

Death is a gateway to an eternal existence with God

By the Rev. Harold Pritt

Editor Jim Haught's perspective about dying was a good, open, honest insight into his very personal views about the most significant event of human life — the end of it and, what then?

I share his age bracket. I am 85, having lived all of my adult life in the Charleston area. We are at that age where, statistically, our time to leave is soon upon us.

I have been a Christian for over 60 years, and reading the Bible, believing what God has told us about life, death, life after death and how to achieve peace of mind and soul about eternal matters, has brought me to the place that I anticipate death as my gateway to an eternal existence with a heightened sense of being and purpose in the presence of the Creator of the Universe and Savior of my soul.

Humanly speaking, I dread the deathly transition, but what lies beyond blots out the possible pain and anguish associated with the body dying.

Since the evidence for God, the Bible, Christianity, Jesus Christ and His power and grace is so overwhelming, I thoroughly enjoy discussing these issues.

Haught's expectations seem to be that, regardless of what you have done or not done, believed or not believed, your best hope is obliteration, simply ceasing to exist. It is

truly a hopeless expectation.

My expectation is the moment my spirit leaves this body, I will be in the presence of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, Creator and Sustainer of the universe. I do not have a "hope so" expectation but a "know-so" faith as I recall the words of Job, the oldest book of the Bible: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth. And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

What this hope does is to give peace and joy in the soul that cannot be obtained by human endeavor or from any other source than from God Himself, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Most people have heard or read all of the Christian claims about eternal life and how to attain it. And there are many groups claiming exclusive knowledge of eternal life, some are called branches of Christianity.

At this point in Haught's life,

God has graciously allowed him to maintain mental capacity, ability to think, reason and act upon conclusions. The key issue is will. God has given us the right to choose. The original sin was when the first man, Adam, deliberately chose to listen to Satan's lie and disobey God. In other words, he yielded his will to Satan rather than to God, in spite of the fact that God told him that when he disobeyed Him and ate the forbidden fruit, he would die — and he did, spiritually; he lost his contact with God. The fruit itself had no effect on Adam; the act of disobedience did.

God so loved His creation, man, that He found a way to redeem him through His Son, Jesus Christ, paying the penalty of his disobedience on the cross.

God declares through the Bible over and over again, that if man will now believe, accept what God has done to save him, yield his will to God, which Adam did not, God will forgive his sins, save his soul from eternal darkness, and give him

eternal life in God's kingdom.

There is no simpler truth in all the universe. Simply yield your will to God, trust Him for your soul salvation and He will give you a far better expectation than extinction.

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