

Welcome to the church of Christ at Alisal

The Lord's Day Message

"Starving Christians"



Welcome Brothers and Sisters!

Jordan will lead our **Bible Class**, **Kerry** will lead singing, **Paul McCollum** will deliver the **Lesson**. May God bless their efforts!

*Our Lord's Day
Plan...*

~ Happy Lord's Day ~

in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

2 Corinthians 11:27

We are praying for you!

The Barry family - for God's comfort and help dealing with worldly people and trials.

David Smith - for his repentance and return to the Lord.

Church of Christ - for strength to preach God's Word to all lost souls.

~God's Blessings to Everyone!~

To Depart and Be with Christ Is Far Better

Rodney Nulph

The apostle Paul was such a warrior for Jesus Christ! In his inspired letter to Christians in Philippi, he penned, "For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23 NKJV). Paul knew that leaving this earth, filled with its sorrow, heartache, pain and frustration would be a joy, because he knew where he was going in eternity. A person's entire outlook toward death changes when he or she obeys the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In many ways, for the Christian, because of God's amazing grace, death is simply a door, a "step" (1 Samuel 20:3) away from the tempest into a calm and peaceful reward. I am certain that is why Paul reminded brothers and sisters in Thessalonica that Christians do not "...sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Hope is what separates Christians from the world! Consider with me just a few of the reasons why it is far better to depart and to be with Christ.

Firstly, departure brings relief. A person does not have to live very long on earth to understand that our earthly bodies are prone to physical pain and emotional strain. One of the major emotional diseases of our culture today is anxiety and depression. Physically, cancer, heart problems, kidney failure, liver struggles, broken bones and a multitude of other physical pains surround us all. Yet, departing this life, as a faithful child of God, relieves us from all those plagues. It is almost impossible to imagine an eternal place with neither physical nor emotional ailments!

However, certainly, it is sometimes more needful for us to remain on earth to accomplish the Lord's will (Philippians 1:24-26). As God continues to give us life, we will glorify Him on earth, but to depart, oh what a relief that will be! Even a casual reading of Luke 16:19-31 shows that righteous Lazarus' life was filled with pain on earth, but his departure brought him great relief. The Psalmist took confidence not in his flesh but in what was ahead. "My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:26).

Secondly, departure brings rest. This earthly tabernacle sometimes makes it difficult for us to really rest. For many, their minds continually race, even through the night, which impedes real rest. Restless legs, aching knees, painful joints and hurting backs make lasting rest nearly impossible. Research shows that the average person tosses and turns 37-40 times each night! That same average person will wake

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up four times each night. Of course, as we age, these issues can become even more frequent. Thus, it is difficult for humanity to imagine a place of perfect rest.

The Spirit promised that those who die in the Lord will have rest from their labors (Revelation 14:13). The compound word for “rest” in this text carries with it the idea of “refreshment” or “taking one’s ease.” Some define it as “to recover.” Picture a runner who has run the most difficult course ever created, whose legs are aching, whose muscles are cramping and whose heart is beating out of control. He is exhausted, but when he feels like he can go no farther, there ahead is the finish line where is a comfy chair with gallons of cold water and fans to cool his overheated body. His mind forgets the pain, and he begins to enjoy the pleasure of his rest. Dear friends, that is exactly what leaving this life is all about!

Thirdly, departure brings reward. Let’s face it; God created us and knows that we need proper motivators to keep going. While living the Christian life here on earth is a great blessing (John 10:10), the ultimate blessing of faithfulness comes when we depart this life. To be able to reach out and to take the hand of God’s messenger (i.e., an angel) by which to be escorted into Paradise will show that “...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). One day, we will see that Paradise, and it will surely be worth it all! To be rewarded with the crown of life will be an amazing blessing (Revelation 2:10). Interestingly, as Jesus addressed the hurting, persecuted saints in the latter part of the first century through the book of Revelation, He centered on the reward – the victory – that was theirs upon departure from this life. Paul had gotten a glimpse of that reward (2 Corinthians 12:1-6), and his conclusion was simple, “to depart and be with Christ... is far better”!

Family, friends and other faithful saints sometimes do cause us to be “hard-pressed between the two,” departing this life or staying here for a while longer (Philippians 1:23). While we remain, we must glorify the Lord Jesus. May we never become so mesmerized by and attached to the things of this life that we forget “to depart and be with Christ... is far better.”

September 17, 2023



The only thing missing is you!

Meeting Days and Times

Sunday 9:00 am

Wednesday (via Zoom) Bible Class, singing & prayer - 6:00 pm

church of Christ at Alisal

67 Eucalyptus Drive

Salinas, California 93905-2728

Paul McCollum, preacher

pulpitpaul@razzolink.com

(831)424-9800 or 206-5568

www.churchofchristalisal.com/