

## Jesus: The Pattern of Facing Death

**Intro:** "... Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ..." (Heb 12:2). He is our pattern; we should intently look upon Him so as to emulate Him.

### 1. Jesus: A Tragic Death Amid a Brutal Society

#### A. Tragic aspects:

1. Youthful – Wasted potential. Surely this is part of what Peter found unbearable about Jesus' talk of death (Mt 16:21-22).
2. Innocent – Jesus "*went about doing good ... for God was with Him*" (Ac 10:38).
3. Unjust – Travesty of justice, humiliation, torturous rigors of crucifixion.
4. Foreknown – Lk 18:31-33; Jn 12:23-27. What a burden this must have been! Lk 12:50 – "*How distressed I am till it is accomplished!*"
5. Deity – Death is *man's* lot; it is inseparable part of our existence. Everything we know has an end. But Jesus' nature is eternal! For God to come to an end, *any* kind of end is foreign to His nature and to what is right.

#### B. Jesus' attitude:

1. Total control and self-possession – No panic, retractions, begging, fleeing, etc.
2. Resignation to the will of God – Lk 9:51 (set His face). But such resignation was not without personal struggle – Mt 26:36-46.
3. Selflessness – Jesus was concerned with the welfare of others to the end. He secured release of disciples in garden (Jn 18:4-9); pitied daughters of Jerusalem (Lk 23:27-31); had sympathy for thief (23:42-43); provided for Mary's care (Jn 19:26-27).
4. Trust – "*Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit*" (Lk 23:46).

C. How was Jesus able to face such a crisis? "... *for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame ...*" (Heb 12:2). He looked *beyond* the event.

### 2. Viewing Our Own Death

A. We are **insulated** from death. Death is sterilized, ritualized; few people at funerals. But Christians must think about, plan for and accept reality of death.

1. Not *quantity* of life that matters but *quality*. God can use even a short life to accomplish great things.
2. Our life is not our own; God gives, sustains and takes away life.
3. Whenever it comes, death seems to *rush* at us. No matter how long we live we will all say, “Where did time go?”

B. Things we fear about dying:

1. The physical process: pain, breathing difficulty, unfamiliar sensations.
2. Emotional distress: fear of unknown; family ok?
3. Greatest fear: eternal destiny. God has done everything needed to alleviate this fear – Heb 2:14-15.

C. Confidence in eternal life.

1. Jesus was confident of His destiny. Paul was likewise confident (2 Tim 4:7-8).
2. We are also urged to be confident – 1 Jn 5:13.
3. Confidence on two bases: love for God (1 Jn 4:17-18) and justification by faith and not works (Rom 3:20-28). No one will be able to appeal to God for eternal life on the basis of perfect obedience. Rom 5:1 – “*having been justified by faith we have peace with God ...*”.

### **3. Faithful Unto Death**

- A. We must remain faithful until (or unto) death – Rev 2:10.
- B. We cannot “retire,” we cannot abandon the Lord at the end, we cannot put our family before the Lord, we cannot let the deaths of others shake our confidence.
- C. Jesus faced the horrors and rigors of death to give us victory over our most dreaded foe – 1 Cor 15:54-58.

**Conclusion:** Phil 3:7-11.