

## THE GREATEST TRAGEDY

### Int.

1. Aim: To show some things that are not really the greatest tragedies and to point out that sin of which we do not repent is the greatest tragedy.
2. Matt. 26:24 "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! **it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**"
2. What is the greatest tragedy ? - disastrous event, calamity, misfortune
  - A. Depends upon our age
    - (1) Child - losing a toy
    - (2) Teenager - losing a boy friend ro girl friend - or losing a ball game
    - (3) Adult - losing home in fire
  - B. Values change as we mature
3. What is the greatest tragedy that happen to a human being ?

### Discussion

## I. THESE ARE NOT THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES

### A. Physical Death

1. Acts 21:13 "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
2. Phil. 1:21-22 "For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain. 22 But if I live in the flesh, this [is] the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not."
 

Phil 1:21 (NKJV) For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain. 22 But if [I] live on in the flesh, this [will] [mean] fruit from [my] labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

3. II Tim. 4:6-8 - Paul fought a good fight and death was not a tragedy to him
4. Rev. 2:10 "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life."
5. Rev. 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord** from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
6. Physical death is not the greatest tragedy that can happen because for a Christian death is a blessing !

## B. Physical Poverty

1. Jesus did not have much, material goods - Lk. 9:58 "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air [have] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his] head."
2. Paul said in Phil. 4:11-12 "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
3. Wealth is a greater danger than poverty
  - a. 1 Tim. 6:6-11
  - b. It is reported that Howard Hughes, when worth approximately 4 billion dollars, said, "I'd give it all for one good friend."
  - c. People who have material goods trust in these things and feel self sufficient

- d. In 1975, six armed gunmen broke into the deposit boxes in a London bank and stole valuables worth more than \$7 million. One lady, whose jewelry was appraised at \$500,000, wailed, **"Everything I had was in there. My whole life was in that box."** What a sad commentary on her values!
  - e. Luke 6:24 **"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation."**
4. People in poverty generally have a greater sense of trusting in God and will be obedient to His will. So poverty is not the greatest tragedy.

### C. Physical Disease

1. Paul had a thorn in the flesh - 2 Cor. 12:7-10
  - a. Not sure what it was - bad eyesight has been suggested
  - b. But this was not a great tragedy in the life of Paul
  - c. This "thorn in the flesh" he says was to keep him humble
  - d. He asked the Lord to remove this "thorn" but instead he learned
  - e. 2 Cor. 12:9-10 **"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."**
2. Job. 13:15 **"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him."**
3. Physical disease is not the greatest tragedy that we can experience.

## D. Loss of Loved Ones

1. Job Lost all of his family -
  - a. He was a "perfect and upright" man and one that feared God
  - b. Job 1:1 (NKJV) "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name [was] Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."
  - c. Had 7 sons and 3 daughters - they were all killed at the same time - 1:18
  - d. Job. 1:22 Job 1:22 (NKJV) "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."
2. Mary and Martha - lost their brother Lazarus - "Jesus Wept" Jn. 11:35
3. Losing a loved one is not the greatest tragedy that happen to us.

## E. Sin

1. It is God's will that we not sin - 1 John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"
2. Examples of Sins:
  - a. Adultery
    - (1) David forgiven - 2 Sam. 11-12
    - (2) John 8:1-11 - go and sin no more
  - b. Lying
    - (1) David lied to Uriah - 2 Sam. 11
    - (2) Peter lied - even cursed - yet he was forgiven Mt. 26:69

## c. Murder

(1) He had Uriah Killed - but David was forgiven - 2 Sam. 11 & 12

(2) Jews were forgiven for the murder of Jesus - Acts 2:23 "...ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

