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FUNERAL SERMON: "See, Thy Son Liveth." I Kng 17:23

Introduction: We meet in this service to pay the final respects to another of our National heroes who gave his life in the line of duty. The nation has already paid this tribute; we add ours in this service. We have known the happy hours of this lad in his youth. I myself knew him as a very personal friend, playmate and schoolmate. He was a fine boy---every inch a man, even in his youth. We have good reasons to believe that his profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was sincere and real. We do not meet to pray for his soul. For over five years he has been enjoying heavenly happiness that we ourselves may have to wait years for. We come to lay the body to its final resting place until the Day of Resurrection. But let's remember that Millard himself isn't here. Millard doesn't live here any more. The earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolved, and he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

We are neighbors and friends of the family. We take this opportunity to extend the hand of friendship and the words of comfort. We want to say to those who are bereaved: "We mourn with you. Feel, if you can, that we share in your affliction. Your loss is ours."

*"If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14:14*  
I. The one thought I would like to leave with you in this message is that The Soul Never Dies; It is Immortal.

The text is I Kings 17:23: "See, Thy Son Liveth."

A. But how can we know that the soul never dies?

Some people say, "Look at nature."

Yes, there are many things in nature from which we can draw a parallel of life. The day rises with the sunrise and ends with the darkness, but there is always a new day. The spring comes with its verdant beauty; later the foliage loses its life under the pressure of winter; but when winter comes, we can know that spring isn't far behind. The moon wanes and disappears but it returns. There is much in nature to teach us that when man closes his eyes in death he will open them again in a new day and a new world.



The leaf falling from the tree is not lost, it is conserved by being converted into another form of life. The caterpillar encases itself in its chrysalis from which under the warming sun it breaks its shell and bursts forth into new life. In its hibernating state it still lived. Look at the bird's nest in the field with its treasure of eggs. After a little while the shell only is left behind, while the bird itself has flown.

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn, and make it to burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, who was made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the breeze, the sweet assurance of another spring time, will He withhold the words of hope from the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of Nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, - will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay?

But we want something more than this kind of assurance when the room is darkened and a white-capped nurse is taking our steadily rising temperature, and a baffled physician is compelled to admit defeat. At such times we want something very definite, authoritative, beyond a question. Nature is full of whispers, hints, suggestions, implications, pointing to the probability of a future life.

But neither poets, nor naturalists nor philosophers, nor all combined, can give me what I want when death's shadow falls across my life.

Thank God, Christ can! He does!

We Christians have more than the allegories of nature. We have Jesus. We have His words. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." But more than His words, we have His life. He lived a physical life and died. But the grave could not contain Him. He arose. And because He lives, we shall live also.

No wonder that, as the realization of this came upon the Apostle Paul, he burst forth into that jubilant classic of Eternal Optimism: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"



B. "See, Thy Son Liveth."

--He is not dead, this friend. Not dead,  
But in the path we mortals tread;  
God some few trifling steps ahead,  
And nearer to the end.  
So that we, too, once past the bend,  
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend  
We fancy dead.

C. Death is only a passage from a lower to a higher phase of our continuous life. Death cannot mean a cessation of life. In this sense, then, it is true:

There is no death! The stars go down

To rise upon some other shore;

And bright in heaven's jeweled crown

They shine forevermore.

There is no death! The dust we tread

Shall change beneath the summer showers

To golden grain, or mellow fruit,

Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

There is no death! An angel form

Walks o'er the earth with silent tread;

He bears our best-beloved things away,

And then we call them "dead."

He leaves our hearts all desolate,

He plucks our fairest, sweetest flowers;

Transplanted into bliss, they now

Adorn immortal bowers.

Born unto that undying life,

They leave us but to come again;

With joy we welcome them--the same

Except in sin and pain.

D. I don't think anyone ever stated this blessed truth of immortality more clearly than did Alexander MacLaren in his memorable words: "The dead are the living. Every man that has died is at this instant in full possession of all his faculties, in the intensest exercise of all his capacities, standing somewhere in God's universe, ringed by a sense of God's presence, and feeling in every fiber of his being that life, which comes after death, is not less real, but more real, not less great, but more great, not less full or intense, but more full and intense, than the mingled life, which lived on earth, was a center of life surrounded with a crust and circumference of immortality."



The dead are the living. They lived while they died; and after they die, they live on forever."

E. One day, when Moody realized that he wasn't long for this world, he said to a friend, "Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of Northfield is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all---out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal, a body that sin cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto His glorious body. I was born of the flesh in 1837; I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die; that which is born of the Spirit will live forever."

F. "See, Thy Son Liveth." That he lives is a fact revealed positively in the Word of God. When you see and believe this truth with perfect faith, you may sorrow because he isn't living here now with you, but you cannot sorrow as those who have no hope.

We may hope with an undying hope  
Since He who knows our need is just,  
That somewhere, somehow, meet we must.  
Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through his cypress trees;  
Who hopeless lays his dead away,  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across the mournful marble play:

Who hath not learned in hours of faith  
The truth to sight and sense unknown,  
That life is ever lord of death,  
And love can never lose its own.

G. God knows why--Alas!! Not we-- that out of all this surging tide he stepped aside into quiet so profound before his time. We do not know the "Whys", the Wheres, The "Whens", the "Ifs", and "Ands"; But this we know, God is wise, For He has studied out the plans. So, when we say, "Thy will be done," We must be submissive to His will; And bow to Him, no matter how the course is run-- He will all our needs fulfil.

We do not need to say "Good-bye," For life is such a narrow span. We shall meet our loved ones by and by-- Then, and only then, we'll understand.