



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	An Appointment with Death	SPEAKER	Dr Victor Wong
THEME	Critical Concerns Beyond the Souls of Man	DATE	14 & 15 Sep 2024

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Everyone will face death, and dying can be a meaningful and transformative event for us if we approach it in the right way. Death is the destiny of every man and we should take this to heart (Ecc 7:2).

Reasons for a Living Funeral

Dr Victor shared that when he turned 50 years old, he came up with a Jubilee Checklist which contained 50 things he would engage in. On that list, the most significant item to organize was his own living funeral. A living funeral meant that he would invite his family and friends to his own funeral where he would be able to hear all the eulogies of his friends. This event was radical, inciting interest for some people and criticism from others. However, it was a good trigger event to enable his congregation and their family to talk about death and how it would impact their family. It caused people to be self-reflective to ask if they were indeed ready for their own deaths.

1) THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME TO DIE

We will either die suddenly or gradually. Either way, time is of the essence. Sudden death will cause the deceased and the family to be reactive, because there is not enough time to think, make decisions and process their emotions. On the other hand, for gradual death, priority becomes the main perspective, and the family will have the chance to prioritize the best things to do over the good things in life. Life is a race against time, only if you have done the important things in life. We should live our life appreciating the memorable moments with our loved ones, being fully present in the now. Sadly, time is always shorter than the important activities in our lives.

2) WHY NOT A LIVING FUNERAL?

Dr Victor shared that at his living funeral. He got to see who was willing to attend His funeral! In addition, he got to appreciate and thank those who came. He got to choose the arrangements of the funeral. For those attending, they did not have to bring any money and buy any wreaths. In addition, his parents and siblings got a chance to be surprised by the events which took place at his living funeral. The mood would not be too solemn. The effects of his friends and family attending his living funeral would be that they now had a life-time to appreciate him with meals, gifts and encouraging words. The ultimate and most significant impact on those who attended would be that it would trigger a personal reflection of their own funeral. Dr Victor also concluded that the best of him is yet to be.

The average person who is without Faith, God and Hope is engaged in a desperate search throughout his life-time. He does not know where he has been, what he is doing, or where he is going. Sadly, he is also doing all these on borrowed time, money and strength. On top of this, there is also the inevitable conclusion that he will surely die, and he has lost God in the process. Yet, Man was made to worship God, but in the process of losing God, he had lost light in his mind, love in his heart and is found stumbling through this dark world with death at the end.

3) HOW DO I WANT MY FUNERAL TO BE?

Dr Victor shared that after he had conducted his only living funeral, he concluded that for his real funeral he wanted it to be with own family with private times to grieve over his death, laugh over his memories, and treasure up the last moments together. His spiritual children will also get together to know each other. They will play icebreakers together, look at photographs, and they will share about the good times they had together. His ashes would be scattered or taken home by his loved ones. A private funeral would allow his family to be real without the constraints of time, programme or pressure to perform. They could enjoy their time together without worrying about entertaining guests. A private funeral for the family allowed for last memories together as a family to be cherished for a long time.

CONCLUSION

When we engage with the reality of death and the impact of it upon our lives, we will be awakened to a new perspective of living. We are reminded of Psalms 39, where the psalmist reminds us that life is fleeting, everyone is just a breath and our only hope is in God. God also planned his own death through the death of Jesus Christ, his only son. Are you ready for your own death? Have you appreciated someone dear to you? Have you released forgiveness? Have you settled your debts and assets? What is the most precious possession you are leaving behind? Have you accepted Jesus into your life?

QUESTIONS

1. What are the top ten activities which you would like to do before you die? Share also the reasons for choosing these activities.

2. Are you prepared for your death in terms of relationships, debts, assets and possessions? Have you accepted Jesus into your life and how ready are you to meet Jesus?

3. What is the kind of spiritual legacy you wish to leave behind when you die and how are you currently building that?