

EPITAPHS GOD WROTE

Gal. 6:7

INTRO: Sometimes I like to take a walk into the silent city of the dead. It is almost deathly quiet. When viewing the grave makers, you may wonder what the person looked like, what they did for a living, how hard a life they had, etc. Most of the time you wonder if they were Christians. The only light you can receive is the short epitaphs written by men.

As we read, it may be difficult to realize that one day someone will read our epitaph. Life is so short. It is like a vapor. James 4:14. Like a flower. 1 Pet. 1:24. Death is so certain. Heb. 9:27. We are somewhat concerned what man may say about us after death, but far more important is what will God write?

I. THE CUSTOM OF EPITAPHS CHANGE.

- A. Tombstones once contained some statement of the person's life and some verse of Scripture or poetry. Usually this writing expressed hope for the departed loved one.
- B. Nowadays there are usually just the name and dates of the birth and death of the individual.

II. GOOD EPITAPHS WRITTEN BY GOD.

The Bible contains many epitaphs; let us notice the good ones first.

- A. "Went about doing good." Acts 10:38. Written about Jesus. How wonderful. Would God write this about you or me? Are we too selfish to go about doing good? Jesus healed and helped.
- B. "Full of good works." Acts 9:36. Dorcas has a wonderful epitaph. She worked that which was good to help others; works that had a lasting effect. The evidence was garments and alms-deeds. Acts 9:39. How will ours read?
- C. "Good man." Acts 11:24. How many of us will have these things said about us as Barnabas did?
- D. "Walked with God." Gen. 5:24. How close he must have lived. Also Heb. 11:5.
- E. "Being dead yet speaketh." Heb. 11:4. So obedient was Abel that his life still speaks. How will our life read when we are gone?
- F. "Asleep in Christ." 1 Cor. 15:17-18. These died faithful; such have hope in the resurrection. A heavenly body will be resurrected. Heaven awaits these. How will our epitaph read?
- G. "Well done." Matt. 25:21. The man with five talents used them well and was rewarded. How are we using our talent?
- H. "Kept the faith." 2 Tim. 4:6-8. Paul was faithful until death. He will receive the crown. Look at all he went through. Will it be said of us?

III. GOD WROTE BAD EPITAPHS AS WELL AS GOOD.

- A. "Betrayed Him." Matt. 26:25. Judas.

- B. "Sinned willfully." Heb. 10:26. Man can turn away from God, he can reach the place that he can so willfully sin and be hardened that repentance is not possible. He is not effective any longer.
- C. "Forsaken the right way." 2 Pet. 2:15. Here are the epitaphs on the tombstones of those that are bondservants of corruption. How horrible to leave the right way after knowing it. How will yours read?
- D. "Left first love." Rev. 2:4. This is the trouble with many congregations; we lose that which first pushed us to really serve.
- E. "Loved present world." 2 Tim. 4:10. Demas forsook Paul, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the brethren. The love of the world was too strong. How will your epitaph read?
- F. "Obeyed not the gospel." 2 Thess. 1:7-9. Will you live a lifetime without obeying? Will this be your epitaph?
- G. "Repented not." Rev. 2:21. The church of Thyatira would not repent. How true of many of us today. Nothing can move us to repentance.

IV. HOW WILL YOUR EPITAPH READ?

- A. God wants us to have a good one. Rev. 2:10.
- B. The goodness of God leads us to a good end. Rom. 2:4.
- C. We will reap as we sow. Gal. 6:7.

CONCL: If you were to leave this life in your current condition, and someone took a walk in the cemetery and flashed a light on your tombstone, what would your epitaph read?