

# How to Snatch Life from the Jaws of Death



**Ecclesiastes 9:1-12**

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On Monday night, my oldest boy went to a friend's to watch a football game. It's the night before school is about to start back so it's still holiday, the day after New Year's Day. So my other boys say, "Can we stay a little bit? How about we watch the football game?" Now, my boys really don't like NFL at all, they are basketball fans. So I say, "You are just stalling because you don't want to go bed?" They say, "Yeah, but can we watch it?" So we turn on the Bills/Bengal game and we are kind of staring at it for a second, and it's a very strange scene...instead of football players on the field, there's an ambulance on the field. I immediately know we were just tuning in when something really bad had just happened. So we are trying to piece together what happened and we are seeing that Damar Hamlin (I didn't know who that was), there's been a hit, something had happened, and he's on a stretcher. We can see all the players on the field and you can see the look on their faces, like this might not go well, like things are not at a good spot. My kids start asking me what happened. I assumed that there

was a targeting play, that there's some really, really bad hit that happened and that is why a football player would be on a stretcher. Now, I don't really want to show them what happened, so I kind of play it off while looking on YouTube trying to see this hit. I wasn't even sure I wanted to watch this because I can imagine this is just brutal. But I watch it and it's just a football play—Damar is actually the one who tackled the guy and it was just a normal hit. I mean, yes, I would have probably died in that moment, but not him, right? He's perfectly capable to take that hit, but all of a sudden, he gets up and then just immediately collapses. There is something about watching his body just collapse on national TV, looking like he just died, it was an eerie feeling for me. I mean, we are going to watch a little football and now all of a sudden we are looking at possible death, and so my kids are asking what happened. So I am showing it to them because it really wasn't a crazy hit, nothing really that wrong. But it was just sort of a freak, accident, a freak moment, where this football player who's twenty-four, in really good shape, makes a normal play, takes a normal hit, and then all of a sudden he's on a stretcher in the middle of the field...and it's just eerie quiet. They go over to the commentators and nobody knows what to do, nobody knows what to say, except for we need to pray, all we can do is pray. Then you saw the whole football team, and collectively, all the coaches, all the analyst, all the news people, everybody—we just need to pray. Crider was texting me, "Dad, are you seeing this? What's happening? Is he alive? Is he dead?" I said, "I don't know. I just have this bad feeling this is probably not going to go well but we just need to pray." In that moment, everybody who is watching the game, or who was seeing it on social media, or getting texts about what was happening, were all being confronted to the reality that death is coming, for everyone. We are all mortal. We are all going to die. If a twenty-four-year-old top of his game, football player, can all the sudden go from life is good to I might die—everybody sort of took a gasp and thought about our own mortality, our own death. In other words, if he could be close to death then so could we.

That is what the writer of Ecclesiastes is going to take us to that same spot in chapter 9—we are all going to die. Death is actually coming for you. Now, praise God, for Damar Hamlin God showed up and answered prayer

and he's doing good. He's on the way to recovery, but it caused a moment this whole week where we all grappled with that we are going to die. As we look in face of death, how do we respond to that? How do we respond to our own coming death? Well, Solomon would want us to look at our own death and to snatch life from the jaws of death. Think about that word play 'snatching life from the jaws of death.' We get that from a sports term of to snatch victory from the jaws of death. Meaning, there's no way we are going to win, and then all of a sudden, there's a Hail Mary pass at the last second, a crazy comeback, and the team snatches victory from the jaws of defeat. Well, that's what Solomon's going to do for us. He's going to take us to that place to see our own death. We are doomed. We are going to die. There's nothing you can do about it. But then all of a sudden, like a last second shot in the midst of our death, we are going to snatch life from death, and we are not going to sulk about our death but we are going to celebrate our life. Right now, in this moment, because we are going to die, we are going to celebrate today as a gift from God, and we are going to live it to the fullest. That's what Solomon wants us to do. So let's look at our own death. I know, it's going to be a great sermon, right? We are all going to die. Point two...we are going to die. Point three...we are going to die. Alright, here we go.

