

Articles and Sermons :: Sermon on the Death of P.P. Bliss by Evangelist D. L. Moody**Sermon on the Death of P.P. Bliss by Evangelist D. L. Moody - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/7/30 0:08****Sermon on the Death of P.P. Bliss by Evangelist D. L. Moody**

Preached by D. L. Moody in the Tabernacle at Chicago on January 31, 1876, just two days after Phillip Bliss's tragic death in Ashtabula. Bliss, with his wife Lucy, was scheduled to arrive in Chicago on the Pacific Express to participate in this service.

Text: "Therefore be ye also ready."

I expected to enjoy this afternoon coming around here and hearing our friend Mr. Bliss sing the Gospel and our friend Mr. Whittle preach.

I was telling my wife, when we got home Friday night, that I was really glad I didn't have to work so hard on this Sabbath. I cannot tell you what a disappointment it has been to me. I have looked forward to those two men of God coming to this city. I had arranged and made my plans to stay over a few days, in order to hear and enjoy their services.

Ever since I heard that I would have to take their place this afternoon, there has been just one test running in my mind. I cannot keep it out: "Therefore be ye also ready."

You who have heard me preach the last three months, I think will bear witness to this, that I haven't said much about death. Perhaps I haven't been faithful in this regard. I'd always rather tell about life; perhaps there's not been warning enough in my preaching. But, I feel that if I should hold my peace this afternoon, and not lift up my voice and warn you to make ready for death, God might lay me aside and put someone else in my place; I must speak and forewarn you.

Today has been one of the most solemn days of my life. The closing hour of every year, for the past ten or twelve years, have been very solemn to me. I think I never spent such a day as I have today. This world never seemed so empty, and men never looked so blind away from God, as they do today. It seems, as never before, that I cannot understand how life can go on in madness, how a man can keep away from Christ, when in just a stroke he is gone to eternity, and there is no hope. Those men I mean that really believe, intellectually, that the Bible is true; that if they die without regeneration, without being born again, they cannot see God's kingdom. How is it, they can believe, and yet they can still stay away from Christ when such judgements are brought near to them, is a mystery to me.

I hope the words of the Lord Jesus will find their way into your hearts, as they have to mine; I hope you will hear Him this afternoon saying, "Therefore be ye also ready." He had been warning them; for in the verse preceding this text He said, "As in the days of Noah, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood came and took them all away." It came suddenly. How often the judgements of God come suddenly upon us.

I want to call your attention to a few words we find in the Old Testament, in the 6th chapter of Jeremiah, at the 10th verse: "To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot harken; behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."

Also in the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel, 4th, 5th, and 6th verse: "Then whosoever hears the sound of the trumpet and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own hear. He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hands."

Do you ask me, now, why I am so anxious to warn you? Because, if I don't the blood of your soul will be required at my hand. I want to warn you today; I want to plead with you today. And it is because I love you that I come to plead with you. I am sure there is nothing else that could induce me to speak this afternoon. I felt rather like going into my room and locking the door, and trying to learn what this providence means. I don't expect to find out yet; I'm not sure I'll ever know. But - (the speaker paused in deep emotion) I just felt I'd got to come down this afternoon and cry out: "Therefore be ye also ready!" Make ready before the close of this sermon! Just ask yourselves this question, "Am I ready to meet God this moment?" If not, when will you be? God would not tell us to be ready, if He did not give us the power, unless it was something within our reach.

The thought is put into some of your minds that I am trying to take advantage of the death of this good man to frighten you and scare you; and I haven't any doubt Satan is doing this work, at this moment. Right here let me notice that some say I'm preaching for effect. That's what I am doing. I want to affect you; I want to rouse you out of your death-sleep, when I warn you to prepare to meet your God; for "In such hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh."

It is just from pure love, pure friendship to you, that I warn you; the thought that I am trying to frighten you from selfish motives is from the pit of hell. You take a true mother; if she does not warn her child when playing with fire, you say she's not what she professes to be, not a true mother. If the father sees his boy going to ruin and doesn't warn him, is he a true father? I say it is the single power of love that makes me warn you. Suppose I walk by a house on fire, with a man and woman in it, and their seven children. If I don't call out, hammer on the door, smash in the windows if necessary, and cry out, "Escape if you can, " what would you say? You would say I ought not to live. If souls are going down to death and hell all round me - I verily believe such live today, and some are in this building - how can I hold my peace, and not cry out at the top of my voice: "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

There is a legend, that I read some time ago, of a man who made a covenant with death; and the covenant was this: that death should not come on him unawares - that death was to give warning of his approach. Well, years rolled on, and at last Death stood before his victim. The old man blanched and faltered out, "Why, Death, you have not been true to your promise. You have not kept your covenant. You promised not to come unannounced. You never gave me any warning." "How, How!" came the answer. "Every one of those gray hairs is a warning; every one of your teeth is a warning; your eyes growing dim is a warning; your natural power and vigor abated - that is a warning. Aha! I've warned you...I've warned you continually. "And Death would not delay, but swept his victim into eternity.

