

# Death and Its Cure

## by Clyde Cook

00:19 Speaker 1: Dr. Johnson

It's a pleasure this morning to have our president, Dr. Clyde Cook. A man who, has a heart for God, who knows, this institution. Who knows, Talbot Seminary and School of Theology, and who loves the work of the Lord. Let's welcome him this morning, Dr. Cook.

[Audience applause]

Clyde Cook:

00:51 Thank you Dr. Johnson for inviting me here. I think this is my favorite, group, to speak to, of all of the groups that I speak to. There's something about, Talbot, audience, that's um, empathetic, forgiving. And so I've decided this morning to practice a sermon on you. I've been thinking about this sermon for 10 years. It's been rattling around in my, brain. I've never had the courage, to do it. So I thought this would be the time. Because ah I know there's a great deal of sympathy out there because, you know what it's like to be here. If you don't you will be someday. And so you can ah, understand and share, in the, pressures that go, on in prea--, in preaching, especially the first time. My sermons seem after I preach them 50 or 60 times, get better. And those of you who've heard my sword message, know what I'm talking about. I just, loved to preach that message, but I figured that too many people here have heard it, or am I no way, not absolutely no way which I thought about giving. But instead I'm gonna speak about a subject,

that ah, will involve everyone here unless the Lord comes. That's the ah, subject of death. When Curtis, prayed, you know he prayed that [we] might come encourage us. Well it's not gonna encourage. Heh.

[Cook chuckles briefly]

Ahh, there's something else and then instructions. I said, "Well maybe I'll take that instruction, or go from there."

02:22 Why, why not speak on something that just, blesses us and encourages us especially when you are, meeting this coming up to the five week, exams and so forth and, to speak on such a morbid subject as death? It makes us uncomfortable, especially here ah, you know in the United States. We just don't like to face death. So we go through all kinds of, ah, situations to avoid it. And um, you might visit somebody in the hospital and ah, uh somebody's trying to, to comfort and console them. And it's obvious they're dying and they say, and the person might say, "You know I'm dying." And, the answer is, "No you're not!" You know. "You're not dying. You're not gonna die." Yet somehow, um, we just try to avoid it. We don't even call it death. We talk about passing away, or, you know, gone on beyond, and so forth.

03:11 Well, for a number of years I've been thinking about how fragile life is. And the uncertainty of life. So I started collecting ah, newspaper clippings, on deaths that eh, that just enforce this, um, reinforce this feeling, of the fragile, part of life. And I'm not talking about cancer or heart attacks or car. You know, we hear those over and over again, and we get used to them and so ah, they don't mean much to us. But, I'm talking about things that are bizarre. For example in Long Beach. A 28 year old man died after being accidently shot in the head with a

cigarette lighter that a friend thought was a gun. You know, shades of the Pink Panther, heh. And ah, there's always the, lieutenant there.

03:59 The reason I encourage that, you know. Ah, some of these you can't help but laugh!

[Audience laughter]

But they, they weren't funny to the person it had happening to, happen to, eh. Or here in Denver. An airline pilot, was shot to death Wednesday when a handgun discharged inside a duffel bag, that fell off a baggage truck, at Denver Stapleton International Airport. Just goes to work and he's, he's loading the, the luggage and, boom, he's gone. A Riverside woman, was, ah, in Santa Ana. A Riverside woman was shot in the head July 18th by a bullet accidentally fired in the apartment next door and died Saturday at Mercy General Hospital, police reported. Or in Los Angeles. A baby, held in his father's arms, in an apartment was killed, when the tenant above was cleaning his rifle, and the rifle discharged and went through the floor and ceiling right in the baby's head. And died right in the arms. You think you'd be safe, in ah, your father's arms. San Jose. April '81 a four your old boy picked up a gun and shot his two year old brother. Again San Jose. Glad I got outta there.

[Audience laughter]

February, a 54 year old man was eating at Bob's Big Boy, and this, and this, somebody just, looking at him and staring at him, an, next thing he knew the guy went outside got a rifle, came back in and killed him. He'd never seen him before. He just didn't like the way he looked at him when he was eating at Bob's Big Boy. Those of you who've eaten at Bob's Big Boy.

[Audience laughter]

05:34 Well, in case you think I'm against guns, let me talk about trees.

