

**FRISTON BAPTIST CHURCH
MILL ROAD, FRISTON, SAXMUNDHAM
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October 2006

To the church's neighbours in and around Friston, and also our personal neighbours in and about Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham.

Dear neighbours,

"If a man (or a woman, or a boy, or a girl) die, shall he live again?" (Job 14.14)

The passionate answer of the Bible is YES.

The most certain thing about life is death. It is the very thing we most hate to think of. But we must. Bear with me, and I will try and show you a way without hurt.

Job says, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job 14.14-15).

The apostle Paul says, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15.54). He also reminds us about the Lord Jesus Christ:- "Forasmuch...as the children (that's us) are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise himself took part of (in) the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2. 14-15).

We must look at death positively like that. What we must never do is to forget about it till it happens.

I know that some of you may bin this letter. Some of you may not even have got this far. But I hope there are some who would love to be done with the fear of death. I address this letter to you with all my heart.

Can it really happen that I should have life after death? Yes. Jesus rose from the dead. Can it really be true? The best thing to do is to read the Bible accounts, say John 20.1-10. Clearly the disciples were not expecting it because, though Jesus had spoken of his resurrection, it had not sunk in; so far were the disciples from stealing Jesus' body, as has been alleged (Matthew 27. 63-64).

Even before He died, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead saying "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11). Lazarus subsequently died – it was but a temporary respite, not because Jesus couldn't have made his life on earth permanent, but because it was not desirable. It was intended as a proof that Jesus had power over death.

If for Lazarus, why not for me? That is, can it really happen that I should have life after death? Lazarus was a dear friend of the Lord Jesus Christ. But you may become a dear friend of the Lord Jesus Christ, too; and Jesus, too, will be your friend.

How can that happen? Do you remember the words (John 3.16) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"?

"Whosoever" is so all-embracing as to include you and me. Whosoever believeth!

Putting all your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is the entrance into all these things. Of course, putting your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ means that you put your trust in all that He taught and stands for. A disciple cannot be above his master, especially when that teacher is Christ (Matthew 10. 24-25). Especially that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23). God requires perfection, and we cannot produce it. It would be an impasse, except that God has given the Lord Jesus Christ who, as a perfect man, had no sin and did actually produce perfection in every aspect of His life.

Therefore, His death is an atonement for the sins of everyone who believes in Him. Whatever the sin. However often repeated. Upon repentance through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He merits heaven and its eternal life; we don't. But He has made His death a substitution for the death of every believer who comes to Him in repentance. God sees that Jesus Christ has paid the penalty of their sins and does not demand payment twice.

There is no fear in death once the torment of the judgment which follows is removed. There may be pain and the heartbreak of parting, but the major instinctive fear is removed. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (Hebrews 9. 27-28). "Come unto me," says Jesus, "and I will give you... rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11. 28-30)

You may be a young person reading this on the internet. The best time to settle the whole matter of death in your mind is when you are young. I was 16. It has become fundamental to all my thinking; a bedrock of all subsequent thought. I have never regretted having this firm foundation in Christ. I have thoroughly tested it against all the varying events of my life and I am now 71.

So central is this to true faith that Paul says that those who reject it judge themselves to be "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13.46). Whereas Jesus says "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead...are equal unto the angels; and are as the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20.35-36). And, when the final day comes and Jesus returns (Luke 21.25-38) "ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21.36).

The church has a website; www.fristonbaptistsuffolk.org We hope that many of you will browse there. You will find these letters, dating back for a year. A 60-second gospel plea. One or two articles. Details of our services. Series of sermons on audio. There is much there to excite interest in spiritual things and to arouse faith.

Our services are open to all; on Sundays at 1045 and 1400hrs and Tuesdays at 1930hrs.

Yours sincerely,