

Shall I Die Like a Dog or a Man?

Sunday, December 11th, 1988

Psalm 49:20

“Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.”

I am going to preach to you a little different message today. I'll be using for my text, Psalm 49. This is an interesting Psalm. Here is the title, “SHALL I DIE LIKE A DOG, OR A MAN?”

You may think that this is a strange title for a message; I suppose it is. That is exactly what David is saying in Psalm 49:20. I want to go to the last verse in Psalm 49 verse 20. *“A man that is in honor and understands not, is like the beasts that perish.”*

What is he saying? Let me paraphrase it. In other words, David is speaking. He is writing under Divine inspiration, which is God breathed. The Lord is speaking through him. David is saying, “A man or a woman that is held in great worldly honor, great esteem, high position with riches and wisdom in this world, but yet, does not understand the true wisdom of God, who does not understand the honor that comes from God, who does not understand true riches in Christ Jesus, he is no more than the dog that dies on the highway or the beast that perishes in the field.” There is no difference.

What is this understanding? I want you to listen to First John 5:20. This is so critical. John says, *“And we know that the Son of God has come and given us an understanding.”* David said, *“A man that is in great wealth and honor, and does not understand, is like a beast that perishes.”*

Where do you get understanding? *“The Son of God has come and given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true.”* There is no truth in this world. God is true and *“We are in God that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is life.”* John says, *“This is life.”* When a man has understanding, he has God. When he has God, he has life. *“He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God, hath not understanding, has not life.”*

It does not matter what kind of beast it is; I have just chosen the word “dog”. He perishes like a beast. It does not matter if it is a dog, cat, or whatever. The importance of what David is saying here cannot be exaggerated. I do not want to die like a dog.

You might be driving down the highway and you see a carcass of a dog beside the road. You do not know if some child has lost their pet, or a farmer has lost his sheep dog. There may be a hunter who has lost his beagle hound. There's not much thought given to

it because the dog perishes. It is annihilated and it is gone. He said, "That a man, no matter who he is, how much honor or how much prestige he has in this world, if he doesn't have understanding, he dies like a dog."

The understanding (referenced here in our text) is in understanding the redemptive purpose and glory of God. The glory of God in Jesus Christ is the only thing that makes a man different from the beast, understanding that one thing. That is what he says.

You see, a beast, like a dog lives for today. He has no thought of tomorrow or life after death. A dog or animal lives for present pleasure (right now). His concern and interest right now is for himself. He may be in the fields; he may even be in his doghouse. The dog is concerned with being warm or cool, getting something to eat or playing with other dogs. The things about him in the world are all that he is concerned about. Do you know anybody like that?

Men who live in this fashion have no concern for their spiritual well-being or no concern for God or no interest in God's grace and mercy. They have no understanding of spiritual things. Well, they are like the dog; he perishes. He lives for the world and he dies with the world. When the world is destroyed, he is destroyed. When his interests are gone, he is gone.

What David is saying here is actually from the loftiest place, the highest place of fellowship with God, of eternal glory, hope, and honor. From that highest place to the uttermost depths of despair and death and corruption, is only a matter of understanding. It is a matter of understanding and believing the truth of God. That is the difference.

The difference in dying like a man (an unbeliever), created in the image of God, or the difference of a believer dying in Christ Jesus, (because in Christ we died with Him); as Paul said, "*I'm crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"

The difference in dying in the glory and honor of God and to hear Him say, "*Come ye blessed into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world*" and to die like a dog on the street; the difference is understanding and believing the true Gospel and true God. Is that what He said?

A man that is in honor, prestige, and power and understands not, is like a dog that dies, a beast that perishes. You see; there are men that have no worldly honor at all. I have no worldly honor at all. Men who have no worldly honor at all, who know God, are higher than the angels. That's right; they are higher than the angels, if they know God. They

are sons of God. *“They are accepted in the beloved.”* They are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

Men boast of great wisdom, riches and honor on this earth. Their names are in the paper all the time and they are seen on television. Some are famous actors and actresses, yet, they do not know God. No matter how much acclaim, prestige, and power they have now, God says, *“When they die, they are like a beast that perishes.”*

“Let not the rich man glory in his riches. Let not the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he knows Me and understands Me.” This is in Jeremiah 23:9 and 10. Write that down. He knows, he understands. I am saying to you from the loftiest place of eternal wisdom, glory is a step from the deepest pit of despair, and corruption is a matter of understanding.

Let’s read this Psalm. Let me paraphrase it, Psalm 49. Let’s start with verse one: David says, *“Hear me ye people, all the inhabitants of the earth; listen to me, both low and high together. Both rich and poor, listen to me,”* David said. *“My mouth is going to speak wisdom. The thoughts of my heart shall be of understanding,”* (real understanding).

“I’m going to submit a parable to you in music. I do not fear to speak the truth in these days of evil,” he said. *“When men of evil and iniquity surround me, I’m not afraid to speak the truth; I am going to tell you the truth.”*

“Men trust in their wealth and boast themselves of great riches,” he says. None of them can redeem themselves. None of them can redeem their brothers with all their riches, honor, power, and glory. Their billions and millions and their so-called wisdom and strength can’t provide a ransom for sinners. They cannot redeem themselves nor their brothers. The price of redemption is too costly.