That is a legend; but how many the past year have heard these warning voices. Death has come very near to many of us. What warnings have come to us all. The preacher's calls to repentance, how again and again they have rung in our ears. We may have but one or two calls yet, this year, in the next few hours; but I doubt it. Then how many of us in the last twelve months have gone to the bedside of some loved friend, and kneeling in silent anguish unable to help, have whisp

ered a promise to meet that dying one in heaven. Oh, why delay any longer! Before these few lingering hours have gone , and the year rolls away into eternity, I beg of you, see to it that you prepare to make that promise good. Some of you have kissed the marble brow of a dead parent this year, and the farewell look of those eyes has been, "Make ready to meet thy God." In a few years you will follow, and there may be a reunion in heaven. Are you ready, dear friends?

When visiting the body of my brother, just before he was put in the grave, I picked up his Bible, of the size of this in my hand; and there was just one passage of Scripture marked. I looked it up, and I found it read, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." As I read it that night, the hand that wrote it was silent in death. It was written in '76. Little did he think, when he wrote it, that in that same year he would be silent in the grave. Little did he think that the Autumn wind and the winter snow would go roaring over his grave. Thank God, it was a year of jubilee to him! That year he met his God. How often have I thanked God for that brother's triumphant death! It seems as though I could not live to think he had gone to the grave without God and hope. Dear friends - dear, unsaved friends - I appeal to you that you will now accept Christ. Seize the closing hours of this year; let not this year die till the great question is decided. I plead with you once more to come to the Lord Jesus. Oh, hear these blessed words of Christ, as I shout them again in your hearing: "Therefore be ye also ready."

Now death may take us by surprise. That's the way it has taken our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bliss. Little did they know, as they rode toward Cleveland last Friday night, what was to be in the real end of the journey. About the time I was giving out notice, last Friday night of their being here this afternoon, they were then struggling with death. That was about the time they passed into glory-land. It was a frightful death, by surprise. But, beautiful salvation! Star of hope! In that time of gloom, darkness and death, they were both ready. They were just ripened for the kingdom of God. I do not think I ever saw two persons who have grown more in Christ than these dear friends have in the past four or five years. I do not think a man walks the streets of Chicago today who has so few enemies as P.P. Bliss. He was a man we will love in another world.

When the summons came, it must have been terrible; it must have brought cruel pain for a few minutes, and - they were in glory. Only a few minutes - and they were all together in that world of light, perhaps raising the shout of praise, "Alleluia, what a Saviour!" I think the heavenly choir has had a great accession today. I doubt whether many around the throne sing sweeter than P.P. Bliss. I doubt whether many have loved the Son of God more than he. With that golden harp of the glorified, how sweetly shall he sing!

But, my friends, while we are mourning here, are we ready? We cannot call them back. We may mourn for them; we may mourn for the sad misfortune that has befallen ourselves. But what is our loss is their gain. It is better for them there than here. It is better to be "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Shall you join him in that blessed land? Say, are you ready?

Now, there are three things which every man should be ready for in this world: ready for life, ready for death, and ready for judgement. Judgement after death is as sure as life; judgement is as sure as death. There are three sure things. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgement." It is of very little account how we die, or where we die, if we are only prepared, if we are only ready. We don't know what may happen any day. It seems to me, we ought to be ready any hour, any moment; we know not what may happen any moment. Oh, let us get ready! It seems the sheerest folly to delay this matter a single moment. Look at that train, where great numbers were ushered into eternity unexpectedly. Little did our friends, Mr. Bliss and wife, think that they were going to be ushered into eternity, as they stepped light-heartedly on that railway train. It would seem that people ought to resolve never to step aboard a railway train again, until they are ready to meet their God. It would seem as though no one would lie down and go to sleep tonight until he knows he is ready to meet the Bridegroom.

Dear friends, are you ready? This question, this afternoon, it seems to me, ought to go down into all our hearts. And then, if we are ready, we can shout over death and the grave; that death is overcome, the sting of death is gone, and the grave opens terrorless. Suppose we do go on and live thirty or forty years; it is all only a little moment. Suppose we die in some lone mountain, like Moses on Pisgah; or like Jacob, in the midst of our family; or like Joshua, with the leaders of Israel around us; or suppose God lets us die surrounded with the comforts and luxuries of home; or suppose Death comes on unexpectedly and suddenly, as it did on Stephen; it may be we shall be called on to die the death of the martyr, and be put to death unexpectedly...But if we are only ready, what care we just how our summons comes?

