

Matters of Grave Concern

Arthur Barry

What does it feel like to come back to life from the dead? - I don't know.
What does it feel like to be dead? - I don't know.

We tend to think about the act of dying, and it is possible to imagine things like struggling for breath, chest pains, etc. But, what about after the dying is over and you are "good and dead"? What is that like? Your lungs have breathed their last breath; your heart has beaten its last beat; your brain has waved its last wave. There is literally nothing left to do. Some would say, "Sweet!" The Apostle Paul, however, when he was ready to leave this world, spoke of his desire to go and be with the Lord (Philippians 1:21). In Verse 19 he has told us of his confidence in the prayers of the faithful and the spirit of Christ to get him through. Paul was never ashamed to ask for prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1), but you will not find him asking for prayer to keep him from death. The spirit of Christ had already dealt with His death. Neither will you find him praying for others, or encouraging anyone else to pray for, those who have already died. When he referred to saints who had died, he said they had "fallen asleep" but when he referred to living souls who were not in Christ, he said they were "dead". Where did he get such ideas?

There were those who heard Jesus say that Lazarus was only sleeping who must have chuckled at his naiveté. So much for this popular teacher who had worked miracles. Did he not even know the difference between death and sleep? Little did they know, however, that this Jesus was about to perform his best miracle when he was among the dead Himself.

I can imagine being blind or lame or deaf, so I can imagine what it would be like to be healed from any such ailment, but Jesus reserves his best work for those who are dead. Only those who are dead can witness life from the dead. Peter tells us that it is by His spirit that Jesus witnesses to the dead (1 Peter 3:18-19). Never forget that prayer helps in this life, but the Spirit of Christ helps in this life as well as in death. Jesus loves us whether or not our hearts are beating! When we lose someone to death, the fact that their brainwaves have ceased does not kill our pain or suddenly deactivate our love for them, does it? So we become connected with each other in ways that are more than just biological. And because of this we grieve over people who are still biologically functional yet dead in sin. And, because of this, we rejoice greatly over a sinner who repents, as do the angels in Heaven. Maybe, then, I do know something of what it is to be dead and what it is to come to life.

I wonder if those angels are still rejoicing over me.



That meets at 701 South Wilbur, Sayre, PA 18840
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July 26, 2020

WELCOME!

Sunday

Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study-6:30 p.m.

All the churches of Christ greet you.

Romans 16:16

Today's Sermon: *The LORD is My Shepherd*

Paul Cowles will deliver the sermon today.

Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.

Bulletins are archived on the website.

valleycitieschurchofchrist.org

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Headphones are available for the hearing impaired.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23

ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS...

- **Wednesday Evening Bible Class: July 29th**, at the building at 6:30. We have been studying the minor prophets of the Old Testament. Last week we continued our study of Micah. We will be concluding **Micah** this week.
- **Next Potluck:** TBD
- **Next Regional Singing: August 30th (if possible) venue TBA**



- Doug Kashorek, preacher in Plattsburgh, NY, has posted an update on his wife, Lori. Lori has suffered weakened muscles making her unable to walk or sit up or stand on her own due to extended steroid use to reduce swelling around her brain tumors. The steroid did not help, but also left her with a fatty liver, high blood sugar requiring insulin, and blood clots in her lungs and brain bleeds. She also has a rapid heartbeat. Doug is working hard to care for Lori and requested prayers from us.
- The church at **Horseheads** are now enjoying the teaching of their **new preacher, David Istre**. He and his wife Mary and their two young children have arrived safely and are finished with their 14-day quarantine. David has already been preaching on Zoom.
- **Paul** will be preaching today.
- **Ruthie** has had both of her cataract surgeries and should be with us here today.
- **Ted, Jennifer and Ethan** have returned safely from their beach vacation and should also be here with us today.

PRAYERS

- **Pray for all of us as individual states are opening for business and gatherings in stages. Pray about schools.**
- **Emily Barry and her son Aidan** are in the process of moving back to NY from ME. Pray for success getting a place to live in the Albany area. Emily is thankful for her job offers. Aidan would like prayers for a job also.
- Pray for **Jackie**, who has been suffering whole body pain from arthritis and has been prescribed Prednisone.
- We are thankful for **Ruthie's** good recovery from the eye surgeries. She is now having some trouble with her Jeep and needs prayer about that.
- Pray for **John Chacona**, Ted's brother.
- Pray for **Andrea Lentz**, friend of Darlene's, who has lung cancer. She is scheduled for surgery 8/13 to remove another mass on her lungs and also a kidney stone.
- Pray for **G.K. Pennington** and his wife Jo as they deal with his esophageal cancer in the months to come. He is undergoing chemo and radiation both at the same time.
- **Bill Dayton**, preacher in Kentucky is suffering from severe depression. Also, another Christian friend of the Barrys, **Steve Harrison**, who lives with his family in Viet Nam is suffering with dark depression.
- **We are thankful for a safe trip for the Istre family as they begin their new work at the church in Horseheads.**
- **Doug Kashorek has asked for prayers for himself and his wife, Lori as they deal with her serious breakdown in health due to her struggle with lung cancer which caused tumors on her brain.**

If you have any PRAYERS or NEWS that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Sandy at barncat7237@gmail.com or text or call (607) 261-0911.