“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” It costs too much to redeem a soul. He says, *“All of you fellows who trust in your wealth and boast yourself of riches, what will it get you?”* You can’t save your soul; you can’t raise yourself from the grave; you can’t take yourself to glory; you can’t invade the Kingdom of God; it is not for sale

“They may talk of heaven, David said, but they can’t buy it.” For wise men die and fools die too. They all, wise men and fools, go to the grave and they leave everything behind them to others. They think that their houses, their names, and their members shall linger.

They name buildings after themselves and they chisel their names in granite and marble stones. They leave behind trust funds and their names on all kinds of things. They think their names, houses, and members are going to linger, but David said; "It is not so."

Even honorable men die and fools die. Great men die and nothing remains. "*They are like beasts that perish.*" They lay in the grave like animals. Death and worms feed on them. Their beauty is consumed in the grave. That is all that it amounts to.

But, "*My God shall redeem me.*" I have a Redeemer; He paid the price. He is able and is fully sufficient. "*He is able to save to the uttermost them who come to God by Him. He is able to present us faultless, holy, and unblameable before His throne of glory. He is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like His own. He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.*" He is able!

My God will redeem me. "*It is impossible with men, but not with God; all things are possible with God. He shall redeem my soul from the grave for He shall receive me to Himself.*" That is when he writes "*A man that is in honor and does not understand this, the redemptive glory of God, is like the dogs that die.*"

I haven't exaggerated this in the least. This is exactly what David is saying, "*A man that does not understand, is like a beast that perishes.*" I say that a man that does not know God, believe God, understand the redemptive glory of God and the true riches of God, is like a dog that dies on the highway. A man who dies without an understanding of the true wisdom, true riches, true strength and true glory and true honor, regardless of his station in life, dies like a dog.

What is this understanding? Let's look at understanding more closely. What is it? It is not in me. It is not in any preacher, not in any priest, not in any organization, or in religious tradition. It is not in the forms or in the law. This wisdom and understanding is not in philosophy or morality. The wisdom of God is in Jesus Christ.

If you will read Proverbs Chapter 8, Christ is called; "*The Wisdom of God.*" In First Corinthians 1: it says, "*Those who believe, see in Christ, the wisdom and power of God. He of God is made unto us wisdom*" He says in John, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*" He has come and given us an understanding.

He says, "*No man knows the Father but the Son and He to whom the Son will reveal Him. No man hath seen God at any time. The Son hath manifested Him.*" God said on the Mount of Transfiguration, "*This is My Son; hear Him.*" So, the wisdom and the

understanding of God come through Christ. *"Hear Him."* If you want to know what God says, then hear His Son; hear Christ. He is the wisdom of God. He is the understanding.

Now, I want to give you four or five things that we learn in Christ that we learn about this understanding, to which we are brought, that separates us from the beast. All men are going to die. You are going to die, and I am going to die. Death is a certainty, just as sure as we are standing here. *"It is appointed unto men once to die."*

I want to die in Christ. I want to die in fellowship with God. I want to die with something ahead of me, not everything behind me. I want to have glory awaiting and a hope of life eternal. *"If a man dies, shall he live again?"* God says that he shall.

Here is what I have learned in Christ Jesus. There are five things. I will give them to you briefly. Jot them down, if you want to. This is what it is to understand.

First of all, in Christ we learn the purpose of God. There is no way of knowing the purpose of God apart from Christ. Listen to this Scripture in Ephesians 1: What is God doing? What is God's grand design in this whole thing? Well, it is wrapped up in Christ. It is revealed in Christ.

In Ephesians 1:9-11, *"Having made known unto us the mystery of God's will according to His own good pleasure which He purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth, even in Christ: In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the council of His own will."*

What is God's purpose? I ask you, now, do you have any understanding? Do you have any knowledge of God? God is Eternal. Back before the world was made or hurled into space and the sun, moon and stars were put in their respective places, before all things, before the morning stars sang together in the eternal councils of God, what was God's purpose in all of this? What did God propose and decree?

Here it tells us; His purpose is in Christ; that in the ages to come He might gather together on a new earth and in a new heaven all things in Christ. The purpose of God is in Christ. God's eternal purpose is to have a people from Adam's race. He is to have people from every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue under heaven, redeemed by Christ and made like Christ.

“He predestinated that we should all be conformed to the image of His Son.” In John 6:37, our Lord said; *“All that the Father giveth Me, will come to Me. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. This is the will of Him that sent Me, that all of which He hath given Me, I will lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day.”*

God’s will, God’s purpose, and God’s grand design in redemption is all fulfilled in Christ Jesus and is related to Christ Jesus. Now, that’s right! I understand this. Christ said, *“Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them I must bring. They will hear My voice and they will be one fold and one shepherd.”* I have some understanding of that, do you?

