



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

The graveside joke that had everyone laughing at a funeral

The [BBC, Northern Ireland website](#), among many others, carried a report of a recent funeral in Dublin.

The report said:

"A dad's message from beyond the grave has touched the hearts of thousands online. Shay Bradley, 62, had a dying wish that had his family and friends laughing at his funeral in Dublin. In a video that has received more than 136,000 upvotes on Reddit, the former Irish defence forces veteran pretends to be trapped inside his coffin and is heard knocking frantically, trying to get out. Coming from a speaker on the ground his voice boomed from his grave: "Hello, hello, hello... let me out!" There is then some swearing which sends the mourners into fits of laughter. He goes on to sing: 'Hello again, hello. I called to say goodbye.' Shay, who had suffered a long illness, organised the stunt around a year ago over lunch and recorded the message on a phone with the help of son Jonathan. Shay was banging on a coffee table beside him for the full effect."

Mr Bradley is pictured in the report as holding a glass which presumably contains an alcoholic drink. Sadly, alcohol and ignorance of the Bible are firm friends! Coupled with the vacuity, the other reports of the incident indicate that the recording included the foulest of expletives!

We need carry no more of the report which had further examples of the blindness that is prevalent today to what the Word of God has to say of death and eternity, and which will make every believer in the Bible sad indeed at its irreverence!

Sincere Christians will find nothing to laugh at in this report rather they will be sad for the man, his family and above all that the subject of death and the eternal destiny of the soul is treated so trivially. Anyone with a consciousness of our sinfulness and thereby our culpability under the Holy Law of God will tremble for such as those who feature in this report.

We all are sinners deserving of hell. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. As such we face eternal judgment and damnation immediately upon our death. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23. The Bible warns of the danger we face but it also sets out clearly the wonderful salvation God has provided through the Lord Jesus Christ. As the verse just quoted states: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a GIFT! Not a reward for labours performed, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," Ecclesiastes 7:20. "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one," Psalm 14:2-3.

That being so, death and the grave are no laughing matters!

The Word of God is most plain on what lies beyond the grave for the unconverted. Were there the least understanding of what the Bible says there would have no laughter in that graveyard in Dublin!

Let me quote God's Word on this subject.

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him," 2 Samuel 14:14.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," Hebrews 9:27.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job 14:1-5.

"For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living," Job 30:23.

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again," Ecclesiastes 3:20.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Romans 5:12.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity," Ecclesiastes 11:9-10.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal," Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John 5:24-25, 28-29.

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them," Acts 17:30-33.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," Romans 14:11-12.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences," 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude 14-15.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Revelation 20:11-15.

I have quoted extensively from the Bible on the subject of death and judgment in order that none might be deceived just what is taught in the Holy Scriptures on this solemn subject. It is not a matter of a Church's teaching or dogma. It is the Word of God we set before you!

Furthermore, the Bible abounds with examples of how the godly referred to death and the grave and their words denote a solemnity that is totally absent from the sad antics at the funeral of Shay Bradley! Here is but one example of the reverent way that those that fear God speak of death. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season," Job 5:26.

The fields around us testify to the pattern of life and death to which man also is subject. For all there is a cutting down and gathering in to our eternal abode. For some it is into the presence of God and for others into everlasting damnation.

Our destination is not decided by our denominational allegiance, our attendance at a place of worship, the morality we may have endeavoured to pursue or the religious attitudes we may have professed. NO!

That is which will decide our eternal destination is set forth by the Lord Jesus, the supreme authority on this matter.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36.

Just what it is to 'believe' on the Lord Jesus He Himself explains. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John 1:12-13.

Faith in Christ entails a 'receiving' of Him. The Greek word translated 'received' in John 1:12 appears in Mark 9:36 and is there translated by the English word 'took'. Look at the verse and you will see from the context the meaning of the word. "And he (the Lord Jesus) took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms" As the Lord Jesus took the little child up in His arms even so must we believe on Christ and clutch Him to our hearts in faith! What Simeon did in the incident recorded in the gospel of Luke illustrates for us just how we are to gather Christ to our hearts by faith. "And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," Luke 2:27-30.

Simeon was ready and willing to die now that he had his arms around the Lord Jesus - not merely physically but above all, spiritually. It is a central and simple truth of the gospel that salvation is not by our efforts or labours but by our resting in Christ; in His finished work at the cross of Calvary where He took the place of the sinner and suffered the punishment due to the sinner. Many years ago the prophet, Isaiah said this of the death of Christ:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah 53:3-6.

Surely nothing could be clearer than that Christ suffered in the place of the sinner.

Peter reiterated this truth.

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls . . . For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Peter 2:21-25, 3:18.

I repeat, in the words of Paul, salvation is not by our works but simple faith in Christ. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8-9.

The solemn and dreadful truth that arises from the mocking voice that came forth from the recording at that graveside is that if one who dies without Christ could speak from the grave it would not be in the words of jesting but rather in the words of the only sinner whose message from beyond the grave is recorded. I refer to the 'rich man' of Luke 16.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

There is no flippancy here, no levity. No, rather a solemn wish that his brothers be warned to 'flee from the wrath to come' and heed the warnings of the gospel that hell, the place of torment, might be escaped!

Let's us hear the response given him by Abraham. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," Luke 16:27-31.

In the light of these words how dreadfully sad and heart-breaking is the stifled laughter and tittering at the graveside of Shay Bradley!

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15th October 2019.