## **Scripture**

***"For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them."***

So we are going to die. That's point one. We can only go up from here, right, so what we are going to do is grab life from the jaws of death. Yes, we are going to die—but your greatest enemy—I want it to point as to your greatest hero, who is Jesus, so that you can in death actually experience life. But not eternal life, life right now in connection with Jesus. The first thing we see when we talk about death is the problem of sovereignty. I don't know about you, but I love the fact that God is in control of all things. I love the sovereignty of God. It comforts me. I can go to bed at night and know that I am not in charge of the world or my life or

my kids' lives; God is. That brings comfort to me. I don't want to be in control because I would blow it. I would not make good decisions. If the world were up to me, it would be a really bad place. But I can rest because God is in control, so I take comfort in that.

But Solomon is going to say God's sovereignty also poses a problem. Let's just read his words about the problem of sovereignty. Verse 1 says, "But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God." So, all of our deeds, our very life, are in the hand of God. That's speaking to His sovereignty and His control. He has control over your life. God has the whole world in His hands! That's a good thought, but then Solomon says, "Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him." So God has your life in His hands. All of your deeds, everything that's happened to you, they are in God's hands, but Solomon says if that's true, then we really don't know if He loves us or if He hates us. That's his conclusion...if God is in control of this, I am confused because I don't know if He likes me or doesn't like me. He's dealing with the reality of the world. Because you have lived longer than a day, you know that life is filled with ups and downs. Maybe this week was awesome and everything went great, and it was perfect. Maybe this week was terrible for you. But that's how life goes...it's good and it's bad. You have an amazing day and the next morning you wake up to that text message that informs you about this thing that happened, and then your whole week is just shot. Tragic events happen, a diagnosis, a death, something horrific happens, and then all of a sudden, you have a problem with God's sovereignty. Now, you are thinking...*okay God, if you are in control, if you are the one controlling this, if you are holding my life, all of a sudden I got this??* What he's saying is if God is in control of all things, if He's in control of your life, then here's what you can't really know—if He loves you or if He hates you—because it's a mixed bag of ups and downs. Sometimes, your world is great; sometimes it's really, really bad.

So what's the point? Solomon is trying to say by looking at the world that God controls, you can't answer the question of does God love you or not? The thing about providence and the thing about sovereignty is you can't really know who's righteous and unrighteous by looking at the events that

happen in people's lives. Good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people. It's not based on if you are really good you are going to get good things. We would think that, right? If God's in control of the world, then if I do good I should get good. If my neighbor does bad, he should get bad. But many times, I'm doing good and I'm getting bad, and he's doing bad and he's getting good. So, it doesn't make sense that if God controls, if we are in His hands, we can't really tell if He loves us or not, because guess what? Even if you love God, bad things are going to happen to you, and the reason is because we live in a fallen world. We live in a world that is a cursed and broken world. So, you can't know if God loves you or if He hates you based on the circumstances that happen to you.

Do you know how you tell if God loves you or not? You look at the cross of Christ. In other words, you don't look at the world and ask how is my life going...does God love me? You look at the cross of Christ, and the cross of Christ tells you God loves you. Despite what happens to you, despite how your career is going, or your relationships are going, or the size of your house, God loves you because He's demonstrated it on the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ says for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. So we don't ask the question 'does God love' me based on how the world is, we ask the question 'does God love me' based on the cross of Christ. And the answer is yes, God loves you. He sent Christ to die for you, and if you will repent and believe in Him, you will come under His good love. So with the sovereignty of God, the problem is if God's in control then His children should get all good things, but that's not how the world works. The world is not supposed to show you God's love; it's the cross of Christ that is meant to show you how God loves.

So, the first problem we have is with sovereignty, the second problem we have is with death itself, and this is what Solomon wrestles with. Not only is God in control, but everyone dies, even the good and the bad, just alike they all die. Verses 2-3 say, "It is the same for all, since the same event [death] happens to the righteous and the wicked..." so we have these groups of people, one person and then the person who contrast that person, "...to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who

does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all.” So here's Solomon's problem with death—not only in life should good people get good things, but often good people also get storms and catastrophes and fires, and all the rest. That’s how the world works. It's not if we are good you get good. It's a mixed bag because living a broken world—but also, death comes to everyone. Death does not discriminate. It doesn't matter if we are good or evil, if we are righteous, or a rebel. It doesn't matter if you make sacrifices or not.

