

## Heidelberg Catechism 42-43 – A Better Life; A Better Death

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You probably don't enjoy going to funerals, but there is one funeral that you should wish you were able to attend - the funeral of the Lord Jesus. You should be glad to attend this funeral because the person being buried **made it easy for you to face death** and **guarantees that you can live a better life now.**

You will hear about this from God's Word.

Our headings are:

**Christ's Death Guarantees a Better Death**

**Christ's Death Guarantees a Better Life**

Our goals are: That **you will know that Christ's death removes your fear of death and gives you confidence to live a victorious 获胜 life now.**

### **Christ's Death Guarantees a better Death**

42 Q. SINCE CHRIST HAS DIED FOR US, WHY DO WE STILL HAVE TO DIE ?

A. Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it puts an end to our sinning and is our entrance into eternal life.

**1. We live in a death culture** and we are inundated 淹没 with news about abnormal 不正常 deaths: suicide,

assisted suicide, euthanasia 安乐死, and having abortions and selling the baby body parts. I heard a lady recently say that she knew her child would know she love her...even though she stuck a needle full of poison into her heart and killed her. Planned **Parenthood** (how ironic) is suing the state of Indiana for the right to kill autistic babies. Some people even stream their suicides online so others can watch.

**But Christians don't have a death culture.** Yes, Christians die, maybe even tragically, in accidents or war and not always in your sleep, but you have a culture of life. You know that death is a reality, but you know that after death life comes – eternal life. How can you have a better death?

**2. You must know that when you die it will put an end to your sinning.** This means you will no longer be offensive to your Creator and Re-creator. Your Creator and Re-creator will prefer that you don't sin while you live, but the fact is you will continue to sin. When you die, however, you will sin no more. You won't sin in heaven. **You will be confirmed in a state of righteousness** – something Adam failed to achieve for his descendants, but which the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam achieved for you. Jesus Christ will confirm you in a state of righteousness in heaven...Paradise restored. You will not be able to sin. You will have no more unbelief, doubts, fears, and the temptations of Satan.

**3. You must know that when you die it is your entrance into eternal life.** "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die" is true for the world but not for the Christian. And when you die you immediately pass from death to eternal life. You don't have to spend time waiting in the grave (**soul sleep**) or going through **purgatory** or some other **intermediate stage.** You don't go into another person or into an animal- **reincarnation** 投胎. **All men won't be punished** to a lesser or greater extent- as Muslims believe.

John 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, **but has passed from death into life.**

1Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that **whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.**

**Dying is a net gain for the Christian.** You get more than you have to give up.

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

And when you die you are freed from your troubles and trials of this life. You have no more diseases in your body. You don't lose your investments or suffer the loss of loved ones. You are never disappointed. What a comfort this is for those who lose covenant children! As soon as you die you enter into God's presence and have the fullness of joy. And more: "In heaven there will be everlasting habitations, into mansions of light, life, love, joy, peace, and comfort; is at perfect rest, and surrounded with endless pleasures..." (Gill). Don't you want to go to heaven? Don't you look forward to it?

**4. But why would you want to live now since death seems so attractive?** Apostle Paul answered that. He loved the Lord and wanted to serve the Lord through helping believers and preaching the Gospel to non-believers. He couldn't do these things if he died. So you must want to serve your wife, your husband, your children, your friends, and the persecuted 迫害 church. So ask God for long life. **Love is the force behind it.** Love for your own joys will say: "Take me home now, Lord." But sacrifice – agape 纯爱 love - will say: "I would rather be here to serve the brothers.

Philippians 1:23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a **desire to depart and be with Christ,** which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to **remain in the flesh is more needful for you.**

**5. In short, you have a better death because the sting 刺痛 of death was destroyed when Jesus died.** When something does not have a sting it is no longer a threat. (Take the stings out of wasps 黄蜂 and they only look dangerous!)

1Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory ... Death has lost its sting. Death cannot confirm you to hell.

**6. You must not try to die, but you should not be afraid to die.** There is no shame in death. After the race, you get the prize.