I discovered it in Christ, in His Gospel, in His life, death, in His Priestly prayer and His Words. I found out God’s purpose is to have a people like Christ. They are loved in Christ, redeemed in Christ, crucified in Christ, raised in Christ, seated in Christ and someday resurrected and made like Christ.

Secondly: In Christ we have an understanding of the power of God. When our Lord talked about salvation, the disciples said; *“Who can be saved?”* Who can be lifted from the dunghill? Who can be made like the Son of God? Who can be cleansed from sin? Who can be perfected? Who can ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who can stand in His Holy presence?

“What is man that he should be clean, that is born of woman that he should be before God without sin?” Our Lord said, *“With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

My friends; I am weary of hearing of today’s impotent god. I’m weary of hearing preachers talking about God wanting to do this, and God wants to do that, and folks just won’t let Him. *“Is anything too hard for God?”* Men keep preaching that God wants to this and God wants to do that. They say, “God will do; God wants to.” Let me tell you something, what God wills to do, He will do. What God Almighty wants to do He will do.

I hear preachers say, “God is trying to show you this.” God doesn’t try to show you anything. If God sets out to show a man something, he will learn it. *“The Son will quicken whom He will.”* God said, *“Have I not spoken; shall I not do it? My council shall stand. None can stay My hand or say unto Me, “What doest Thou?”* God says, *“I declare the end from the beginning.”* They said, *“David; where is your God?”* He said, *“Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased. Whatever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, earth and in the seas and all deep places.”*

The next time you hear a man preaching or talking about God wanting to do this, or that, and He is not able or “men won’t let Him,” turn your television off, turn your hearing aid down. That man is not talking about the living God. The living God does what He sets out to do. He accomplishes what He wills to accomplish and “*nothing is too hard for God.*”

I see that in Christ “*The Son quickeneth whom He will.*” Matthew, follow Me. Zacchaeus come down. Lazareth, come forth. Have you ever known Jesus Christ to try to attempt to do anything that He didn’t do? Study His life. “*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, earth, seas and in all deep places.*”

Thirdly: In Christ we understand the providence of God. God is the first cause of all things. “*We know that all things work together for good, to them who love God, and who are the called according to His purpose. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.*”

When God determined to bless Abraham, He called him and blessed him. When God determined to put Joseph on the throne in Egypt, He put him on the throne in Egypt. He worked all providential dealings in the life of Joseph to bring him to the throne.

When God chose His disciples, He called them. All things in heaven and earth, all things good and bad, all things past, present and future work together for the eternal good of His people who are called in Christ Jesus. That is true!

Hannah understood this. She said, “*The Lord kills and the Lord makes alive. The Lord maketh poor, the Lord maketh rich, the Lord lifteth up and the Lord bringeth down. The Lord exalteth the beggar from the dunghill and makes him sit among princes.*”

Job understood this. He said, “*The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, praise the Lord.*” Eli understood this. Samuel told Eli, “*God is going to kill your two sons.*” He said, “*Well, it is the Lord, let Him do what He will.*” Paul understood this. He said, “*I am what I am by the grace of God.*”

Do you understand this? You can’t change God by wishing. You can’t change God by your theological patterns. You can’t change God by your feelings. God is God. “*Let God be true.*” Understanding God is the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and His Divine Providence.

Fourthly: In Christ, I understand the presence of God. *“No man knoweth the Father but the Son, He to whom the Son will reveal Him.”* You see, *“He was in the world.”* Who was in the world? God was in the world. He was in the world in the Person of Jesus Christ. *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”*

The disciples said, *“Show us the Father.”* He said, *“You are looking at Him.”* *“He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.”*

God came to earth. *“God was in the Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”* To know the presence of God is to know Christ. A man who does not have Christ knows nothing of the presence of God. *“He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son of God the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

Not the presence of God, not the love of God, not the mercy of God, but the wrath of God abideth on him. God’s love is in Christ. I promise you that and that is true! God’s love is in Christ.

That is understanding the presence of God. Anything else is presumption. It is a fools presumption too, because He plainly says; *“He that hath the Son hath the Father. He that hath not the Son of God hath not the Father. My Father and I will come and take up our abode with him.”*

Fifthly: in Christ, we understand the promises of God. My friends, listen to me; *“All the promises of God are in Christ Jesus.”* That is so! Turn to Second Corinthians 1:20, *“For all the promises of God are in Christ.”* That is what it says right there, *“And they are yes and in Him, amen to the glory of God.”*

There is not a promise outside of Christ for anybody. There is a promise of forgiveness in Him, *“In whom we have redemption.”* There is forgiveness of our sins, there is a promise of justification; *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.”*

There is a promise of eternal life, *“God hath given us life, and this life is in His Son.”* There is a promise of resurrection, *“Because I live you will live.”* There is a promise of hope, *“Christ in you the hope of glory.”*

There is a promise of peace, *“He made peace through the blood of His cross.”* There’s a promise of rest, *“Come unto Me and I will give you rest.”* There is a promise of His presence, *“Lo, I am with you always.”*

Shall I die like a dog, or a man?