I want to talk this morning about death. Sounds like a bad thing, doesn’t it? Death. The Bible says in

II Cor. 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

The savour of death unto death to some, and to some, life unto life. You know, whenever some people hear what we have to say, or see us, they just see nothing but death; the message that we preach is “well that’s negative, that’s so unattractive”, that’s what they are saying when they say “can’t you give it a little more … there’s something about this it just does not seem right .. oh, I agree with all your words, they are truth and all but boy, there’s just something not right.” What they are actually saying is “there’s a smell of death about it.” But then others see it and it’s “life unto life”.

It depends on are you dead or do you have life with this world? There’s a story a bout a man who had fallen into sin, I think he was a catholic in a monastery – one of the monks. His fellows dug a deep hole and stuck him In it and asked him, “are you dead yet?” and he said, “no”. So they started shoveling dirt back into the hole up to his knees and asked again, “are you dead yet?” “No.” They shoveled in more dirt, up to his hips this time, and asked, “are you dead yet?” “No.” “Are you willing to give up your sin? Are you dead?” He said “No.” So they shoveled up to his armpits full of dirt and asked yet again, “Are you dead yet?” He said “No,” but he was beginning to get a little nervous. They shoveled it up to his neck; now only his head was sticking out above the dirt. They asked, “Are you dead yet?” He knew the next step would cover his head up; he finally said, “I’m dead, I’m through with that, it will kill me.” So they dug him out.

They were trying to teach him a point about death – Are you dead yet? What is it going to take?

The savour of death unto death or the savour of life unto life. Which are we in this world? Jesus taught that, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone;” Before grain can produce anything it has to die. It’s the same way with man; two worlds cannot live in your life; two lives cannot live in your body. We either have life in Christ or we have the life in the world. We are either dead to God and alive to the world, or dead to the world and alive to Christ. The Bible talks a lot about death and dying. In fact, whenever it speaks of baptism, that’s a representation of death.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
We are buried with him by baptism unto death. When we are baptized, that is a symbol/picture /representation of death that we have gone through. If you were to die right now, what would that mean? That means that everything that’s important to you right now would not longer be important to you because you are dead. It has no value to you anymore. The life that you would have lived from that point on no longer exists; it’s not there; it’s gone because you are dead. No matter what age you are, the life in front of you is gone, it’s over … no more. But then someone would come along and say, “Arise”. After you came to the realization that you were dead, your life was over, nothing more was ever going to be the same, and then someone came along and said, “Rise again”, what would every moment of your life mean to you from that point on? Every moment of that life should be different. We’ve died to this world, we are dead to this world, it’s over. The finality of death – it’s over … now arise to a newness of life – a life in Christ. That’s what baptism is supposed to be. That’s when we’ve died to ourselves and this world and from now on every moment of life we have is to be for Christ because we are living for him from now on. Our life is gone – we are buried and dead to this world. That’s what Romans 6 is talking about.

11Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead indeed unto sin. It doesn’t mean we wont be without struggles or temptations, but right here is how we get victory over them – to die.

Galatians 6:14But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

By whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world; I’m just as dead to the world as the world is to me. Whenever the world looks at me, they see death. The world don’t want to be around death, they don’t like it. Whenever they look at someone who is dead to the world, it’s just like them looking at a dead man; they don’t want to be around it. And when we look out into the world, that’s the way we ought to be too. We ought to see all the world has to offer is just a bunch of death and not be enticed by it or drawn to it.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. The cross – a man said to us this weekend, “Before Jesus died, the cross used to be a bad thing, scary, fearful. But when Jesus died, all the badness went out of it and now it’s a nice thing.” That’s what’s wrong with Christianity today – their cross doesn’t produce death to those who would take it up and follow. Their cross has become a nice thing. Their death has become a nice thing. But it doesn’t produce the death that produces LIFE in Christ Jesus. Until a man passes through the cross and death, there is no life, no resurrection. Until you die, there is no resurrection, that’s why there’s so much fruitlessness in Christianity today … people want to hang the cross around their neck, on the wall, paint pictures of it, put pictures of it on their Bible, hang it all over their churches, glorify it, sing about it … the cross Jesus died on … but they don’t want to get on it themselves and die to themselves. They don’t want to die; they want the life so they pretend they have it … they want a better life, so they quit a lot of their bad deeds and start going to church, but they don’t want to lose their life. They don’t want to face death, but that’s the way to life.

