

O death where is your sting?

Christ, the hope of resurrection.

Message 12: [You are my anchor series.](#)

D E Wasake, a slave of Christ Jesus

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Introduction

I am writing this message during the holiday season and it reminds me of my childhood. When I was a child – I thought like a child and the holidays represented drinking *Coca Cola or Fanta*, eating A LOT of the best food, and wearing new clothes, it was the happiest time of the year! But now I am a man and I must also see the world as it is around us – not everyone is having the best of times. For them it is the worst of times. In Bethlehem for example, the city of David, where our Lord was born, there are only muted celebrations this year because of the conflict between Israel and Gaza. Bethlehem is part of Palestine today. Besides the Israeli – Gaza conflict we have seen the Ukraine war, earthquakes and disease and the saddest thing about this, life moves parallel to death – one is being born, while another is taking their last breath.

Amidst the death which moves parallel to life, My Lord, King Jesus wants me to give you a message of hope and that message is this: **O death where is your sting!**

The Lord Jesus wants me to assure you that your redeemer lives. He says: *I was dead and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and hades. Revelation 1: 18 (NIV).*

So, if you are living in the shadow of death and you are asking yourself: “what is it about Jesus that can give me the assurance to place my hope in him?” Then I can help you, and show you how he can be an anchor for your soul – as he has been for me! This is the subject of this message.

About me and the oracles of the Lord

Before I share with you the anchor verse and today’s message, let me share with you a short story about my children. So, one day, one of my children, who was 9 years old came to me crying out loud. When I enquired why he was crying, it turns out that it was because his sister who is 2 years older than him had told him he was going to hell! She did this as a punishment to him, as they had been fighting. Even at his young age, he knew he did not want to experience the horrors of hell.

I wish us adults had a more child like attitude as Jesus wants. An attitude where we believe him with simple faith. If he says hell is terrifying and the worm never dies and there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, let us cry out loud and wail, like my son did. Unfortunately, today,

many adults think hell is a fun word and use language like: “What the hell” or “hell no.” Those who use such language are likely not faced with the daily fear of death. If they were, they would not use such language lightly for they would be a real possibility they would face their creator any day.

Imagine those who face death every day, for example: those with terminal illnesses, the vulnerable, those in war zones, the hungry or the poor. Do you think they take death or hell lightly?

The truth is, for those who think death is fun or take hell lightly, underneath all the bravado of adulthood, even from a young age, many of us are terrified of the fear of death – at least I was until I had a very radical encounter with the Lord Jesus in 2017. This encounter came through reading the Bible. I immediately got saved and then baptized about 2 months later. The Lord then called me a second time, this time as a preacher of righteousness and that is how he gave me 12 message to give to his people in a season called “Catch the Anchor” of which this is the very last message of the season!

Anchor verse

So, for those of you who are humble enough to worry about their own death and that when you think of this fear, you worry for your soul, you are in a good place, because it means the Holy Spirit is leading you here and this is when the anchor scripture for this message comes along to give you hope. It says:

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 15: 54-57 (NIV).

These verses are telling us that when you place your hope in Christ, then he cleanses you of sin and when you are cleansed of sin, then death which you previously feared is disarmed of its sting. Why is this so?

The great fear of many human beings when they die is not death in itself. It would not be a problem to die, knowing for example you were going to simply be turned into manure and would cease to exist – just like many atheists believe.

The great fear for many humans is that when you die, you will face God and eternal judgment and if you lived a sinful life, then knowing that the wages of sin is death it means you will be judged for your sin, which penalty is death – hence such a person will face the second death in hell or hades – where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out. Mark 9: 48 (NLT).

By comparison – for those early Christian martyrs who faced death daily and yet they seemed to smile at death, what did they know that others did not?

Christ, the hope of resurrection

The scriptures show that just before Jesus was handed over to be killed, all his disciples fled in fear at his arrest! One young man even fled naked rather than be killed with the Christ. (see Mark 14: 51).

By comparison, something changed after Jesus rose again. The scriptures show this:

There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. Hebrews 11: 35-38 (NIV).

What kind of faith, what kind of sure belief, what kind of anchor led all these people being described to withstand the horrors of life and even of death? These people withstood:

- Being mocked – with jeers.
- Beaten – with whips. Imprisoned in chains.
- Being killed through stoning, through being sawn into two, being killed with a sword.

The kind of faith these people had in God is described in the scriptures like this:

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Hebrews 11: 1.