If I am ready, I would as soon die like Stephen, or Moses on Pisgah. I would as soon die like our friend Mr. Bliss, as like Jacob with all his sons around him, if only I am ready for my glorious inheritance beyond the grave. That is the main question. It is not how we die. It is now where we die. At the worst, it may be but the sudden shock of a few minutes, and all will be over; and we enter upon eternal joy, joy for evermore. Millions and millions and millions of years in this world will not yield the joy of one minute in heaven. O my friends, shall you have a place in that heavenly home? Oh! Will you not each one ask this question just now, "Am I ready, am I ready?"

I believe that every man in this Christian land has had some warning; some John the Baptist to warn him as Herod had, some Paul as Agrippa and Felix had, some friend like Nathan, sent to warn him, as David had; some friend to warn him such as Ahab had in Elijah. And, my friends, I think this is a day of warning to you. Are you not coming to God today? Will you not hear the Savior's loving voice today, "Come unto me?" God will forgive your sins and blot them out, and give you a new heart. Oh, let not the sun go down tonight without being reconciled to God.

Little did those people on that train, as it neared Cleveland Friday night, little did they think the sun was going down for them the last time, and that they should never see it rise again. It is going down tonight - as I am speaking - the last sun of the year; and some of you in this assemblage may never see it rise again. Dear friends, are you ready for the call, if it comes to you between now and tomorrow morning? This very night you may be called away; your soul may be required by God your Maker. Are you ready to meet the King and Judge of all the earth? Let me put, urgently but kindly, these questions to every soul here tonight. Can you say, "I have Christ. I have eternal life through Jesus Christ my Savior?" If not, dear friends, let me ask you, what will you say when He shall come to judge you? If, this very night, he should summon you to stand before Him, what would you say?

Oh, how deceitful death is! Something may fall on us as we walk home tonight, or we may fall down and break some part of our body, and be ushered into eternity. We may be seized by some fit, and we're gone. We may have some disease around the heart, that is hidden from us and that we know nothing about, and this may be our last day on earth. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow." We don't know what will happen, even before tomorrow. And then, another deception: A great many people, you know, because their parents have outlived the allotted years, because their parents were long-lived people, think that they're going to live long also. How many are deceived in that way. Then, there is that lying deception: "Oh, it is time enough to be a Christian, time enough to cry out to God, when He calls us." Look at that wreck! Look at those people being dashed down that frightful chasm to frightful deaths! That is no time to get ready; that is not the time! They have all they can do trying to get out of the wreck - bleeding, burning, drowning, frozen! How many in eternity in five minutes! How many instantly! No time for prayer in such chaos as that. I would not say God is not merciful; He may have heard even then, the penitent cry; but I would not dare say "Put it off till some calamity overtakes you." The Word comes, now, at this moment: "Prepare to meet God," "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Oh, that is the first duty and pleasure of life, not its last! It is more important that you seek the kingdom of God today - just now, this very hour - than anything else, than anything else, in life! It is more important than going home to look after the highest earthly affairs; more important than if you could win the wealth and honors of the universe! Let business be suspended and every thing be laid aside, until this greatest question of life - this greatest question of time and eternity - is settled. "Prepare to meet thy God." Oh, prepare!

My friends, I call upon you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. I call upon you to prepare this day and this hour to meet your God. I lift up my voice in warning to all in this assembly. Would you not rather be in the place of Mr. and Mrs. Bliss, and die as they did, in that terrible wreck, by that appalling accident - would you not rather choose that, than to live on twenty-five years, or a hundred years, and die without God, and go down in despair to dark rivers of eternal death! Oh, it was appalling! But I would rather, a thousand times, have been on that train that dark night, and taken that awful leap and met my God as I believe Mr. and Mrs. Bliss have met Him, than to have the wealth of worlds and die without God and without hope! Oh, if you are not ready, make ready just now! I think a great many tears should be shed for the sins of the past year. If you take my advice, you will not go out of this tabernacle this night until you have tasted repentance, and the joy of sins forgiven. Go into the inquiry - room and ask some of the Christian people to tell you the way of life, to tell you what to do to be saved. Say, "I want to be ready to meet my God tonight; for I don't know the day or the hour He may summon me."

I may be speaking to some this afternoon who are hearing me for the last time. In a few days, I will be gone. My friends, to you I want to lift up my warning voice again tonight once again. I want to speak as to brethren beloved, hastening on to judgement: "Prepare to meet thy God." I beg of you, I beseech of you, this moment, don't let the closing hours, these closing moments of '76 pass, until you are born of God, born of the Spirit, born from death. This day, if you seek God, you shall find Him. This day, if you will turn from sin and repent, God is ready to receive you. Let me say, He never will be more willing than today; and you'll never have more power than today. If you are ready, He is ready now to receive and bless you forever! Oh, may the God of our fathers have compassion upon every soul assembled here! May our eyes be opened, and all flee from the wrath to come! May the Divine warnings take hold on every soul! May we profit by this sad calamity, and may many be raised up in eternity to thank God that this meeting was ever held.