**Never To Taste Death**

Based on [John 8:42-59](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn8.42-59)

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The Fifth Sunday in Lent ~ Judica

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

According to worldometer website as of this morning, there were over 32,000 deaths worldwide from the Coronavirus, 61 in Canada. We are frail creatures who take death very seriously. The world lives in reaction to it and its threats. Can you imagine a world without sickness and death? What would it look like? Would there still be fear, anxiety or anything like that?

Some illnesses are reversible, others lead to death. Jesus Christ was sent by the father to undo death. When you think about his healing miracles, they involve bringing back to life that which has died. If you become blind, there is no doctor who can resurrect your sight. If you are paralyzed there is no physician that can enliven dead limbs. If you die, there is no one on earth who has the technology to bring you back to life. The only person with that power is God himself. He created life, and His Son is the source of life. In him we trust to deliver us from death and give us everlasting life.

In John Chapter 8, Jesus is disputing with the Jews...probably certain leaders of them. And he says something that is incredible to them. He says anyone who keeps his word will never see death. Every great person that came before Jesus died. Abraham died, the prophets died, now Jesus comes and says that his word is more powerful than death?

Yes, it is true. Jesus’ word is more powerful than death. Someday the world will come to an abrupt end. That will happen at a time the Father has set, when the final trumpet will sound, and with a word, the breath from his mouth Jesus will put an end to all evil and set in place a new creation. “Heaven and earth will pass away”, Jesus said, “but my word will not pass away.” “The word of the Lord endures forever”.

This is why, when a global pandemic strikes and throws the world off balance, we don’t have to be anxious or afraid. There are people who are not afraid simply because they trust in the spirit of this world. They think that the fundamental stability of the world is a given and so “This too shall pass”. It might. Everybody has an opinion on where all this is going. But those who blithely believe that the current pandemic and its aftermath won’t lead to their death have a misplaced hope. Because this world is not guaranteed a tomorrow.

But we are the church, the kingdom of heaven on earth wherein God reigns in the hearts and minds of believers. Through the *word* of Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives us faith that prepares us for death. We know that there is no death for those who are in Christ Jesus. Sure we may die someday, but it’s not terminal. It is a death that doesn’t lead to death. Just as God said to Adam and Eve that if they eat of the fruit of the tree they shall surely die, what He meant was they shall surely be naked and vulnerable, they will surely know their guilt, fear the wrath of God, and doubt His love and gracious intentions. The wages of sin is death, that death is being separated from the grace and love of God. The physical death we see, the stopping of the heart and the lungs, that is only a symbol and a symptom, real and horrible as it is, of the real spiritual death caused by our sin, which originally put us at odds with God. Thanks be to God that that, through faith, he has since made us dead to sin and alive in Christ.

The Jews oppose Jesus because they say Abraham is dead. But they are wrong. They are right in that currently Abraham is buried, and his body is dust...but they are wrong that he ceases to be, or that he is away from God. Jesus elsewhere says that His Father is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that he is not a God of the dead but of the living. Abraham is with God in paradise, and though he is without his body he is living. He is reconciled to God and at peace. Abraham saw Jesus day when he breathed his last and his soul was immediately taken to be with Jesus in paradise. He did ***not*** taste death. His soul was ***not*** abandoned to hell. Before Abraham was born, the Son of God prepared a place for him in His Father’s house.

And the Son of God has prepared a place for you. There may be tribulation on the way there, as we are told it is through many tribulations one must enter the kingdom of God. Global panic and foreboding of what is happening to the world is a part of that. But our faith accounts for the worst case scenario. We don’t have to evaluate how bad things are. Rather we can say “I don’t know where this is going, but I do know that if it is going to lead to death, at least we will not die.”

It’s a good way for a responsible, rational person to think. People who suffer from anxiety are told that the best thing to do is to sit down and really think about what it is you are really worried about. A lot of times, people find out that what they were so afraid of was really a small thing, that appeared fearsome simply because they were afraid to face it. Small things can cast a very large shadow; so it is with our fears if we refuse to face them for what they are.

So why should we doubt and worry over the present state of the world? Is it because everythings going fine, the human spirit is indomitable, we’ll get through this? By no means! Those who trust in the world will be disappointed, if not now then some day. There is no guarantee that this virus won’t get out of hand, or that the stock market will surely bounce back. The world’s pep talks are empty, and it’s promises are paper money. But for you who are in Christ, who keep his word, you need not worry because even when you die you will not die. Even if your lungs cease and your heart stops, you will not taste death.

Adam and Eve tasted death when they tasted the forbidden fruit against the word of God. But just as they tasted death by eating the fruit of the tree of which they were told not to eat; we taste eternal life by eating the fruit of the tree of which our salvation was won. Jesus gives his flesh and blood as our medicine and his cross has become for us the tree of eternal life.

It is a shame that we cannot share the Lord’s Supper together now. Still, we have his word and we continue to hear and keep it, so that we have nothing to fear in the evil day. As the world struggles to find a cure to one virus, we can rejoice that we have already been vaccinated against death, inoculated from hell by the word of the lord which endures forever. It is in our hearts and our minds. And if the worst case scenario of this pandemic does come to pass, even so we will always be in the love of the Lord, who will take us to where he is. Though we die, He will keep us alive until the day when he raises all people from the grave and ushers us in to the life of the world to come.