That is the imagery of religion. People are going to temple and making sacrifices, so it makes sense they should live longer and better than those who are not making sacrifices, right? If God's in control of the cosmos, the one who sacrifices should get a little benefit but it doesn't always work like that. It would make sense that those of you who came to church on a Sunday morning rather than just going for a bike ride on a Sunday morning because you don't care about church, should have longer and better lives. Right? We should have a little less wrinkles. Life should just go better. But Solomon says that is not how it happens. It doesn't matter if go to church on Sunday or you go fishing on Sunday. It doesn't really matter—you are going to die. That same event happens to everybody, to the good and the bad, those who try hard, those who don't try at all. Death is coming.

The reason death is coming because there's actually a problem with humanity. Solomon says this in verse 3, “Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.” The reason we all die is because there's actually a problem with us, and the problem is our own sin. Solomon can just see it. He’s in charge of a kingdom so he can look out and see how people behave, and he knows his own heart. He concludes that when it comes to humanity we have wicked hearts. We have maddening hearts. We do things we shouldn't. We do things we *know* we shouldn't do. We even tell ourselves not to do those things and then we go and do those very things. We have wicked hearts. So death comes to all of us because inside of us, we have wicked hearts and our wicked hearts deserve death. That's why death is coming to all of us and that's why, by the way, we all

need a redemption in Jesus Christ. Because we have wicked hearts, we need someone to save us. That is that great imagery. Think about Ezekiel. What's the image of salvation? God's going to take your heart of stone out and give your heart of flesh. The image of the New Testament is you become a new creation. You are born again. You get a new nature like God's nature. The redemption is God deals with our wicked maddening hearts, and by repenting and believing in Christ, we get new hearts. So, it's pointing to humanity. We are wicked, we don't love the Lord, and we are self-centered. Even in our goodness, it is oozing with self-centeredness. I'm doing what I want to do for my own glory, and therefore the penalty is death. And we are all going to die, that's why we need a redemption from our wicked hearts. The redemption is found in the Lord Jesus who will rescue us by His death and resurrection.

So, we have the problem with humanity, we are all wicked and we need Christ, but then we are going to see there's a hope in life. So, we are all going to die but there's actually a hope for those of us who are still alive, and it's going to be interesting hope. Here's what Solomon says is his great hope in life—at least those who are alive know they are going to die. That's his great hope...*Hey guess what? I've got some hope! If we are alive, the good news you can understand we are going to die.* That doesn't sound like much hope, does it? But that's his conclusion. Here's what he says, verses 4–6, “But he who is joined with all the living has hope...” Alright, so he's dealing with death and now we have the living. We have life. We have hope. Okay, what is our hope? “...for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For [here's the reason] the living know they will die...” That's our hope. That's why it's better to be alive than dead...because alive people know they are going to die. He goes on, “...but the dead know nothing, they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.”

That's kind of an odd hope...it's better to be alive; I know life seems like it's not that great because we are going to die, but it's better to be alive than to be dead. In fact, it has the imagery of a dog and a lion. See, in ancient days they didn't love dogs like we love dogs. I have a

Goldendoodle named Grizzly. She gets to get on the couch, she gets to go anywhere in our house, she eats food off the table, she is part of our family. In the ancient world, that was not true with dogs. They would get sticks to chase dogs off. They were not welcomed pets. They despised dogs. So Solomon is kind of saying you don't want to be alive because you are just going to die, but then he says life, though, is better than death just as a dog is better than a lion. Now, lion is of course way better than a dog, but if the lion is dead then the dog actually beats the lion. So it's better to be a living dog than a dead lion.

