

GOD'S CHILDREN NEVER DIE

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In loving memory
of my mother and father,
who brought me to Jesus
and who are now living with Jesus

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1

GOD'S CHILDREN NEVER DIE

“I [Jesus] am the resurrection and the life. . . .
Whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

John 11:25,26 (NIV)

“Am I going to die?” the critically injured man gasped. The pastor, hurriedly summoned to the hospital emergency room, hesitated a moment before answering: “God’s children never die.” Then, with a gentle hold on the dying man’s hand and a strong hold on God’s Word of Life, he led that man to the Savior’s atoning cross and emptied tomb.

Yes, God’s children die. They are not exempt from the Grim Reaper’s scythe. For them too, life on this earth is measured in days and months and years. For some the span is long; for others, short. Age saps strength, disease does its damage, and accidents take their toll for God’s children also. And in the end, their souls vacate the bodies that housed them for their allotted time on earth.

God’s children know they are going to die. Not too many years into life, they bump up against death when pets are lost or grandparents are taken from them. And once the questions about death start, they never seem to stop. Though believers know that eventually they will die, that reality often only hovers on the horizon. However, when death not only knocks at the door but barges right in to the

middle of life, reality hits hard. And the questions take on a more intense, searching tone.

In the face of death, God's children not only ask questions, they know where to find answers.

Thank God, they know the one who calls himself the Resurrection and the Life. Resurrection and life are so closely connected with Jesus that he calls them his own. Only he, who rose from the grave as proof that sin is canceled and death defeated, can offer resurrection to dying mortals. Only he, whose suffering, death, and resurrection paid for sin, can offer a life that never ends to those taking their last earthly breath.

So let the questions surface and the apprehensions bubble. By God's grace, believers look in faith to Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. Because of him, they know God's children never die.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you know my anguish and concern. Where can I turn? What can I do? Bring me close to you and to your promises. Help my heart hear and hold this blessed truth: in you I have a life that never ends but reaches its fullness with you in heaven. Amen.

2

LORD, IT'S NOT TRUE, IS IT?

The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: “O LORD, save me!”

Psalm 116:3,4 (NIV)

She just didn't want to talk about it. After her surgery the doctor had reported that death would be just a matter of time and that she had better get her house in order. But she didn't want to hear that. Nor should her family talk about it, not even her pastor.

Initially, denial can be a friend. Like sandbags used to line riverbanks, denial offers a buffer against the rising water. When the news is bad and the prognosis poor, we need time to catch our breath. Denial gives us time so that the numbness can wear off before we gear up for action.

Denial can also be a foe. When the river keeps rising, we invite disaster if we remain standing behind the sandbags instead of evacuating our houses. Then it's time to face reality and prepare for the inevitable. Continuing to deny the inescapable truth only deprives us of precious preparation time.

Facing death is an overwhelming burden. Numbness is natural—for God's children too. We shouldn't be surprised