**A Beautiful Death**

Jarrod Jacobs

As we observe nature during this time of year, many will remark that the leaves are beautiful right now. The many colors certainly attract our attention, and we note the beauty that is all around us. Such beauty is yet more evidence of a Creator. There is too much design and order in this world and universe to suggest that all things have occurred by random chance. At this time of year, the vegetation is preparing for the cold temperatures of winter. In light of this, have we ever stopped to consider the fact that this beauty we are observing is due to the fact that the leaves are, in fact, dying? God made trees with the ability to shed leaves so that the trees themselves might survive winter, living off of the sugars and nutrients stored up during the spring and summer.

I marvel at the beauty of this time of year. At the same time, when I have considered the facts concerning the trees shedding their leaves, my thoughts turn to spiritual matters in light of man dying….

It has been said that life is a “terminal disease”. This is because once man is born, he begins to die! In fact, “the living know that they will die” (Ecc. 9:5). The Holy Spirit spoke about death and said, “just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb. 9:27). In fact, every day brings us closer to our final day upon earth. To the Roman Christians, Paul stated this fact by telling them, “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11). Who knows, today may be your last day (Prov. 27:1)! Just like the leaves on the trees are dying right now, everyone who is on earth is in fact dying.

While we cannot always control the manner of our death, or the time of our death, we can control how we act until that time comes (I Cor. 9:27)! On one occasion, God called the death of His saints “precious” (Ps. 116:15). From the book of Revelation, we read, “‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Rev. 14:13).

Please note that the reason why certain ones’ deaths can be described as “precious” is because of how they lived! A “blessed” death comes as a result of a person living that righteous and blessed life as is described by God (I Pet. 3:10-12; Ecc. 12:13; etc.). Friend, how are you dying? Are you dying with bitterness, evil-speaking, dishonesty, and a life away from the Father? Or, are you dying “in the Lord” (Rev. 14:13)? Are you dying with the Lord as your shepherd (Ps. 23)?

The beauty of nature around us is clearly seen, even as the leaves slowly die. Spiritually, what beauty are we adding to this world while we die? More than this, are you ready to leave this world, should that happen today? Paul wrote, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is it hand” (II Tim. 4:6). Can we say the same (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38)? Do folks look at us and see a beautiful death?

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*