So even though death is coming, it's better to be alive, but why? Why is it better to be alive than it is to be dead? He said it's better to be alive for this reason—there's hope, and the hope is that you know we are going to die. The dead don't have that knowledge...they don't know they are going to die because they are already dead and all of their memories have vanished. Everything they worked for is gone. They don't know they are going to die, so it's better for us who are living because at least we know we are going to die. I don't know about you but that doesn't sound very hopeful to me. I should be happy about my life, that I'm not dead yet, and my hope is that I know that I'm going to die soon? That doesn't seem very hopeful. So why would that be Solomon's hope? Why would that be our hope? Because what he's going to try to get us to see is if we will understand our death properly, it will lead to a new kind of life. That if we would truly see and face our death, that from knowing we are going to die, we can actually have hope in this life, and we can actually live it to the fullest.

Think about the New Testament perspective of this. How good is it to be alive? It's because we know we are going to die. You have that knowledge that you are going to die, but the New Testament would come in and say that also in death there is judgement. Hebrews says it's appointed for man to die once and then comes judgment. So not only do you know you are going to die, but you know there's a judgement coming. Now, you are saying how is that hopeful? How should I be happy, because I know I'm going die and I know I'm going to be judged? It's because we also know what the gospel is. We know what John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the



world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.” See, we know we are going to die, we know we are going to be judged, but here's other information that we know as New Testament people—we know that Christ swallowed up death by His death. We know that He died and rose again, so when we believe in Him, we are not just going to die and that be the end, but actually in our death, it's going to be a gateway into our future. Death is not the end of our story because our greatest enemy, death, is going to show us our greatest hero, who is ultimately Jesus Christ. By believing in Him, we will pass through our death into life forever with Him. So Solomon says it's hopeful to be alive because you know we are going to die. But Jesus will come in and say it's really hopeful if we are alive because not only do you know you are going to die but you know through the gospel that there's life past the grave in His name.

Let's just pause and ask the question, do you have hope in life right now? Is your hope in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you truly repented and believed in Him so that you know when you die you are going to go through judgement because you have already passed through judgement at the cross of Christ? And that your sins have been forgiven and you will live with God forever when you die? That's a really important thing that God wants us to wrestle with this morning. Solomon kind of brings up the question and then we answer it with the New Testament. You are alive, you know you are going to die; do you have the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now Solomon makes a really odd transition—and the odd transition is because you are going to die, rejoice. Because you are going to die, be happy. The application is because you are going to die, in light of death enjoy your life. I mean, that kind of sounds strange, right? Solomon said we are all going to die, and now he says be really happy and joyful and go rejoice. He is saying in light of your death, rejoice. In light of your death, live to the fullest. We kind of get that, right? Like Damar Hamlin, he's probably a little bit different today, right? I haven't talked to him but I have read his Twitter and he's very thankful and grateful to God in prayer. The roses smell a little bit different today. Why? Because maybe before he thought I'm twenty-four and I have my whole life ahead of me, and all of a

sudden, wait, I might not. Every day is different. When you look at death in the eye, when you see your greatest enemy, it will lead you to your greatest hero, and it will cause you to actually live your life to the fullest. So here are some applications on how to live your life to the fullest.

1. Enjoy good things.

Verses 7–8 say, "Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head." We are all going to die, go be joyful, that's his transition, that's his application. In light of your death, be happy, rejoice. In other words, grab life from the jaws of death. Knowing we are going to die, go live. When you eat and drink, do it with joy and a merry heart, for God is approving what you do. I think that approval is of your joy and your merry heart in these mundane things of life, like food and drink. You should be excited and rejoice. They are good things. He says put on your white garment, put on your oil. Now, that's different than sackcloth and ashes. If we are talking about death, death comes with sackcloth and ashes. That's what ancient people would do. If they know they are going to die or if they are going to a funeral, they put on sackcloth and ashes and they cry a lot, they mourn a lot. He is saying in light of your death don't dress in your funeral attire, go put on your party suit. Put on white. Put on a little perfume. Go and live. Be excited about life even though you know you are going to die. Enjoy good things. Have joy. Have a merry heart. I think we push back a little bit on that because I think, just unsaid, we think religious people should be unhappy. It's like if you are going to be holy, you better frown a lot because if we are happy, that has to be worldly, like we are doing something wrong. If you are happy you are sinful, and if you are sad then you are somehow godly. That's not how the Bible presents life. That's not what God wants for us. God actually takes pleasure in our pleasure. He wants us to rejoice. He wants us to be happy. He is giving you good gifts and He wants you to rejoice in those good gifts.