[Audience boisterous laughter]

Dallas. Good thing you gotta out of ah, Dallas, anybody from Dallas. A huge tree limb cracked like a thunder bolt, and plunged some 50 feet into a group of spectators at the, Byron Nelson Golf, Golf Classic, Friday, killing one person. Injuring, at least three others. But there are other things besides trees that fall from, from the sky. San Juan Capistrano. A five year old girl was killed when she was struck by the propeller of a banner towing, plane that crash landed in San Juan Capistrano Saturday afternoon. New York. A helicopter, flipped over the side of the Pan Am building, at the airport on the top, through the airport. The right landing gear collapsed and two people were killed on the street below when a falling rotor blade, by the fallen rotor blade. One was a 22 year old woman, who was two blocks away. Well, you get off the ground, get up in the air. Two hundred and sixty nine people were blown from the sky, by a Russian missile when a Korean Airlines jet accidentally strayed off course. Florida. January '82 an airline crashed at Florida airport and only one person a stewardess, a stewardess survived. When interviewed a few days later she said that because of the accident she had a whole new perspective on life. Her entire value system changed. Washington D.C. January '82, Air Florida flight 90 crashed in the Potomac River after taking off from National Airport in Washington D.C. Seventy four people died in the plane, and four died on the bridge, as the plane hit the cars on the bridge. Well you stay out of airplanes. Same day Air Florida 90 crashed, three died in Washington in a subway crash. Well you won't get on the train. Miamisburg, Ohio. Two women and a month, old baby

were killed when a Conrail freight train derailed, and crashed into a two story house, authorities said. Seven people suffered minor injuries. If we were walking is it safe? Washington Township, New Jersey. Five year old Jerome Vaccarezza, was walking to a seat for the opening act of the circus. Three performing leopards. But he came too close to the cats, and as a horrified audience watched one of them slashed his throat. Jerome died an hour later, after being admitted to the Hackensack Community Hospital Thursday night. His father said, "He was five years old and he went to Bible School. I'm sorry that's all." San Francisco. January 25 in '81, an article enti--, entitled, "Death Delayed, Its Hand Until Now." The caption under the picture says, "She beat the odds in Laos, only to die in a million to one accident." Goes on to describe this Laotian who escaped the tremendous war in Laos. She's walking along the streets in San Francisco when a plaster [scroll] fell from the top of a building, and hit her directly on the head. Police said it was a, one in a million possibility.

08:49 Well, to escape this morbid subject. Get away from it all, go to an amu--, an amusement park. San Jose again. A teenage boy was killed Saturday and eight persons injured in a rollercoaster accident at Marriott's Great America in Santa Clara, according to amusement park spokesman. Go out to ah, Valencia. Magic Mountain. A 23 year old man was killed Saturday, and his bride of several hours, seriously injured, after the couple, fell nearly 50 feet in an amusement park gondola, authorities said. Last night's paper. You're gonna play music to calm your nerves. Santa Ana Register last night. A high school party in Orange ended in tragedy Saturday night, with a 19 year old guitarist apparently, when a 19 year old guitarist, apparently was electrocuted, by his guitar, and microphone. Evidently there was a short in the guitar and the microphone. He, grabbed the microphone. It killed him. Well you go to the beach. December '81, Malibu. A 55 year old man died when strong winds blew his surf equipped surfboard. His

sail equipped surfboard, out to sea, in what a coast guard spokesman called a freak occurrence. Fifty five year olds sitting there on surfboards, heh. Twenty five year old Lewis A. Boren of Pacific Grove was surfing at Fanshell Beach, Beach in Monterey, and was killed, by what authorities feel was a 25 foot, great white shark. Well you won't go in the water, you just lie on the beach. La Jolla, California. August '81, a sunbather came down, put his towel out, layed down, and a lifeguard patrol wagon drove over his chest, and killed him, at 4:25 yesterday.

10:53 Sometimes nature plays a part. Ten year old Peter Gosselin disappeared while playing in the snow during a blizzard in 1978. Massachusetts. They found him five feet from his front door when the snow melted. April '82, three children were killed in a mudslide in a Pacifica house on Tuesday. They were sleeping in their room, at home when the hillside 40 feet above, let loose with a roar and swept into the house. The parents were Barbara, and Bill Velez. One of the neighbors said, "A very together family. Bill was always helping others. He ran the picnic for the opening day of the soccer season. It's a family that goes to church every Sunday. The kids go to catechism. I don't understand how all this could happen to such a marvelous family." Bill stated after the confirmation that his children were dead, "I know it now. There is no God." Well take a trip. July '81 a 113 people died in the Hyatt Regency in Kansas City when two walkways collapsed in the lobby. This is one of the most modern hotels, only a year old. August '83, a 29 year old tourist was killed in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, by a lady, who jumped from the top of the cathedral committing suicide. Killed the tourist. Even going to the hospital's not safe. Boise, Idaho. Rabies vaccinations are under way for 48 persons who came in contact with a Boise woman who died of rabies after cornea transplant. Dr. Fritz Dixon director of Idaho's central district health department said, "Constance Wesselman, 37, died after receiving a cornea

