

# Joy-Filled Readiness

Luke 12:54-13:9

## Preparing for danger...

“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.” *Proverbs 27:12*  
Some day, your life and my life on earth will end. (Maybe decades from now, or maybe today...)

“Death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart.” *Ecclesiastes 7:2*

Prayer: Show us how to live given that we will certainly die

## What happens when we die?

Some claims people make:

Everyone ceases to exist as a conscious person

Everyone goes to “a better place” and is “at peace”

We begin another life based on how we lived this life

Interesting claims → What is the evidence and rationale? Why believe it?

Fideism: believing something just because I believe it

Jesus taught:

When we die, we meet God

Jesus might return before we die, and then we’ll meet God

When we meet God, He will judge each one of us

Heaven or hell, with variations in each

Interesting claims → Why believe Jesus?

He claimed to be God and He gave believable, solid evidence

He claimed to be able to come back to life after death ☑ and He did!

So what did Jesus say about life and death?

## Luke 12

“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those [people or things] who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: **Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.**” *Luke 12:4-5*

➤ The most rational and fact-based understanding of our world is to believe that there is a personal, moral Creator (“God”)

➤ If there is a God, dealing with God is the most fundamental and important question of our existence

Lesson: The most important issue for facing death (and so also for living life) is dealing with God

4 Illustrations...

## Luke 12:54-13:9

### 54-56: Planning ahead for life but not death is stupidity

Wisdom = working to predict and prepare for the future

Weather → especially for farmers!

Retirement and finances, careers, vacations, ...

Not also planning for death is hypocrisy: why?

They worked to live life well, and likely prided themselves in it

Yet they were not taking the biggest issue in life seriously

Why weren’t they planning for death?

Foolish + disregarding God = stupidity

The separation between us and meeting God is paper thin

God “watches all who live on earth—he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything we do” *Psalms 33:14-15*

Our end can come at any time

### 57-59: Failing to prepare to meet God our judge is stupidity

They knew that making peace with adversaries is wise

It is even important when dealing with God!

We are invited to be reconciled with God now

If we wait, it will be too late

Life is a "class" you can't re-take

If life doesn't go well, you can't change your major or find a different career path!

Failing life ends everything good!

Hypocrisy: they know what is wise (making peace with one's adversary), and they claim to be living wisely, yet they have decided not to deal with God

### 13:1-5: Others' disaster & death should be a warning to us

People reported to Jesus about Galileans whom Pilate killed

Jerusalemites looked down on Galileans

Perhaps an illustration of needing to settle before seeing judge

Jesus' response

Those who died are a warning to others, not a sign of their evil

Same for Jerusalemites who died: no worse than others

Death comes to every single person

Death is so often sudden, and it is always irreversible

"Unless you repent and turn to God, you also will lose everything!"

### 6-9: The exceptional patience of God still has an end

Fig tree: used as a symbol for God's people

This teaching applies to individuals just as well

Exceptionally kind care for a fruitless tree!

A sign of God's exceptional kindness, NOT of our goodness

Patience...with a limit

Description of Jesus' ministry: "The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." *Luke 3:9*

### The Big Idea: Jesus taught...

**Since death is inescapable and there is no do-over it is stupid to fail to prepare for it!**

**Those who have made peace with their Maker can live life and face death with joy and peace no matter what comes**

We would never just keep driving without a plan when the trouble is so obvious

Why do we live life without giving serious consideration to the inevitability of our death?



### Application

#### Make peace with God in Christ

Death is inescapable, unpredictable, and without "do-overs"

Tolstoy: "What meaning can a person's life have which would not be annihilated by the awful inevitability of death?"

Make peace with your adversary before you meet the judge

Jesus is the one with whom we are to make peace

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and **will not be judged** but has crossed over from death to life. ... For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man." *John 5:24-27*

Jesus is the ONLY one who can give peace with God

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.

**No one comes to the Father except through me."** *John 14:6*

Genuine trust in the life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Jesus Christ brings life with God now & forever

**Head:** believe Jesus' claim to be God, and in His resurrection

**Heart:** put genuine trust in Jesus and in His death in our place

**Hands:** begin the journey of fully following His teaching

We can then meet our judge and maker with confident joy!

“On this mountain (where Jesus died) he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; **he will swallow up death forever**. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.” *Isaiah 25:7-8*

It is a **choice** you can make today

It requires faith, yet it is also a very reasonable faith

It requires faith, yet it is also incredibly beautiful

It requires faith, yet it is also incredibly good

Have you made peace with God in Christ?

The BEST preparation for the future you can ever do

### **Live life with constant awareness of our peace with God in Christ**

Jesus said: “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but **has crossed over from death to life**.” John 5:24-27

A past event (making peace with God in Christ) that has unending benefits (life with God in Christ)

Whatever disaster we may encounter, whatever human judgment we may experience, we have peace with the One who matters most

“O, sing hallelujah! Now and ever we confess: Christ, our hope in life and death!”

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” *Romans 8:31-32*

When we encounter trouble, we can say: “God...

“A” (beginning): The creator of the universe and of me

“Z” (end): The judge of every human being, and the one who is forming the new heaven and the new earth

“B-Y” (everything in between): The sustainer of every breath of every human life, who constantly sees my heart and my actions

is personally with me and for me in every step and season of life

and He is preparing my home and life and work with Him forever”

### **Reflection Questions for later today or this week...**

1. Have you put your genuine trust in the life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Jesus Christ?
  - a. If so, find someone to tell the story of how God did that work in your life. It will be a source of encouragement to you and to others!
  - b. If not, is there something holding you back or distracting you? Is there an alternative that is more reasonable, more beautiful, and filled with more good?
2. When life is filled with challenges, what does it look like for you to “live life with constant awareness of our peace with God in Christ?” What steps can you take today “to rehearse the alphabet” of God’s presence and work for us?
3. What can you do today to help someone who is a genuine believer in Jesus Christ to walk in this joy and peace?