Jesus talked a lot about it [death]. Matthew 10:38And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

And in another Gospel it says, “for my sake and the gospel’s”. If you keep/find your life, you will lose it. But if you lose your life you will find it. That’s the ONLY way; so whenever people see our message they
think “Oh you are putting a bad light on Christianity” it’s because they see death there and that’s not attractive to the world, so they want to turn away from it. They turn away from the only thing that can bring real life to them from God.

Paul said the world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world. He was dead to this world.

Before I began following the Lord, I was alive to this world. I love this world, I wanted to be a part of this world, I didn’t want to miss anything … wanted to be involved in everything this world had to offer. I liked the flashy things, liked to have the best. I didn’t care to be different than the modern world, in fact, I loved being different, but it was still the world; my world, my life. My dream in life was to have a huge farm, registered cattle and horses, have sales and show them and really ‘make a big splash’. I used to think that if I didn’t have a pair of white ostrich boots and a $200-$300 cowboy hat and diamond rings on my hand … I loved that. But when I died, I didn’t want that anymore. A lot of my friends, scattered around the country, were in to auctions. They’d travel all over and make a big show at the auctions – it was so exciting to go to these big sales and these cattle and horses bring big prices … go to the shows and do all these things. I have friends in the auction business that lived this life; I thought that was neat, I loved it. After I became a Christian and was living for the Lord, my brothers had bought the sale barn/stock yards from one of the commission companies and the first week that I started wearing suspenders when I was a Mennonite, one of them couldn’t make it to the sale that day, so they called and said, “you are going to have to go into the ring and be the ring man that day.” The first day I put my suspenders on, had my beard, my plain blue clothes, no cowboy hat, no white boots, no big belt buckle … suspenders and a beard … they put me right in the ring where I always wanted to be, in the center of everything among all the people I wanted to impress. There I was. Do you know how to die? Go to the people that you are trying to impress, stand right up in front of them just exactly the opposite from what you would do to impress them … that will produce death in you.

Dead to the world, glory in the cross of Christ. You can’t kill a dead man, because he’s already dead.

What do you love in this world? Face it. Stand up against it right in front of everyone you know that that’s all they care about. Or would you rather have their praise? Would you rather be dead to Christ and alive to their applause? Alive to their envy? Or alive unto Christ?

He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ and the Gospel’s shall find it unto everlasting life. Are you dead yet?

Colossians 3:1If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Kevin shared this with me a couple of times: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Your life is hid … when we are on the streets, people often walk or drive by and say, “GET A LIFE!” Do you know why they say that to us? Because our life is HID in Christ Jesus. They can’t see our life, all they see is death; our life is hid to them. I always wanted to be a big shining light as a Christian – the world does too; they want everyone to know, “I’m a Christian.” They get in a little bit of trouble and they say, “I’m a Christian … I’m a pastor … you can trust me!” They want people to know, they want to be a witness, and a lot of times it gains them a little bit of respect, for why I don’t know. But it does = because people can still see their life. But they are not going to recognize ours, all they are going to see is death because our lives are hid with Christ in God. It’s a blessing …

4When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
… and all those people who thought they had life on this world and on this earth are going to find that when Christ appears their life was actually dead. And all their glory will vanish away … sink right into hell because they kept their life. They didn’t pass through that strait and narrow gate of death; they kept their life.

There’s a lot of things if we’d get a hold of if we could just get dead. We can’t grow fruit, have life, we are not going to rise to life until we die. What can the world do to us when we are dead? You can’t kill a dead man. I’ve already died, what life are you going to take away from me? I think that’s one of the reasons why people get so hurt by churches – whenever they find out the church failed them and they get bitter because their life was in the church instead of being dead.

Die. Are you dead yet? Face death, take up the cross and let it kill you in this world; let it crucify you. Remember His death till he returns. For the savor of death unto death to this world, but unto God we are the savor of life unto life. Our life is hid in this world, but when He returns, our life shall appear. All that looked like death to the world will just bloom and explode into life in that time and all this trash that looks like life in this world will just crumble like ashes into hell.

Praise the Lord.

The Christian Hymnary #567

At every motion of our breath,
Life trembles on the brink of death;
A taper's flame that upward turns,
While downward to the dust it burns.

Moment by moment years are past,
And one ere long will be our last,
There is a point no eyes can see,
Yet on it hangs eternity.

This is that moment who shall tell,
Whether it leads to heaven or hell?
This is that moment as we choose,
The immortal soul we save or lose.

Time past and time to come are not
Time present is our only lot;
O God! hence forth our hearts incline
To seek no other love than thine.