from a 30 year old Baker, Oregon man, whose doctor said probably died of rabies.” You won't go anywhere. Five year old boy sitting on his bicycle outside a toy store, [San] Carlos, was killed when engine part flew off a passing automobile. Volkswagen. You know sometimes they have the, engine explodes there. Bolt came off the generator. Struck him in the jugular vein. The child Robin Evans bled to death almost instantly of a severed jugular vein police said. Big Bend, Wisconsin. Mrs. Ashville was killed Tuesday night when she tripped in a neighbor's yard, fell on a glass she was carrying and it slashed her throat. Palo Alto. A piggyback ride on his father's back turned into tragedy, when East Palo Alto boy late Sunday when he fell, and hit his head on a piece of furniture. The boy, three year old Charles [inaudible] was pronounced dead at Stanford University Hospital according to a spokesman for the Santa Clara County, coroner's office. July '83, just this summer. Los Angeles. A seven year old girl hanged herself, accidentally in the backyard. She was jumping rope, and she went and tied one end of the rope, to a fuse box, that had to stand on a bucket to do it. Somehow she slipped off the bucket and the rope, tangled, around her neck, and, and, hanged her. I know it has been, depressing, and morbid, and uncomfortable. But don't reach for an aspirin. Seven people died October 1 and 2, when they took Tylenol headache capsules, laced with cyanide.

14:11 Now I'm not trying to depress you, with this rather long list of unusual deaths but rather to indelibly, impress you, with the truth that is appointed unto man, once to die. Whether you fly, or drive, or walk, or stand. Bed, which isn't exactly safe, 'cause that's where most people die. Death is on its way. And cannot be avoided. Listen to the words of Eliphaz, in ver--, in Job 22, [note: is in Job 21], "One dies in his full strength. Being wholly at ease and satisfied. His sides are filled out with fat. And the marrow of his bones is moist. While another dies with a bitter soul, never even tasting anything good. Together they lie down in the dust, and the worms cover them."

Whether it's the end of a long and rich, and full life, or the life, is just beginning. Death is ever present. So the psalmist says, "Teach us, to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." I would like to ask, several questions, about death, that'll help us I believe, in applying our hearts to wisdom.

**15:28** First of all, what is death? The dictionary says, "The ending of all vital functions without possibility of recovery. The end of life. The act, the process, or fact of dying. The state of no longer being alive." That's terrific, isn't? That's a lotta help. "Death, is the absence of life." I see death as separation. In physical death it's the separation from the body, from the soul and spirit. That which makes it alive. At the moment of death something leaves. It's the immaterial part of the person with the viable called the spirit. This is physical death. Genesis 2:7, "When the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." Physical death is when this, breath of life leaves. However there's another death of which the Bible speaks. And that is spiritual death. Here again there's separation. Instead of the separation from the, of the body from the soul and spirit as in physical death, it's the separation, of the spirit, from God. Paul talks in Ephesian about, Ephesians about all those, outside of Christ as being spiritually dead, because of his or her sins. What is, death? Physical death is the separation, of the material, and the immaterial part of man. Spiritual death is the separation, of that spirit, from God, who created us.

**17:03** Second question is, "If we're made in the image of God, why do we die?" Again the answer is found in the word of God in Genesis 2:17, "But from the tree of the, knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for the day that you eateth from it, you shall surely die." And the Hebrew is so strong there. "Die? All shall die!!" Genesis 3 of course, gives us the story of how death arrived. It came through the disobedience of one man. Paul talks in Romans

