

Only One Life to Live

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When was the last time it crossed your mind that you have only one life to live in this world? Did you do anything about it? How differently would you live if you knew exactly when you would no longer be on this earth? These are questions we occasionally ask ourselves. Once, I heard an insurance agent say about his work, "If I have two lives to live, I would still be an insurance agent." On another occasion, a barber said, "I would still be a barber in the next life." What does it mean to have a next life? Who has the authority to grant us a life after life? The Bible says, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:27-28). Who is the "man" who is appointed to die once? This refers to all of humankind, regardless of race, religion, gender, or nationality. Equally, everyone will face death; equally, each one will have to stand before God in divine judgment.

John Bunyan (1628-1688) wrote the Christian classic *Pilgrim's Progress* in 1678 about a pilgrim's journey from the City of Destruction toward the Celestial City. It was an allegory of a Christian's pilgrimage through life. *Pilgrim's Progress* is widely considered the second most popular book next to the Bible and is still in print in over 200 different languages. In July 2001, I joined a summer study group at Oxford with my alma mater to visit John Bunyan's church in Bedford, England. It was challenging to learn of Bunyan's steadfast faith even in imprisonment. It reminded me of Apostle Paul's pilgrim journey. He writes, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14). From the time he encountered the resurrected Messiah, Jesus, on the road to Damascus, Apostle Paul lived a heaven-bound life of a pilgrim, longing for his eternal home.

How long do we have on this earth? Every one of us has an appointed time for death. Death came through the disobedience of Adam and Eve to God's word. The Bible says, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). So what is the solution to death? How can we be guaranteed of a life after death? Jesus told sinners, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). God forgives us when we repent, which means to make a U-turn from a life of sin, toward the living, eternal God. It is to be born into an eternal Kingdom, with an eternal King, "...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The only solution to the problem of death is to believe in Jesus Christ as YOUR personal Lord and Savior.



One life to live, but never fearing death because of the resurrection of Jesus

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, over the past year and a half, we're told over 600,000 people have died from the virus. And the pandemic is not over yet! The total death count has reached at least 6 times the number of those killed in action from both the Korean and Vietnam Wars combined. Even as we vow never to forget them, as we remember them, we realize death is all too real. To this day, 7,000 MIA from the Korean War remain unaccounted for, buried in the Korean soil. Like the pandemic, this war is not over yet. But each year, family members of the MIA die with the memories of their beloved buried deep in their hearts, never having gotten the chance to see them alive again. These soldiers bravely sacrificed their one life to live on this earth. The only hope for another meeting is through a heavenly reunion—through a resurrection faith of Jesus' power over sin and death.

May God help us to take seriously our one life to live so that we can trust in God alone for eternal life (John 3:16)! Our departure is determined by His appointed time for each of us, so trust in God who can give us life after death. Do it NOW as you traverse your life journey.