

“The Unanswerable Question: When I Die?”

People always feel uneasy when faced with the question, "When will you die?", because they do not know the answer. Sometimes, through science and medicine, we can get a good estimate of when someone will die, but no one can give us an exact answer, and even when we get an estimate, we're often never pleased with the answer itself. This is because the answer does not solve death itself.

So, almost everyone goes through their daily lives trying not to think about anything related to death. In other words, they live under the illusion that they will never die. But as we all know or should know, no one can escape death. However, is death really an issue that must be the subject of such fear for humans?

Today we come across the record of Moses' death through the scripture of Deuteronomy. Let's take a look at the biblical lessons we can learn about death through Moses' death.

Moses is introduced as the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. We know that Moses' work for Israel is vast. However, we find that the description of his death is very simple compared to that of Abraham and Jacob. When Jacob died, it took forty days to put the antiseptic incense into his body, and the Egyptians mourned his death and wept for seventy days.

The Exodus is a very important event in connection with the salvation of God's chosen people of Israel, and even the salvation of mankind by Jesus Christ. God accomplished it through Moses. Then, in the Bible, shouldn't his death stand out more than anyone's? However, we can see that today's text greatly reduces the very meaning of his physical death.

At Kadesh, in anger at the wrath of his people, Moses broke the commandments of God and struck the rock twice, causing water to burst out of it. Then the Lord said, "Because you did not have enough faith to acknowledge my holy power, you will not go into the land that I promised" (Num 20:12).

In Deuteronomy 3:25-27, Moses pleaded with the Lord to allow him to enter the land of Canaan. At that time, God steadfastly refused his petition. "That is enough! Don't mention this again!" (v 27.) Do you not feel that God is cold-hearted at times like this?

However, in verses 1–2 of the text, before Moses died, the Lord himself walked with him and showed Moses the land of Canaan in detail. Here, the image of the Lord, who punishes sin but gives mercy and rewards to the end, is shown. With that grace, Moses was able to achieve a triumphant life with no regrets, even if mistakes were made.

Another spiritual meaning was implied when Moses was unable to enter the land of Canaan. Moses was a person who symbolized the 'law' as a giver, proclaimer, and transmitter of the law. Therefore, the fact that he could not enter the land of Canaan and died in the wilderness shows that the law could never enter the land representing the new heaven and the new earth, Canaan, the symbol of heaven.

In the introduction of Moses' death, there is the Lord's intention to use his death for good purposes: to protect the weaknesses of the people who are trying to idolize the great man Moses. For Moses, who believed in the faithfulness of the Lord, the question of "when will I die" was meaningless because he was more focused on the question, "How will I die?"

In my family, there were 4 boys and 3 girls, for a total of 7 siblings. I was exactly in the middle of them. The first sister is 79 years old, and the youngest younger brother is 61 years old if he is still alive. He has long been an alcoholic and has smoked a lot. He could not stop drinking and smoking until he was diagnosed with cirrhosis. Eventually he was diagnosed with liver cancer, and he had to be admitted to the hospital once or twice a week to remove ascites.

Now that his body could no longer handle alcohol and tobacco, he was able to stop them. His daily routine was only to get treatment in and out of the hospital, and the rest of the time, he took a break. He had heard the gospel countless times from birth until that time, but he could not completely rely on Jesus as the Lord of salvation.

Five years ago, when he no longer had the physical strength to support his life, he began to see Jesus as the Lord of salvation. From then on, he, who

lived in Korea, and I started talking over the phone and praying. He sometimes experienced a lot of physical pain and psychological anxiety whenever he was treated with a new drug or treatment.

However, he and I communicated honestly. I said to him, "You or me, it is by the grace of God that we wake up each day. We all do not know when we will die. Leave everything to the Lord and give thanks. Reconcile with everyone, hope for heaven, and comfort your family in the confidence of your faith so that you will not be ashamed if you die tomorrow."

At that time, he confessed that he finally realized God's grace and family happiness. Together with his wife and daughter, the three members confessed that they were happiest now that their family had been freed from the pain of alcohol addiction.