5:12, "Therefore as through one man sin, death, had, through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin. So death spread to all men because all, sinned." Adam and Eve's disobedience, to the command of God. Their being deceived by Satan, brought death. When Adam and Eve sinned, all, both kinds of death came upon them. Spiritual death took place, ah, immediately. The seeds of physical death, were sown. It eventually, culminated, in the physical separation of Adam's body from the breath of life. If you think that my list, was depressing, read ah, Genesis 5. All the way through Genesis 5. And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. How did both spiritual and physical death get here? The same way through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. So all of us are now partakers of that death. Because all of us, were in Adam and Eve. The whole human race descended from them. Again Romans 5:12, Paul is stating that, "When Adam sinned all sin entered with him." This is borne out both by the Greek grammar, and the context that follows, where five times in succession, it's stated that one and only sin is the cause of the death that befalls all men. Man does not die because of his individual sin. His sin is a natural consequence of his sin nature inherited from Adam. Man's fall nature, ah, nature means that man will sin. His individual sin just confirmed that fact of his sin nature. And are not the cause of his spiritual death. Dr. [inaudible] of ah Westminster's pointed out, "The guilt and judgement of Adam's transgression is shared by those, that he united Adam their head by God's creative appointment. All die in Adam, because all are guilty in Adam. The sinfulness of all humanity is not the survival of the fittest. It's a result of the fall. Man's doom sets us back to his initial rebellion, and [draws] with his multiplied iniquity." Why do we die? We die because of the sin of Adam.

19:55 The third question I'd like to ask is, "What are the consequences of death?" Genesis 3:17 to 19 give us some of the consequences of both physical and spiritual death. "And to Adam he said,

because you listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree which I've commanded you, saying you shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground because of you. Toil ye shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles that shall grow from you. Ye shall eat, the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face ye shall eat bread, to return to the ground, because, from it you were taken, for you are dust and to dust you shall return." Physical death often brings, pain. To those who left behind, there's a great deal of pain. Perhaps a sense of rejection and loneliness and guilt. It has a sting. Some deaths are very, very painful. I remember one night in the Philippines, being awakened by, ah, a, screech and a wail, that ah, I'll never get out of my ears. There'd been a death next door. And all night long, this wailing, screeching. I see Leanne and Dale [inaudible]. You've probably heard it, in some of the areas there near Irian Jaya. Just for days. And just, ah, you can hardly stand this listening over and over and just the, the wailing and the screeching and the crying and the, the, the despair. Very painful. As is painful as the consequences of physical death are, the consequence of spiritual death are so much greater.

**21:38** What does it mean to be spiritually dead? Well it means to be eternally separated from God. 2nd Thessalonians 1:7 to 9, "The Lord Jesus, shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know, not God, and that obeyed not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Secondly means the judgement of God. Paul stated to the philosophers of Mars Hill, "The times of ignorance, God winked at, but now commands, all men everywhere to repent because he's appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath, he hath ordained." And he was saying to them, that's your ultimate concern. You had been talking and, and discussing all kinds of

philosophy. Your ultimate concern is the day of judgement. And so time is neither circular nor meaningless. It's linear, because it's all coming to that day of judgement. And you're gonna be judged by that Man. [The] personalization rejected, that Man whom he hath ordained. And that's your ultimate concern, that day of judgement. The proof of that, of course, is the resurrection.

22:55 Third, the judgement means the wrath of God. Paul states his position very clearly, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath." For on account of these sins the wrath of God will come. What a, whatsoever, is under heaven is under wrath, unless he's under the Gospel. Romans 1:18, Paul makes it very clear there, "This wrath of God revealed from heaven is against all unrighteousness, and ungodliness of men." Fourth, to be spiritually dead, means to be without. Without God, Christ or hope, Ephesians 2:12; Without life, Ephesians 2:1; Without illumination, Ephesians 4:18; Without liberty, Romans 6:17; Without inheritance, Ephesians 5:5; Without forgiveness, Acts 26:17; or Without excuse, Romans 1:20. It means to be eternally separated from God in a place of torment, fire, pain, weeping and all those things that heaven is not. The Old Testament writers warned us of hell, of hell's depths, and the importance of avoiding in delivering one's soul from hell. Isaiah talked about the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings. Our Lord described it as outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth, as a furnace of fire. Jesus said, "It would be better to live with one foot or one hand, or one eye than be cast in the hell fire." In Luke 16 Christ talked about the rich man being in torment, in this great flame. Jude wrote, "Hell was reserved for the, fallen angels, where they'll be in everlasting chains under great darkness." And John describing hell, wrote, "The same shall drink of the wrath of the, the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out with mixture into the cup of his indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever. You shall

have no rest, day or night.” To go to hell, means to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and to be tormented day and night forever and ever.