My little girl, Evie Kate, has been wanting a bike for a while. She outgrew her little one and she's want a bigger one. We had a little Christmas money, a little birthday money, so on Tuesday I got to go up to Gear Up

and get her this awesome pink and purple bike that's just her size, exactly what she's been wanting. I brought it home and waited for her to come home from school. I had it in the garage, and I said, "Hey, Evie, I got a surprise for you." She says, "What?" I said, "Come out here." She comes out and she sees this bike that she's been asking for six months. She wants it, she desires it, and she sees it and her little face just lit up! She's glowing. She's smiling. She says, "Thank you Daddy," and she gets on it. She rides it around, and not only is she smiling, guess who else is smiling? Me! I am smiling a lot. Her joy is my joy. Her pleasure is my pleasure. She is my little girl and I'm giving her a gift, and I want her to be excited and enjoy it...do you get it? Is God not the same way as our heavenly Father? He's giving us good gifts. He doesn't want us to frown and moan about them; He wants us to enjoy the good things He's given us in life and rejoice over them as gifts because God takes pleasure in our pleasure. He's a good Father who enjoys the smiles of His children. So go be joyful. Go be merry. Don't act like we are about to die and put on your funeral clothes. We are about to die but go live! Enjoy every day as a gift from God, so enjoy good.

## 2. Enjoy love.

Notice what Solomon says in verse 9, I love this line, "Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that He has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun." So not only enjoy good things but enjoy love. Enjoy the wife. Enjoy life with the wife that you have been given. Do you enjoy your marriage? Do you enjoy your spouse? Do you have this cultivated, loving friendship that is growing, abounding, and exciting and enjoying life with your spouse? He is commanding us to do that because this is a portion, this is a gift. Notice it says, "He has given you." God has given you a spouse to enjoy and to go through life with. So what should we do? We should cultivate that loving friendship with our wife or our husband and we should be paying attention to them. How is your marriage going? Are you cultivating that loving friendship with your spouse? If you need help, he wrote another book called Song of Solomon. Go read that and just the fill in the blanks. This is a loving friendship that you get to

have with your spouse. He's saying enjoy life with the one you love. It's the gifts that God has given us. Enjoy love.

### 3. Enjoy our work.

Notice what Solomon says in verse 10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going." So, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Why? Well, because we are going to a grave, and in the grave, no more work is going to happen—no more knowledge, no more wisdom. Sheol is not eternity; Sheol is the land of the dead, and he's really talking about your gravestone, your tomb. At some point, we are going to put your body in a tomb and your work is going to be disconnected from all of us. You are going to end at that moment, from our under the sun point of view. So because of that, don't sulk and be like ah man, I'm going to die...no, right now do good work. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might. People don't understand that from a biblical point of view, work is a good thing; work is not bad thing. As a culture, sometimes we relegate it to a bad thing and think the whole point of work is to retire one day. Work is actually a good gift from God. Part of being human, part of being image-bearers of God is to work and do good work. He says whatever your hand finds to do—this is not just what you get paid for—this is all of your work, whether it's guarding, or painting, or cooking, or housework, or your job. Whatever you find to do, do it with all of your might. Actually enjoy and take pleasure in your work. See it as the way you are imaging God. God works, so you get to work so do it with all of your might.

