

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT TO DIE?

I am not whining or complaining, but the simple truth of the matter is serving the Lord is gut-wrenching, painful, teary work (**Acts 20:19-27**). Like Paul, I am not made of solid steel. Yes, I have my scars (**Gal. 6:17**). Moreover, sometimes, like Paul once expressed, I wish I could leave this old earth behind and call the sojourn quits (**Philippians 1:23; 1 Peter 1:17; Hebrews 11:13**). Yes, I must admit, that there have been moments when I have said to myself, “*Wouldn't it be great to die?*” Indeed, what a beautiful thought to close my eyes only to open them again in paradise (**Luke 23:43**). Such would be far better than life here on this old hedonistic earth (**Philippians 1:23; 1 John 2:16**). Listed below are some of the advantages, beyond the obvious ones, that I would gain if I died today.

- I would never again have to feel the pain involved with losing close friends – friends who have marked me for standing up for the plain truth as I did when leaving liberalism (**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 3:17**).
- I would never again have to feel the pain involved with losing close friends – friends who have marked me for standing up for the plain truth as I did *since* leaving liberalism (**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 3:17**).
- I would never again have to hear people say, “*great sermon*” only to have those same people stab me in the back – slicing me to pieces with their tongues (**Jeremiah 18:18; 2 Corinthians 10:10**).
- I would never again have to preach my heart out to people I care about only to have them never really apply what is being taught from the Word of God (**Ezekiel 33:30-33; James 2:14-17**).
- I would never again have to have some lazy brother or sister tell me how I could do a better job laboring in the kingdom (**Matthew 7:3-5**).
- I would never again have to hear people toot their own horn (**Proverbs 20:4; 27:2; Matthew 23:5**).
- I would never again have to deal with those who get upset over trivial matters (**Proverbs 28:25; Matt. 11:16-17**).
- I would never again have to learn of congregations splitting into 19 different pieces because tradition or fear ruled the day (**Mark 7:8-9; Revelation 21:8; Jude 3**).
- I would never again have to hear those who “watch the clock” complain about the length of the Sunday assembly (**Psalms 122:1; Matt 22:37**).
- I would never again have to “feel my heart sink” as I look out at empty pews – wondering where in the world “so and so” is (**Hebrews 10:25; John 4:24**).
- I would never again have to learn of congregations wherein 10% of the saints do 95% of the work, while the other 90% are carnally minded (**Ephesians 4:14-16; Romans 8:5-6**).
- I would never again have to learn of people leaving their reading glasses sitting on the pew each and every week (**Psalms 119:162; Matthew 5:6**).
- I would never again get discouraged over those who say they have counted the cost and are ready to follow Jesus, only to render initial obedience and then fall away (**Luke 14:25-33; Acts 2:36-47; Luke 9:62; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 2 Cor. 11:29**).

Beloved, there are many more advantages I could note that would come as a result of my death. Yes, it would be great to die. However, is that what is best for all? No. Instead it is more needful that I abide in the flesh (**Philippians 1:24**). My wife is not ready to be alone (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**). My mother needs spiritual prodding still yet (**Proverbs 15:10**). I still hope to reach some of those folks who marked me with the glorious light of the truth (**2 Peter 1:19**). I have not yet knocked every door in the local area (**Mark 16:15-16**). I have classes yet to teach; sermons yet to write and preach (**2 Timothy 4:2**). There are still wayward saints to discipline (**1 Corinthians 5:1-13**). There are still new babes to ground (**Colossians 1:21-23**). There are still needy people to minister to (**Matthew 25:31-46; 1 John 3:17**). I have more to learn (**1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16**).

Thus, even though it would be great to die, I reckon it is best, for the present, to be in the flesh.