



February 8, 2009

Who Will You Call

This past week the national news presented a new trend in saying farewell to the departed. A funeral director related an account of a woman requesting that her husband's cell phone be buried with him and that the phone should be turned on. Related to this was the fact that the cell phone account was still active (payments are still being made) so that friends and family can leave messages for the deceased. Apparently this is not an isolated case as the story cited an increase in the number of requests for cell phones and other items to be buried with loved ones. We might have a tendency to laugh at this, I will admit the idea of roaming charges in the afterlife came to mind, but there is a serious side to it as well. Many cultures preserve the memory of the departed through family shrines, visits to grave sites, photographs and other reminders. Mankind has trouble saying farewell and moving on. We understand why we hold on to possessions belonging to those we care for. Photo albums, videos and other media bridge the void providing a connection to those we miss. We understand the nature and terror of death and the uncertainty it holds. It is for this reason that Christ came into the world. ***“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb 4.14-15)***. Sin entered into the world when Satan tempted Eve and she ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam followed suit and because of this the relationship with God was breached. Throughout the Biblical narrative the lives and deaths of those who were faithful, and unfaithful to God, are related as we follow the development of God's plan to save mankind. We find that Christ came into the world for the specific purpose of healing the wound that sin created, reconciling man to God. This is a great blessing that through the death of Jesus we can obey his commands, be acceptable to God and have the promise of a home beyond this life. A home that will never be taken away. Meeting the simple conditions rendering true obedience as given in the scriptures is the beginning of a life of service to God. Christ told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place that they might come and be with him. Christ stated, ***“In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” (John 14.2)***. People will generally admit that Christ lived and was a great teacher, but deny his attribute of being deity, born of a vir-

gin or raised from the dead. Some find it difficult to think that we need to honor and revere the name of Christ by preserving doctrine and worshiping him in an acceptable manner. Some find it difficult to understand that he is at the right hand of God interceding for us. Some find it hard to grasp the concept of Christ's sacrifice being represented by unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine without turning it into something else. All that seems just too hard to believe. But we want to hold onto the idea that those who have lived among us can still communicate, dwell in various places, or, receive messages via voicemail over a cell phone after death. What is the difference between these situations? Those who have passed from this life that we know and love have a personal connection with our emotions. They are part of us and when they are gone we feel as if we lose a part of ourselves. Christ came into the world to die for each and every human being. He did so at a time when his own disciples did not understand what he was doing. He was hated and eventually executed as a common criminal, for us, so that we might have the home that he spoke of as cited above. What about Christ then? We may not see things as the scriptures would have us because we have not fully come to the realization that our sins killed the Lord. We may not see that everyone has a part in the death of Christ but through the grace of God we can all be forgiven and made his children. We may pass up many admonitions and invitations to take advantage of these blessings because we do not believe it. We feel no connection to Christ and his sacrifice for us. It is easier to invest our minds and emotions in the idea of cell phones reaching the afterlife than it is to believe in an all powerful God who was willing to send his son into the world (for us), inspire and preserve the message (for us) protecting it so that all can access it. The only call that we need to be concerned about is that issued by God, to us in his word. There won't be any roaming charges if we answer that one.

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