

Facing Death With Certainty

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

Aunt Willa Mae was a wonderful Christian and a godly influence in the lives of many. She knew the Lord and evidenced great faith in Him. She constantly walked with Him, talked with Him, and testified of His grace. Although she was bedfast for some time before her death, her testimony never weakened. Of course, she always spoke of Uncle Joe, her preacher-husband, and how she anticipated seeing him. But Christ was her life and she loved Him.

In her dying hours her faith seemed to be stronger than ever. The last time I visited her I told her I had been meditating on the above text, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Then, I quoted Paul’s further words, “to be with Christ; which is far better” (1:23). When I commented, “That will be wonderful, won’t it?” affirming her faith, she strongly whispered, “Absolutely!” She faced death with certainty.

It was not a hard task for me to speak in her funeral. She had lived the life of the righteous and she died the death of the righteous. Basically, she had already preached the sermon. So I used this same text and told this same story of her confidence in the Lord Jesus. Here are a few thoughts about living the Christ-life and dying with a living trust in Him.

We can face death with certainty if we personally know Christ! The Apostle Paul was not speaking of whether or not the people in Philippi knew Christ; he was not referring to whether or not the folks in Jerusalem knew Christ; he was testifying of his own personal knowledge of Christ. “For to me to live is Christ!” “To me!” Knowing Jesus personally is the big issue, dear friend. Can you say, “Christ is real to me?”

We can face death with certainty if we daily trust Christ! Paul did not just say, “To me,” did he? He said, “For to me to live is Christ!” “To live is Christ!” “To live!” His knowledge of and his faith in Christ did not just involve a time and place in the past. Yes, he had believed. But by God’s grace, he continued to believe. Daily, hourly, moment-by-moment, he trusted the Lord Jesus! This is truly, “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2).

We can face death with certainty if we constantly live Christ! The Apostle did not just say, “To me.” Neither did he only say, “To live.” His testimony was, “For to me to live is Christ!” Christ was his life! Christ was his breath! Christ was his all! The Lord Jesus lived His life through Paul. And, He wants to live His life through you and me! With a life full of Christ, we can face death with certainty, and say, “To die is gain!” “Absolutely!”