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; **nor do I count my life dear to myself,** so that I may **finish my race with joy...**

### **Christ Death Guarantees a better Life**

43 Q. WHAT FURTHER ADVANTAGE DO WE RECEIVE FROM CHRIST'S SACRIFICE AND DEATH ON THE CROSS?

A. Through Christ's death our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him, so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us, but that instead we may dedicate ourselves as an offering of gratitude 感恩的祭 to him.

**1. Christ gives you victory over sin and death because you were in him spiritually when he died.** Because of this you now have renewed strength to "kill" sin and its desires. You can count yourself as being the liberated! You can have victory...starting now!

Romans 6:5 For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His death,** certainly we also shall be in the **likeness of His resurrection,** 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should **no longer be slaves of sin.** 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live with Him,** 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no **longer has dominion over Him.** 10 For the death that He died, **He died to sin once for all;** but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, **reckon 估计 yourselves to be dead indeed to sin,** but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Dying to sin means that you no longer live for yourself, but you separate yourself from sin and live righteously.** While **your redemption was costly to Christ, it was free for you.** God could not pay for it with gold, but he paid for it with the blood of Jesus.

Psalm 49:6 Those who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude of their riches, 7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, **Nor give to God a ransom 赎金 for him—**8 For the **redemption of**

their souls is costly, And it shall cease forever— 9 That he should continue to live eternally, And not see the Pit.

As a result of your redemption you never have to die spiritually again - never. Jesus Christ died once for all. (So much for those who believe you can have eternal life and then lose it. What a horrible attack against God's Word! Jesus Christ did not die to give you multiple lives. So much for Roman Catholics who believe they have to kill Jesus every day in the devilish Mass to atone for 弥补 sins.)

**2. Because of your freedom that Christ Jesus secured for you, you now must live your life for God.** You must live to please him: worship him, live for him, speak to him, listen to him, and speak for him.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The more you kill sin, the more you will bring glory to God and the greater the blessing you will receive in this life. (See how wonderful Christ's death is to your life now?)

Romans 12:1 I beseech 恳求 you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us...

**3. When you now live as a Christian, you are not only able to please God, you are also able to save up for a better reward in heaven.**

Athanasius: *"Now that the common Savior of all has died on our behalf, we who believe in Christ no longer die, as men died before, in fulfillment of the threat of the law. That condemnation has come to an end; and now that, by the grace of the resurrection, corruption has been banished 放逐 and done away, we are loosed from our mortal bodies in God's good time for each, so that we may obtain thereby a better resurrection."*

**4. If you don't live your life for God now and you let your evil desires rule over you for a time, then you will bear the consequences.** Apostle Paul warned you against falling into this trap... a trap that robs you of the joy you ought to have now.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign 统治 in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Yes, the Christian life can become miserable if you fall and remain in sin. You will lose hope, you will hide yourself from God's people, and you will feel helpless. So guard against that!

### **Conclusion:**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. As the redeemed of God through Jesus Christ, know that when you die in your body you will go to heaven and cash in the capital and interest you have accrued in this life.** There you will enjoy the fullness of joy and will be freed from troubles and trials that are so common in this life.

**2. While you remain on earth, live the good life - life as the redeemed with a heavenly inheritance.** By Christ you were healed – sin and death no longer have power over you.

**3. Fight sin now.** You are able to have a successful life fighting sin...and getting rewarded for it in this life and the next. **But while you continue in this life you must learn to die another death: you need to die to sin daily.** Do not let sin rule you. Mortify 腐坏 it and live in victory.

**4. Are you afraid of physical death?** Its sting has been removed. Face it! You are simply entering into your Father's home.

Finally: If you are not a Christian death must be a terror for you. There is life after death, but you don't have it. All you have in this world...some money...some fame...some power...but they are all gone in a short time. Only the one who relies upon the Savior and ask for new life...will enjoy eternal life. Do you want this Savior? The benefits of his work are free to those who sincerely ask.