

What Dead Men Know

If the _____ could open and the dead could speak, we'd learn several important spiritual truths! Today, we're exploring what the dead men know and we need to _____. God's word opens the _____ to the most important treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The apostle Paul spoke of Jesus Christ and said, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). We need that wisdom to know how to think and how to _____. We need that wisdom, because it's the key to _____ life.

If you and I, as living people, could know what the dead men know, we'd see things from a new and a _____ perspective. As it is, we're _____ in what we know and often distracted by the things of this world. When we get too focused on this present world, we may _____ the most important lessons that affect this life and the life to come. Paul prayed for the Colossians, asking "that you may be _____ with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you'll walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to _____ Him in all respects" (Colossians 1:9-10). Have you considered what is necessary to please the Lord Jesus?

There are _____ ways people know things. First, people learn intellectually through listening, observing, and study. Second, people learn through _____. Hebrews 5:8 says that Jesus "learned _____ from the things which He suffered." The experience of His suffering on the cross _____ Him what obedience truly means. I've wondered, "How could one _____ Jesus anything, since He's God's Son?" But Jesus experienced in death something He had never experienced before; He experienced the _____ of crucifixion and death. It's one thing to _____ about obedience; it's another to give your life in obedience. That's what Jesus did to save us from _____.

Our reading today comes from Psalm 103:8-12.

Dead people know things about God and the afterlife from experience. We, today, know things by _____, since the Scriptures teach them to us; but the dead are now experiencing them. They know these things are _____ and they beg you to pay attention. Some people think that when we die, we'll simply go to sleep and not ever know anything.

I hear people quote Ecclesiastes 9:5, which says "For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know _____, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten." They would do well to quote this passage in _____, paying attention to verse 6, which says, "Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a _____ in all that is done under the sun." The phrase "under the sun" refers to the dead body not to what our spirits will experience in the afterlife.

Recently a man called me and said that Psalm 146 says our _____ to be conscious ends at death. Psalm 146:4 says, "His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts _____." Sadly, he missed the context of this passage: Psalm 146:3-4 says, "Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his _____ perish." The point here is not to _____ what men teach. Unlike God, the teachings

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of men perish, but God's teaching continues forever. So, don't believe those who tell you, "When you die, you cease to know anything." They're leading you astray.

Here are some of the things the dead people know and wished live men took seriously. First, the dead will have consciousness in the afterlife. In Luke 16:19-31, the Lord Jesus _____ what happened to the rich man and to Lazarus after this life is over. Lazarus was in a place of _____ and knew it; the rich man was in a place of _____ and knew it. They both could see, could speak, could hear, and could feel what was happening to them. In Matthew 17:1-5 Moses and Elijah, though they had been dead several hundred years, were having a conversation with Jesus. In Revelation 6, the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God _____ to God the Father wondering about avenging those who had killed them, and God gave them an answer. They were conscious of their past and their present. Many today mock the idea of God, but no one will mock that idea in the afterlife.

Second, they know the God of the Bible, the God of heaven, is _____. Some proudly proclaim they're atheists or agnostics who don't know whether there is a God, but there will be no _____ about God when this life is over. Ecclesiastes 12:7 describes death this way, "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." When we die, our bodies will return to the dust; but our spirits will go back to God who gave us that spirit. We'll know what is happening around us. When Jesus died, that very day He went to _____ (Luke 23:43) and He committed into the Father's hands His spirit (Luke 23:46). If we're faithful to God we'll experience the same _____. While we live in the flesh, we can't _____ God; but when our bodies die, our spirits will go to Him. We'll know He is real!

Third, dead people know every word in the _____, every word in this book is true. They know the prophecies are true, the promises are true, and the warnings are true as well. They realize that everyone who is "of the truth" listens to the _____ of Jesus Christ (John 18:37). They also realize many people have believed a _____ and had false hope. Many people fall for the deception of wickedness and perish, "because they didn't receive the love of the _____ so as to be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). They will know that people who do not _____ the truth will not find salvation. They will also know that those who obey the truth and remain faithful will enjoy all the promises of God.

You may think, "It doesn't matter what we believe"; but God's Word in Scripture determines the spiritual truth that saves _____. Don't imagine that God is going to set aside His Word just to _____ you. You must _____ His Word and _____ Him. Remember the words of Jesus when He answered Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every _____ that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). Whether something is biblical or not matters to your _____ life. God never said, He never says anywhere in scripture, or even suggests that "It doesn't matter what you believe." The devil is a _____ and the father of lies; and this notion, that it doesn't matter is really from the devil not from God. The Bible declares there is but one _____ in Galatians 1:6-9 and one _____ in Ephesians 4:5. The Lord Jesus said that He was the _____ way to the Father, in John 14:6. Dead people will know the Lord means what He says, and we need to learn that in this life.

