

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

This morning, I read a short article about a celebrity scientist's thoughts on dying and funeral options. It was mostly bad biology mixed with lots of personal opinion. It was, however, a needed reminder that our Earthly lives are very short and eternity is very long.

Every Sunday, we affirm the Apostle's Creed. We believe in the "forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." The "resurrection of the body" is the understanding that when we die, our spirit immediately enters the presence of the Lord (II Cor. 5:8), but our physical body returns to the dust from which it is created. Those who reject Christ in this life will enter Hell until their final judgement. Their bodies will likewise return to the dust. Hebrews 9 tells us that it is appointed for men once to die, and after that comes judgment. (Heb. 9:27)

The Bible clearly teaches that one day, all bodies will be raised and receive a resurrected body similar to Jesus' resurrected body. Acts 24 tells us there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. (Acts 24:15) Jesus said that "an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement." (John 5:28-29) Every person who ever lived will have their body resurrected. It is with that body we will spend our eternity.

Scripture records the terrifying vision John saw of the judgment awaiting all those who reject Christ: "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hell gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hell were thrown into the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Rev 20:12-15) According to Revelation 20:10, the lake of fire is a place of torment, "day and night forever and ever."

Scripture also teaches that the believer's judgment will be much different. Our salvation will not be judged; rather, it is our works done after we were saved. Paul was writing to Christians when he said, "For we must all appear

before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."(II Cor. 5:10) This judgement of believers does not determine our eternal destination, but rather our eternal reward.

God's all-consuming fire will be applied to every believer's works. Jesus is the foundation of our faith. "Now if anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." (I Cor. 3:12)

Our resurrected bodies will fully embrace the untold joy of an eternal fellowship with God, "the life everlasting." Or it will remain forever conscious of the unspeakable torment it will eternally endure. God is the Holy and Righteous Judge. His judgments are forever just. There is no third option.

See y'all Sunday  
Perry Cunningham  
Lay Leader