## d. Denial of Jesus

(1) Peter denied, even cursed

(2) Other apostles did the same

## e. Betrayal

(1) Judas - Mat. 26:47-50

(2) This is not the greatest tragedy

## II. COMPARISON OF TRAGEDY IN LIFE OF JUDAS AND LIFE OF PETER

### A. Good in Judas

1. Disciple of Jesus

2. Very special disciple - apostle

a. Chose 12 best men

b. Was not a devil from the beginning

c. He became something which he was not before

3. Allowed evil to get into his life

a. John 12:4-6 - criticized - "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas I scariot, Simon's [son], which should betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

b. Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver - Matt. 26:47-50

B. Peter - he was a disciple and apostle

1. Jesus Told Peter that Satan desired to have him - Lk. 22:31 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired [to have] you, that he may sift [you] as wheat:"
2. Peter said he would never deny - Mat. 26:35 "Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples."
3. But Peter did deny the Lord - Matt. 26:69-75 V. 74 "Then began he to curse and to swear, [saying], I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew."
4. Jesus Looked upon Peter
  - a. Lk. 22:61-62 "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."
  - b. He wept
  - c. Have you ever looked in the eye of someone you have done wrong?

### III. WHICH IS CHRIST MOST WILLING TO FORGIVE ? Peter or Judas

#### A. Peter - John 21:15-17

1. He had denied the Lord 3 times
2. Here Jesus asked him 3 times if he loved Him
  - a. John 21:15 "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."
    - (1) Jesus used the word for love "Agapao" - a strong term indicating strong devotion of a high order.
    - (2) When Peter replied he used the word "phileo" - a word denoting the humbler, warmer emotion growing out of kinship or close association.
  - b. John 21:16 "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep."
    - (1) Jesus again used the word Agapao for the word Love
    - (2) Peter in his reply again chose the warmer, more humble word "phileo". He will not claim more than deep affection for the Savior. - his boastful claim to a commitment superior to others is gone
  - c. John 21:17 "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

- (1) This time Jesus used the same word for love that Peter had been using. He was saying. "Do you really have the warm, close, personal and abiding affection for me that you claim? Have you forgotten that you stood afar off and even denied that you knew me?"
  - (2) Peter was cut to the heart and he was overwhelmed with grief. He no doubt remembers that night when he denied the Lord !
  - (3) Now he says: "Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."  
- here Peter also used the word "Phileo"
3. Three times Peter denied the Lord; three times the Lord required him to reaffirm his love. This helped Peter to become committed and he became one of the most courageous and faithful disciples the Lord ever had.

#### B. Judas

1. Brought the money back
2. Matt. 27:3 "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,"
3. Matt. 27:4-5 "Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What [is that] to us? see thou [to that]. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."
4. Acts 1:15-20 - He committed suicide when he realized what he had done.

C. The Greatest tragedy is to sin and not repent !

1. Judas regretted that he had sinned but he did not have godly sorrow
2. Instead of going back to the Lord he went out and hanged himself

D. Application

1. 1 John 1:8-10 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
  - a. We all sin - we all make mistakes - we are not perfect
  - b. But we must not continue in our sin
  - c. Here he mentions that we must confess our sins - admit or acknowledge that we have sinned
  - d. What is it that causes us to be willing to confess our sins?
2. Godly Sorrow
  - a. 2 Cor. 7:9-10 "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
    - b. Godly sorrow - means we are sorry that we have disobeyed and disappointed God because of the sins that we have committed.
    - c. Repentance - a changed heart that results in a changed life
    - d. This leads to salvation
    - e. But the sorrow of the world leads to death

E. This is the difference between Peter and Judas

1. Judas had worldly sorrow - sorry that he got caught - instead of going back to the Lord he hanged himself
2. Peter had godly sorrow - that lead to repentance and forgiveness

### **Conclusion**

1. What is the greatest tragedy that happen to a human being?
2. It is not: Physical Death, Physical poverty , Physical disease, Loss of a loved one, Sin
3. But it is to sin and not repent of it -
  - a. Not to have godly sorrow that leads to repentance that brings salvation.
  - b. The greatest of all the tragedies is to lose our soul !!!
4. Remember the verse at the beginning: Matt. 26:24 "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."
  - a. Jesus was talking about Judas - v. 21-23
  - b. V. 25 - "Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, thou hast said."
  - c. Not long after this Judas betrayed Christ - and then he refused to repent and went out and hanged himself - The greatest Tragedy !! To lose our soul !
5. Heb. 9:27
  - a. Some day it will be over for us ! How tragic it will be if you are in a lost condition !
  - b. Are you a Christian ? Is your soul in a saved condition? Will you repent ?
6. God wants all of us to be saved? 2 Pet. 3:9