

When Death Surrounds Us!

by Wayne Goff

This past week has been quite disconcerting to me because of the number of deaths that have come our way. First, we buried my step-sister, **Amy**, in Centerville. Then I saw a post on the Golf Channel that the professional golfer, **Bill Haas**, had been involved in a tragic accident in California which took the life of his 70-year-old host for the week. He and Mark Gibello went for a joy ride in Mark's Ferrari, and Mr. Gibello was killed in a collision with a BMW. On Wednesday afternoon in **Parkland, Florida**, a crazed gunman ruthlessly murdered seventeen innocent high school students! Finally, Tom Rainwater's wife, **Sonia**, is on the verge of death after a long battle with cancer. What can we make of all this?

First, we should realize that death can come to any of us, at any time, and in any of a number of ways. We cannot avoid death because our physical bodies are a temporary *"tent"* (2 Cor. 5:1-4) that is quite fragile. Life on this earth is guaranteed to none of us.

Second, each human death affects us all. Though we may not have ever met or known some of the above who passed away, their deaths are a constant, painful reminder of our own mortality. *"Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart"* (Ecclesiastes 7:2). Taking death to heart means that we learn from the deaths of others and properly prepare for our own.

Third, life is not fair. It never has been, and it never will be. As long as good and evil are combined in the same realm, evil will harm us. Solomon noted that with life on earth, *"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them"* (Eccl. 9:2). We don't know always **when** or **how** we will die, but we *do* know that we **will** die. Prepare for death now.

Finally, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

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