The reason Solomon says to do good work is because one day we are going to die and we are not going to be able to work anymore, so that's his motivation. Do good work, because one day you will be in a tomb and you will not be able to work anymore. Now think about our New Testament motivation for doing good work. I think the New Testament would say enjoy your work because it's part of your humanity as an image-bearer of God, and guess what? When you die, your work actually goes into the forever Kingdom and you get to work for the glory of God forever. That's a bigger reason to work. I will just give you a little bit of Scripture to back it

up. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 says, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain." See, Solomon says work hard even though it's kind of in vain. The New Testament says work hard because it's not in vain. How is it not in vain? It's because 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15 and 16 is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There's a resurrection that has happened. Jesus rose from the dead; therefore, all of your work is not in vain, because the tomb is not the end anymore. The tomb is just the beginning and all of that work you do transfers into the new Kingdom. The work you do for the Lord, in the Lord, to the Lord, lasts forever. So how much more should we be the people who enjoy our work? And not just our church work, not just our religious work, but all of our work. I mean, for thirty years Jesus did work that wasn't just going and preaching and making disciples; He did work with His hands. He was a carpenter. He was a mason. He did good work to the glory of His Father. We should want to do the same thing because we are image-bearers of Him, knowing that because of the resurrection, all of our work is not just going to die with us, it's going to last forever. So in light of your death, work hard. We should be the people who are most joyous on Mondays because we get to charge Monday's job. It's not mundane; it is opportunity because we get to work hard for the glory of Christ. We know death is coming but death is not our final say, so we are going to work hard for the glory of God. Again, He wants you to snatch life from the jaws of death. Yes, we are going to die, so therefore, live. Don't just sulk and be mad about your death, instead celebrate and enjoy life as a gift that God has given you. Enjoy good things in love and work and enjoy your life.

Oh, and by the way, Solomon is going to close with this—because you will die. So, end on a good note. Verses 11–12 say, "Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them." He is saying when it comes down to the sun, when it comes to how the world is, it's broken, it's not always the fast who

wins the race, and always the smart who make it in life, but instead, it is sort of time and chance. In time and chance, it's not negating God, it's saying those things you can't control just sort of happen, and you can't always control everything and you certainly can't control your death. It's like a fish in a net. You are swimming, life is good, and then all of a sudden, a boat comes and catches you in a net. That's how your life is. You are like a bird that is suddenly caught in a snare. What he's saying is it doesn't matter whether we are smart or not, if you CrossFit or no fit; it doesn't matter. You are going to die whether you have a PHD or GED, rich or poor, it doesn't matter. There's nothing you can do to insulate yourself from death.

I told one of my buddies I was doing a sermon on death. He said, "Oh, you have to watch this series on Disney Plus called Limitless. It's Chris Hemsworth who plays Thor and you just gotta watch it. I'm telling you to fit perfect." Chris It's a show that starts out with him basically talking about his granddad who has Alzheimer's, and all of a sudden, he realizes that he's going to die. So he wants to try to live as long as he can and push death as far as away as he can. He wants to be limitless. He wants to push it away. He wants to escape death. So, he hires these longevity experts, which I don't even know these people existed, but they are scientists who work with people to try to help with your longevity. They try to give you a long life and they try to get you to cheat death. So he gets these experts and there are all these different things he has to go through. One killer is stress, so in order for him to fight against stress and live forever, he goes on a 900-foot building and walks across a crane (which I am terrified of heights, so I would just die right there), but they tell him how to control his stress so that he can live longer. One of the ways you live longer is to shock your body, so he goes to Antarctica and swims in the Arctic Channel. One of the ways you escape death is through fasting, so he fasts for four days. He's trying to live as long as he can, and by the way, he's thirty-nine and this is his fortieth year. Now, I am thirty-nine, this is my fortieth year, so this is kind of like me. Here's a guy who is the most fit person I have ever seen in my life—I won't even let Katie come in the room when I'm watching. I'm like, "Katie, you gotta stay in the kitchen. You can't watch this guy, this is not what normal people look like!" If anybody is in the best

shape ever and should not be thinking about death, it's gotta be him. And do you know the only thing he's thinking about? *I'm going to die and I and I have to figure a way to escape this!* He's actually doing these crazy things to his body in order to escape death. He wants to be limitless. But even the title is ironic because he's not limitless. He's limited. I mean, he might look like a god, but he's limited. He's going to go old and he's going to die, and in a sense, there is nothing he can do about it. He can jump in the Arctic as much as he wants, he can dangle from buildings as much as he wants, but at some point he's going to be swimming like a little fish and the net is going to take him.

