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What Lies on the Other Side?

Several years ago Terry and I began the practice of sending special monetary gifts as memorials, in loving memory of relatives, friends, and friends of friends who have passed away.

Though we miss those about whom we do not hear, last year we gave memorials for 77 people.

That's not intended to be braggadocios, simply illustrative of the realities that we know a lot of people and that death is non-discriminatory. It will happen to everyone, sooner or later.

In funeral sermons I've preached, I usually have at least mentioned what I call *The Miracle of Life, The Mystery of Death, The Marvel of Eternity*. With appropriate explanations, those words sum up quite well my thoughts about those three topics: life, death, and eternity.

Sometime ago I read this simple explanation of death. It doesn't cover the miracle of life or the marvel of eternity. It only offers one man's simple understanding of the mystery of death.

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, "Doctor, I'm afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side."

Very quietly, the doctor said, "I don't know." The man replied, "You don't know? You're, a Christian man, and don't know what's on the other side?"

The doctor was holding the handle of the door. On the other side came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with eager joy.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, "Did you notice my dog? He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death. But I do know one thing... I know my Master is there and that is enough."

These selected words of a familiar hymn (LSB 461) are simple, straightforward, and true:

I know that my Redeemer lives; what comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives triumphant from the grave; He lives eternally to save.

He lives to bless me with His love; He lives to plead for me above.

He lives to silence all my fears; He lives to wipe away my tears.

He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend; He lives and loves me to the end.

He lives and grants me daily breath; He lives, and I shall conquer death.

He lives, all glory to His name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same.

Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives: I know that my Redeemer lives!

What lies on the other side? Though I can't answer that question completely, I know that my Redeemer is there. And that is enough!

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