Fourth, the dead know that life can end _____. They know the words of James are true, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a _____ that appears for a little while and then _____ away" (James 4:14). David said, "As for man, his days are like grass; As the flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its

place acknowledges it no longer” (Psalm 103:15-16). The Scriptures are clear: “it is appointed for men to _____ once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Each one of us has an _____ coming with death and judgment.” Death and judgment are appointed and certain.

As a minister, for many years I’ve had the sad _____ to have to bury infants, small children, teenagers, and adults of all ages. Friends, we have no assurance that we’ll live _____ and do all that we wish to do in this life. God is in _____, and He may require our souls this very day. Please don’t fail to _____ your soul for eternity. Once this life is over, we don’t get a _____ chance to make things right with God. We must come to the Lord, and obey the gospel, and stay faithful.

This leads us to our fifth thing that dead people know: they know death is when our _____ is settled. In Luke 16:22 the poor man who was right with God “died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, a place of comfort. The rich man in this story was not right with God; he also died and was buried.” Verses 23-24 say, “In Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment, 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 cool off my tongue, for I am in _____ in this flame.’” Abraham couldn’t send Lazarus, because there was a _____ chasm fixed between those who were righteous and those who were unrighteous, and no one can cross that chasm (Luke 16:25-26). The Lord Jesus reveals the unfaithful and unrighteous are _____ from God and from His blessing from the time that they die.

That ought to wake us up and cause us to _____. We must do what is right by loving God, keeping His commandments, and loving others! Romans 13:11-14 says, “Do this, knowing the time, that it’s already the hour for you to awaken from _____; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the _____ of darkness and put on the _____ of light. Let us behave properly as in the _____, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the _____ in regard to its lusts.”

We put on the Lord Jesus Christ first by believing in Him and by being _____. Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have (put on, or) clothed yourselves with Christ.” It’s not enough simply to become a child of God, we must _____ on putting on Christ throughout our lives here on earth. We do this by how we think, how we speak, how we treat others, and how we live. People who want to live with Christ in eternity put away _____ behaviors and live like Christ keeping the morals He taught. Don’t let wickedness _____ you. Being a Christian means _____ in the light as He is in the light. You can’t walk in spiritual darkness and then expect to have the _____ of God. Many people celebrate sin and laugh about it in this life, but no one will be laughing about sin in the life to come.

Sixth, dead people know there is a great _____ in God’s eyes between the faithful who are saved “in Christ” and the lost who are “outside” of Christ. Those who are _____ of Christ are “separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). But those who are “in Christ” are “no longer strangers and aliens, but you’re fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19). If you’re in Christ, you’re a fellow _____ with the saints; you’re God’s son, you’re God’s daughter. You matter to Him because you’re _____ to God. As God’s child, you have an inheritance with Him in heaven! Nothing you will ever do is as important as maintaining that faithful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last, the dead know there is a _____ Day. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his _____ in the body, according to what he’s done, whether good or bad.” Some imagine, “God is too _____ to condemn anyone.” When they say that, you can be sure they’ve not _____ what God said in Scripture but have listened to other people. Second Peter 2:4-9 speaks of God condemning angels when they sinned, condemning the ancient world in the days of Noah, and condemning Sodom and Gomorrah for their immorality. He concludes in verse 9, “then the Lord knows how to _____ the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under _____ for the day of judgment.” You can’t refuse to repent and still escape God’s judgment! You’re only fooling yourself. God is holy and He is a just God; He will punish those who choose sin and ignore Him.

The Judgment Day doesn’t have to be a judgment against you. At the close of his life, Paul said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I’ve fought the good fight, I’ve finished the course, I’ve kept the faith; and in the future there is laid up for me the _____ of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to _____ who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

If the graves could open and the dead could speak, they would _____ to each of us clearly and emphatically, “Draw close to the Lord and obey Him. Don’t let anything come _____ God and you.” The wicked dead and former unbelievers wouldn’t want you to _____ their steps and end up where they are. The righteous dead would plead for you to put your trust in the Lord and _____ Him. They would passionately urge you to stay faithful to the Lord Jesus. They know how serious a matter salvation truly is. Are you getting this? Wouldn’t it be foolish to ignore this warning and find yourself lost like the rich man of Luke 16?

Our Father in heaven has no _____ to see you lost. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Our Father in heaven hopes you will look at the cross and come to _____ the Lord with all your heart. No one loves you like the Lord loves you. No one wants your salvation more than the one who died on the cross for your sins.

You can find salvation from sin and judgment in the grace of our Lord Jesus who shed His blood for our sins. Trust in the Lord Jesus, turn from sinful thinking and behaviors to serve the Lord humbly and repent, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ by an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Study Acts 2, Acts 22, and Romans 6. The Scriptures will teach you the truth about baptism into Christ. And then get involved in the church and stay faithful.

Focus your heart on God, do it today by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one.