

“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Mark chapter 12 verse 27

Death is not, generally speaking, pretty. Physical bodies were made to live. We want to live. Something in us resists death. Even when we believe that the passing of physical life is not the end, we generally have a strong instinct to fight against death.

When Jesus came to the tomb of his friend Lazarus, people were mourning his passing, even though they believed that he would rise again on the last day, and Jesus himself wept, even though he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead there and then. Jesus did not welcome his own death, even asking his Father if it was possible that he might not have to suffer it.

According to the Bible, death is not even natural for human beings. People were made to live. Death came into the world when people rebelled against God's authority and care over their lives.

But speaking to the Saducees, a Jewish sect who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, Jesus declares that God is the God of the ancient patriarchs of Israel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because of their trust in God, Jesus is saying, although their mortal bodies have been dead for many hundreds of years, yet they still live. The death of their bodies was not even an interruption of their lives, but simply a passing from a physical condition appropriate to living in a physical world to a spiritual one able to inhabit eternity.

The apostle Paul also takes this view. He says “we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. Therefore, whether we are at home (with God) or away (still here on earth), we make it our aim to be pleasing to him.”

No one welcomes death, of course. We do not know the time, place or circumstances of our deaths, and we do not want our loved ones to grieve, and nor do we want to lose loved ones ourselves. God also does not delight in the death of anyone, but would rather that people turn to him and live. But he, too, knows that the way to eternal life in his presence is through the gates of death. Hence we have the reassuring words of Psalm 23 to encourage us throughout this life and beyond; “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.”

## Prayer

Father, thank you that life and death are in your hands, and that you see death as no more than a passing from one kind of life to another. By faith in your Son Jesus, we live in the hope and expectation that when this life is done we will enjoy eternity with you. We pray that when our time is over in this world we will face our passing in peace and with faith. Help us also to share this hope in Jesus with those who do not know him. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*