells. And so, the Paradise of God is where the \_\_\_\_\_ of life is (Revelation 2:7). If Jesus' soul was not abandoned to Hades but He went to Paradise, then Hades must contain a place where righteous souls are \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostle Paul also \_\_\_\_\_ us to understand that we will have an existence in spirit form after we die and until the resurrection. **Read what he said in 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.** When the righteous die, they go to be \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord.

**Read what Paul said in Philippians 1:21-23.** Paul said he would \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ "with Christ" when he died. This is the Christian \_\_\_\_\_, to live with our Lord Jesus forever and ever.

**Read the reassurance Paul gives in Romans 14:7-9.** We may die physically, but not even death can separate us from the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus. When Christians die, they go to be with Him that very \_\_\_\_\_. But when \_\_\_\_\_ people die, the angels take them to a place of torment.

This is why we must be \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually. No one else can do that for you. The Bible says, "For we must \_\_\_\_\_ appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10). The

saved in Christ go to judgment washed \_\_\_\_\_ by the blood of Jesus; and their names are recorded in the book of life. They can face the afterlife with confidence that they have an eternal \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord. The unbeliever and the impenitent person have no such \_\_\_\_\_. They must \_\_\_\_\_ God on their own without their sins being washed away. They will be \_\_\_\_\_ eternally.

God doesn't want anyone to be \_\_\_\_\_—He wants everyone to be \_\_\_\_\_. He wouldn't have sent Jesus to die painfully on a cross if He were looking to \_\_\_\_\_ everybody. But God won't make people \_\_\_\_\_ and He won't turn their lives around, and He won't make people believe in Him or love Him. That is your \_\_\_\_\_. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ moral agent, and you are deciding whether you will serve Him or you won't serve Him.

God has prepared the way for your salvation in the \_\_\_\_\_ of His beloved Son, Jesus. By His \_\_\_\_\_ you are saved. But grace as a gift must be received by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We don't \_\_\_\_\_ our salvation, but God has determined that those who receive His gracious salvation are people who meet his \_\_\_\_\_.

The Bible says, "Although He (that is, Jesus) was a Son (that is, a son of God), He learned \_\_\_\_\_ from the things which He suffered. And having been made \_\_\_\_\_, He became to all those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Your gift of salvation is ready for you if you \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and are \_\_\_\_\_. My friend, have you prepared? Death is something that all of us will face one day, and it may come sooner than we think. Are you prepared?

I bought life insurance to \_\_\_\_\_ my wife and to \_\_\_\_\_ for my family after I'm gone. I've known people to buy a plot, choose the casket, and arrange the funeral service \_\_\_\_\_ before the time. How foolish I think it is to be so well prepared for the dying and the death here, but \_\_\_\_\_ to prepare oneself spiritually for the hereafter. I don't want to be like the five foolish virgins who failed to \_\_\_\_\_ the oil needed for their lamps. They ran to the dealers to buy oil; and while they were gone, the bridegroom came; and the \_\_\_\_\_ was shut and they were not allowed in (Matthew 25:1-14). We must \_\_\_\_\_ now before the time is up.

Don't waste your opportunity to get right with God; once life is over, there isn't any \_\_\_\_\_ chance. Why not \_\_\_\_\_ in a new and different direction for your soul's sake and for those you love? Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and \_\_\_\_\_. And if anyone \_\_\_\_\_ my voice and \_\_\_\_\_ the door, I'll come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Friend, you can lose your car, your house, your health, or your life and still go to \_\_\_\_\_. But if you lose your soul, you've lost \_\_\_\_\_. Make the most important commitment that you'll ever make, that of giving yourself to the Lord by \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. Believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of every sin. Confess the name of Jesus, and be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're baptized, the Bible says in Acts 22:16 that God will wash your sins away. The Lord will add you to His church, and you'll be a child of God with the promise of eternal life. Would you do that?