24:59 You see how hard it is to preach on this subject? I believe it was Moody who said that, “One should never preach on hell without tears in his eyes.” Our Lord wept over the city of Jerusalem. Paul testified, “That by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every man, day and night, with tears.” Jeremiah cried, "O that my head were waters. Mine eyes a fountain with tears that I may weep day and night for the slaying of the daughter, daughter of my people." Now if I had to stop here, I'd be a dismal, day. But thank God there's good news. And I'm a minister of the Gospel, to bring good news. Now I've not brought much good news today, so far. What's the cure? Actually as far as the physical death there is no cure, until Christ comes back, and establishes a new order. Unless he returns every single one here, will have that appointment. It cannot be avoided. Now there are lots of things you can do, to put your house in order, to help prepare for death. But there is no cure. There is a cure however for spiritual death. Hebrews 2:14, "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise, also partook of the same, that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject, to slavery all their lives." Jesus Christ came to taste death, for every person. And his sacrifice on the cross extended life to all. Whereas sin entered the world through one man, spiritual life comes through Jesus Christ. Paul writes in Romans, "For if by the transgression of the one death, reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in Christ through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through the transgression there resulted condemnation of all men, even so through the act, of righteousness, the one act of righteousness, there resulted justification, of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience that

men, many were made sinners, even through the obedience of the One, and many will be made righteous." Paul puts it well when he talks about the consequences of Christ's death. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin was the law. But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

27:43 I remember hearing a story of a famous preacher who had, buried his wife. On the way home from the funeral he was trying to explain to his, little eight year old daughter, and ah, he was having trouble. "Why did Mommy die, so young?" And they came to a stoplight. As they were there at the stoplight, a truck came alongside, in the next lane. The truck cast a shadow on the, car. And all of a sudden illumination came to him. He said, to his little girl, "Would you rather be hit by the truck? Or by the shadow?" And she of course said, "By the shadow." He said, "That's exactly what's happened to Mommy. Christ has taken the truck,

[Cook loudly slaps hands]

out. And all we're hit now is by the shadow." We pass through the shadow of the valley of death. Its sting has been removed,

[Cook softly slaps hands]

by Calvary.

28:42 I remember receiving a telephone call from, a, classmate of mine at Biola. And, his wife had just died. She's in the, ah, hospital, and visited by, two of her friends. She was, a, principle, and ah, they had a good time sharing, then they left, and ah, he and his wife were left there alone.

He said to ah, her, "Would you like, Joyce, would you like a back rub?" She liked to have her back rubbed. And so she sat up in bed, and ah, he was rubbing, the ah, her, shoulders and her neck. And then, while as he was, rubbing her shoulders and her neck, all of sudden she said, "Ron, it's time." And died. And he called me just about an hour and a half after it happened. He said, "You know, Clyde, as I was walking through the parking lot, you know, thinking back on this it just seemed like, somebody had come into the room, and said, "Joyce, it's time." And took her. Alright this summer I was, up at Mount Herman I was sharing with [inaudible] Carlson this story. And he said, "You know, I had a friend, who was confined to a wheelchair. She was so, gnarled and, arthritis had gripped and she couldn't walk. Couldn't walk for years. But she with those gnarled hands, would make little dresses for missionary kids and, she made 113 of them. Sent them ah, on to the mission field. And ah, one day he was walking by, her room. She's sitting in her wheelchair and all of a sudden, he heard her exclaim, "I can walk again!" And he turned and went back in the room. She was gone.

30:45 Today I've tried to show the inevitably, and unexpectedness of death. If this is a different audience I'd ask 'em another question. "Are you ready for it?" I trust that everyone here has had their, soul, washed, by the hands of the One who died for them. Your sins have been forgiven. You'd been washed, made pure by the precious blood of Christ and you're ready for death and God has, given you, victory over the fear of death through Calvary. What about those around you? Are they ready? We have three billion people in the world today, who are spiritually dead. Two billion of whom, don't even know there's a cure. May God give us boldness, to share the cure. Let's pray.

31:46 [Long pause]

31:57 Father, death hangs as a, ominous cloud, over all of, men. Physical death, and spiritual death. Father we thank you for, Calvary. We thank you for that death, of your Son, who gives infinite worth, to every person because of that death. The God of all heaven. The Creator of all things. The Sustainer of all things, died, for that person, for me, for each one here. And that gives, us, infinite worth. We're fearfully and wonderfully made. But you have redeemed us, with that, precious blood. A price, that we could never pay. So Father we thank you for taking the sting out of death. Thank you for delivering us from fear. A fear that could, all our lifetime, enslave us. And then Father we pray for those that are walking, not in the shadow of death, but in spiritual death. I pray that from this group you'd raise up laborers. I pray to the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers, to the three billion, that is still dead, in their trespasses and sins. Give us boldness, to share the cure. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.