Around that time, he sensed that death was coming closer to him; however, he was able to remain detached about when he would die because he had already prepared for how he would die and where he would go after death. It was because the hope of heaven that the Lord gave him overcame it. Now, two years have passed since he moved to the eternal kingdom of God during his family's farewell.

Now, let's look at how Moses died in the text.

First, Moses committed his death entirely to God.

If we leave our lives entirely to the Lord, He will take full responsibility for our deaths. When my life is entrusted to the Lord, the spiritual principle that my death is automatically entrusted to the Lord is established. At that time, both our lives and deaths begin to proceed through the Lord's hand and plan.

Here we take a look at the tomb of Moses. Obviously, verse 6 records that Moses was buried in a valley opposite Bethpeor in the land of Moab. But why, even to this day, does no one know where the tomb is? The Good News Translation Bible added the phrase "God buried him" in verse 6. In a word, it means that God Himself finished the last journey of Moses.

Here, our regret for the overly short description of Moses' death is resolved. I would imagine that for Moses', his death was the greatest moment of his life. Why? Because he was joining God in heaven? There are times when we sigh because we can hardly accommodate the reality that has been

given to us. We must admit that this is a time when we still need to practice meeting God more realistically.

Second, Moses was always concerned only with how to fulfill God's mission given to him. In other words, it was an attitude of preparation for how he would die. Being faithful to the mission entrusted to him day by day was the goal of his life. The Lord had already rejected his entry into Canaan, but he did not give up on the mission of continuing to lead God's people to Canaan.

Let's look at 34:7. "Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, but his eyesight was still good, and he was as strong as ever." If so, in terms of physical conditions, Moses is not ready to die. I cannot help but be a little jealous. 120 years old with great eye sight and great strength? I'm sure many of us would not mind trading our bodies with that 120-year-old man. Almost all of the previous Biblical characters died from declining physical strength, which is very normal. So, why did Moses have to die at this time?

It is not a punishment for Moses. Jacob lived to be 147 years old, Joseph 110 years old, and Joshua 110 years old. Compared to them, we can see that with Moses, at the age of 120, the Lord kept him so he could fulfill his mission.

Pompeii, a city that lay buried under volcanic ash for over 2,000 years, was originally inhabited by around 50,000 people. In the days leading up to the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius, volcanic ash began to spew out slowly. In response, slaves and less affluent citizens hurriedly fled the city.

On the other hand, the approximately 2,000 individuals who were ultimately entombed in volcanic ash were often from the nobility and were wealthy merchants. These individuals, brimming with wealth, power, and fame, made valiant efforts to safeguard their possessions until the very end, only to lose everything.

However, not far from Pompeii, the catacombs serve as a testament to the enduring faith of those who relinquished their worldly possessions to serve God. This historical record of human history imparts a timeless lesson: "The possessions of this world over which I am the master can lead to my

downfall, whereas the possessions of this world over which the Creator, the true provider, holds dominion can bestow upon me eternal life and glory.”

The apostle Paul confessed, “I die every day” (1 Corinthians 15:31). In the Lord, for those who experience death every day for the gospel of the Lord, what other fear of death is there? Obedience to the commandments of Jesus, like death, requires a process of breaking down and renewing ourselves daily. Likewise, we must also experience death every day.

Now let's recall the title of today's sermon. “When will you die?” Medically, no one in the world knows the answer to that question. But we believe that by giving spiritual answers, that question loses its power of fear, and we can completely move on from focusing on and being anxious about it because death in this world will mean a rebirth in heaven.

This is the only confession you can have today about death. “I died today with Jesus to live with him again.” Amen.

****Reflection and Application for Today's Sermon:**

1) Have you considered when your own death might come? What implications can we draw from Moses' passing regarding your thoughts on mortality?

2) How can you commit to a lifetime of obedience, following in the footsteps of Moses, who remained faithful to God till the very end, even though he glimpsed the Promised Land of Canaan but could not enter it?

3) Inspired by Paul's statement, "I die every day" (1 Corinthians 15:31), what alterations or improvements do you wish to make in your daily life?