All these people who first believed, where did they get their confidence from such that they could suffer and even die without fear? They got their confidence because they saw Jesus alive. In fact, the early chapters of the anchor verse I shared from 1 Corinthians 15 describe those early people who saw Jesus alive after he died. The Apostle Paul wrote about them this way:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 1 Cor 15: 3-8 (NIV).

These verses are showing that the early disciples of Jesus –including the many women and men who followed him from when his ministry started in Galilee, they saw him being arrested,

they saw him being crucified and when he died, they were scared, shocked and heartbroken because they couldn't understand how the son of God could die. This is what caused a young man to run away naked for example as I mentioned. He was afraid of dying.

These very fearful people however started believing the scriptures fully after Jesus rose from the dead and he appeared to them to prove what he said. The verses show he appeared to:

- Cephas or Peter – the leader of the 12 original apostles or disciples.
- The 12 – being the rest of the original disciples.
- 500 other witnesses.
- James his brother.
- Many other apostles.
- Then Paul.

It is these people to whom the Lord appeared who received FAITH or the confidence that IF Jesus had died and was alive, then everything he had said in the scriptures was true and this is the confidence or the faith they had to believe that death was not the end of it all for all who believed. It meant that for those who believed, there was life after death, and that if their sins were forgiven, they would not go to hell, but instead would be with their Lord Jesus in heaven.

This gave them the confidence that even if they were flogged, sawn in two, killed by the sword, they would simply leave this earthly body or tent and put on a new body, that was imperishable. They could believe this because if Jesus had been raised from the dead, so would they, just as he had promised.

This was the anchor of their hope and this can also be your hope and this is why such people who believe in Jesus can confidently say – O death where is your sting!

What does this resurrection of Jesus mean for you?

Think of those who died for Jesus. These people who had seen Jesus die and then resurrected were so convinced that he was alive that they were willing to be sawn into two, to be persecuted, to be killed.

How can anyone die for a lie?

Would you be willing to be flogged by a whip 39 times and bleed on your back for a lie? Those who flogged these disciples wanted them to deny that Jesus was alive but they refused!

I too would be deceived and a liar if I was spending all my time recording a message which was a lie. How deceived I would be! But I am not deceived, I have hope in Jesus my redeemer, that he is the resurrection and the life.

These early Christians understood that if Jesus was raised from the dead, they understood it meant the following:

1. Everything he had said was true – including that he indeed was the son of God, hence why they wrote these things down in the New Testament for those who would follow them.
2. If Jesus said he was coming back, they also believed it to be true and this is why the last book of the Bible of revelation talks of his return, which we are waiting for and Jesus himself confirms he holds the keys to death and hades.

The Message of Jesus to you

So, you and I we were not there when Jesus died and resurrected, in other words, we are not eye witnesses, how can we confirm these things written in the Bible?

We are convinced that the words of the Bible in the New Testament are true because the same Spirit who raised Christ - lives in us who believe in him and the Spirit confirms to our spirits that what we read is true and the Spirit proves this through giving us who believe gifts: the gift of salvation and other gifts such as: prophesy, miracles and signs and wonders which confirm what we read in the Bible.

Me who is speaking to you, I too am a witness to these things because for example Jesus has spoken to me, he has given me the gift of prophesy and he has given me this ministry.

When I therefore read the Bible accounts of those who were before me, I believe what they wrote to be true, because as I said, the Spirit of Jesus who lives in me, tells me they are true.

This is the confidence that is an anchor for my soul and this is the same confidence that should allow you to also believe that we will live again even when we die.

When you believe such a thing:

1. You can endure the unfairness of this world, including wars and hunger - knowing it is not the end.
2. You can endure the persecution for being a Christian, knowing to be absent in body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor 5: 8).
3. You can share the Good News of the Season - about the love of God to others knowing that those who are loved by God, will be resurrected, even when they die.

Do you have this confidence that you will live again even when you die? If you do not, what are you waiting for? Why would you want to live another day with the fear of death? Why would you want to live with the pain of knowing death is coming for everyone around you including your loved ones if they don't have Jesus?

I doubt you would want to live with such fear. You can however change this – first for yourself and then for your loved ones by praying for them and preaching to them, after the Lord has helped you. If you believe in Jesus, whom all the scriptures are about, you can trust the eye witnesses and experience Jesus for yourself, just as I too trusted the scriptures and believed

him for myself. When I did, he visited me. Do you also want to know Jesus today? If so, pray this prayer to become a Christian:

"God of heaven, I confess that I am a sinner and have been one since birth, but I have heard that you can make me new, and you sent your son Jesus to die for me. He rose again and it is he who can give me his Holy Spirit. Please forgive me and welcome me into your Kingdom, teach me how to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Lord Jesus, come – Maranatha!