



Resting in Peace

ALL SAINTS DAY

Gen 15: 1-1 John 5:19-29 1 Cor 15:51-57

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I am sure that you have all seen tombstones, especially in old western movies, that have **RIP** written on them. **RIP** is from a Latin phrase that means “rest in peace¹”. RIP seems to have been a practice of the early Christian Church. Graves dating back to 400AD have been found with the inscription. But now, especially in movies, it is simply a pious wish that the dead person *rests in peace*.

You might be surprised to learn that **RIP** is actually a Biblical statement of Christ-centered hope at times of death. God promised Abraham that he would *rest in peace* when it was time for him to die. Let me show you:

[God said to Abraham,] “You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. Genesis 15:15”

God is speaking to Abraham, who believes God’s promise of the coming Messiah. The Lord assures Abraham that he will *die in peace*. Today, on *All Saint’s Day*, we remember and thank God for our loved ones who now “*rest in peace*.” We thank God for their faith and life, and we look forward to seeing them again, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, in the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹ “Rest in peace” (RIP) is the Latin phrase requiescat in pace. It is sometimes used in traditional Christian services and prayers . . . to wish the soul of a decedent eternal rest and peace. RIP was common on headstones in the 18th century, and is widely used today when mentioning someone's death. WIKIPEDIA

Biblically, *resting in peace* means dying with faith in the Savior Jesus Christ. It is not simply a pious wish, but it is **certain hope** and **confident assurance** that when you die, you will be with Christ in heaven.

You have *peace* with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Your sin created hostility between you and God. Your disobedience demands punishment. Your immorality separates you from God. Rather than peace with God, sin brings the wrath of God; including horrible guilt, terrible shame, death and dying, and final condemnation and judgment. There's not one thing you can do to change this. There is no way you yourself can make peace with God.

That is why people, *by nature and without Christ*, fear death. Their sin and guilt weighs heavy on them. In their hearts, they know there is a God and that they are accountable to Him. Their conscience convicts them; final judgment looms over them; and the doom of condemnation creates great fear and terror in their minds and consciences.

Peace at death

does not come from your own works, merit or accomplishments.

Peace at death

comes only through Jesus Christ, the Savior God sent for you.

Jesus gathers up your sin and takes them to the cross. You should have been punished for your sins, but you are not: *Jesus is punished instead*. He took your place. That's why He died. He died for you. He faced the wrath and anger of God for you. Your sins have now been paid for. In His resurrection from the dead on the Third Day, God the Father declares to the world that He is at peace; that your sins no longer separate you from God. Death now passes over you. You are given eternal life! You have peace with God because of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Martin Luther wrote a great deal about *death and dying*; as has other Christian authors throughout the centuries. Up until recently, death and dying was an ever present danger. It has only been in the last century that "*being healthy*" was expected. For most people throughout history, and many people even today, death and dying was an everyday reality and danger. **Martin Luther wrote that there are two things to remember about death and dying.**

First, think about death and dying **now**, while you are living and healthy, **NOT** when you are in the throes of death and dying. **Now** is the time to repent of your sins! **Now** is the time to understand the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Now** is the time to believe that your sins are forgiven and that God promises to never ever remember your sins again.

Now is the time to understand and believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting! **Now** is the time to study God's Holy Word so that your faith is strong and your conviction is solidly on God's promises. **Now** is the time to build your knowledge and increase your understanding of the things of God². **First, think about death and dying now, while you are living and healthy, NOT when you are in the throes of death and dying.**

If you wait to think about death and dying when you are in the throes of death and dying; fear, guilt, and dread will overwhelm you. Death is a fearful enemy; guilt separates you from God; fear paralyzes you. If you wait until you are in the throes of death and dying to think about death and dying, then you will have *no peace at the time to death*.

Now is the time to think about death and dying, understand it, to repent of your sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who takes your sins away, gives you peace with God, and promises you eternal life!

God the Father,
send us the Holy
Spirit, so that we
may prepare for
death while we live,
and have peace
when we die. In
Jesus Name, amen!

The **second thing** the Martin Luther teaches about death and dying is that when you **are in the throes of death and dying**, the only thing you have to think about is Christ. You do not have to agonize trying to remember past sins; you do not have to deal with any lingering guilt; you do not have to rehearse the things that you think are pleasing to God; and you do not have to have the heartbreak of leaving loved ones behind. *When you are in the midst of death and dying, you keep your eyes on Christ and His promises.* **That is the only thing that matters.** Jesus is the Savior God provided for you to give you eternal life. You have prepared yourself for death and dying throughout your life. You have repented of your sin; you understand and believe in Christ's forgiveness, and you have had peace with God while living your life. Now, as death approaches, you still have peace with God. **NOTHING CHANGES.** When you are in the throes of death and dying, the only thing to think about is the Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior, who forgives your sins and gives you eternal life.

You may know the hymn, "*Abide with Me.*" One of the stanzas says

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes
Shining through the gloom and point me to the skies
Heavens morning breaks and deaths dark shadows flee
In life, and death, O Lord, abide with me.*

² Everything that we do here at Trinity could be seen as preparing you for death and dying. We strive make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who are biblically literate and doctrinally sound. The only way that happens is by the hearing, reading, and studying God's Holy Word. It is never too late to come to a Bible study; most of my Oasis notes for the past years are available on Trinity's website, trinitylcs.org under the "info tab". You are ALWAYS, *always, always* welcome to start coming to any Bible study we have here at Trinity!

When you are in the throes of death and dying, the only thing to think about is the Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior, who forgives your sins and gives you eternal life.

This is also a guide for you if you are with someone who is in the midst of death and dying. *The way that you comfort, support, and encourage someone who is dying is by pointing them to Jesus.*

- ⇒ You can do that by reading Scripture to them; especially the promises of the gospel³.
- ⇒ You do that by reading parts of the liturgy that they have grown up with all of their lives, especially the Absolution and the Apostles' Creed
- ⇒ You can sing hymns and canticles to them.
- ⇒ You can play the familiar hymns and songs on your phone or on a CD player
- ⇒ You can ask a faithful pastor to come visit you

If you are comforting someone who is dying, then be sure to be pointing them to Jesus. When someone's in the throes of death and dying, the only thing they need to think about is the Lord Jesus Christ, their Savior who gives them peace at the time of death.

God promised Abraham that he would *die in peace*; that's God's will for you as well.

Today we celebrate and thank God for our loved ones who *rest in peace* -- they died trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we pray that we *die in peace*, as we think about death and dying now while we are living; and then when death and dying comes -- we focus only on Christ and His work of salvation for us!

Amen!

³ I have many of these promises of eternal life listed on a document that I can easily send to you; email me at dbolte@trinitylcs.org and I will send them to you (I can also print them off for you if you want). These are the promises that will strengthen your faith, give you peace, and comfort you when you think about death and dying; and when you *go through* death and dying. In addition, these are verses you can use when you are with someone in the throes of death and dying.

**God the Father,
we thank you for your Son Jesus
who gives us the hope of glory,
that is
the resurrection of the dead
and the life everlasting.**

**Send us the Holy Spirit
so that we may have strong faith
and deep conviction
in Your promises.**

**Help us to prepare for death while we live,
so that we may have peace when we die.**

**In Jesus,
our living Savior's Name we pray,
amen!**

Genesis 15: 1-16

15 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” 2 But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” 5 He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. 7 He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.” 8 But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?” 9 So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11 Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the Lord said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” 55 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 5:19-29

Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. 24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. 25 Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28 “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.