When a twenty-four year old puts on a helmet and goes on a field, he is not in anyway thinking today I might die, but that's almost what happened to Damar. It's just like all of a sudden we can't control what we think we can control, and that's what Solomon wants us to see. He wants to take us into the reality that you don't know your time and that should cause you to contemplate deeper things. You should contemplate your life and it should cause you to live it to the fullest. I mean, this week we have seen bit after bit where people who weren't thinking about death, weren't thinking about the afterlife, all of a sudden when the Damar Hamlin thing happened, now everyone is thinking about death and what's going to happen to them. All of a sudden, we realize that we could also be on that stretcher, we could be on that field just as easy, because that's how death is. It just comes and we don't know when it's going to happen but it could come. Do you know what I noticed? When that moment happened, and all week long when we all collectively saw our greatest enemy, which is death, at the same time everybody, believer, non-believer, turned to our greatest hero, who is God. It just happened and you couldn't control it, right? People on ESPN, which is not a place that naturally promotes the gospel and prayer, were praying. One coach said I'm not going to say I'm going to pray; I'm going to pray, so bow your head with me. They are praying on ESPN! Because what do you do when we are looking death in the face? You don't have any other resources, you pray to God because God is the only one who can intervene. And then, I loved when we actually saw God answer a miracle. We woke up the next day, and you could see on CBS and on sports channels on national TV say, "Hey, you know what? It's like I

learned church—God is good,” and then everybody else says “All the time.” On national TV where we are not supposed to pray anymore, especially in football, all of a sudden when we saw our greatest enemy, the only place we could go collectively as a people (who most of us don't believe in God anymore) and it's like we need God, that's what we need because we are going to die and we need God to save.

See, we all collectively looked at our worst enemy. It was like this Monday moment, which is a very ecclesiastical moment, this moment right where Solomon wants us to get. We are going to die and there's nothing you can do about it. So, in light of your greatest enemy, look to your greatest hero, which is God. Because guess what? God has an answer for death and the answer is His Son, Jesus Christ. He sent Jesus to live the life you couldn't, to die the death you deserve. On the cross He was trading places, He was taking your penalty. That wicked heart that you have, He was taking that penalty on the cross, and He died in your place for your sins. He rose again on the third day, swallowing up death, getting victory over death so that if you will and believe in Him, if you will turn from yourself and turn to Jesus and tell Jesus you are my Lord and Savior, He will give you not just life but eternal life. If you believe, you won't perish you will live forever. When you die physically on this planet, it will be a gateway into eternity with God. Our greatest enemy leads us to our greatest hero, who is Jesus who swallowed up death for us.

So, what should we do in light of the week we have had, in light of the text that we are in? Well, number one; realize you are going to die. I mean, it's just the truth. The only 100% guarantee in life, people say, is you are going to die. That's the only we are going to count on. You will die. So in light of that, number two, embrace your Savior, Jesus, who beat death for you. Because you know you are going to die, you know you are going to go through judgment, embrace Christ. He came to seek and to save those who are lost, He came to give life to those who are dead, so embrace Christ through faith. That's how you live past the grave. So if you don't know Jesus this morning, if you were laying on a stretcher, and you didn't make it through, what would be the result for you? How is your heart in that moment? Do you know that you know Christ and that He has



defeated your death so that death will only be union with God? Do you know that you know the Lord? Do you have an answer for that day, because it is coming like a net that captures a fish, like a snare that grabs a bird? You can't plan on. It's coming. Have you embraced the Lord Jesus? And then thirdly, if you have, in light of death live today as a gift from God. Put on your party suit. Have a smile. Rejoice. Be glad. Be happy. Enjoy life. Why? Because it's a gift and it can be gone tomorrow, so enjoy the gift you have from God as a good gift from Him, and give glory to Him. As you do it, actually, live your life. Don't sulk about your death. Celebrate life right now and the knowledge that you are going to have life forever in Christ. That's what we do. Yeah, death is coming but God has an answer for death, and the answer for death is His Son Jesus Christ.

So for those of us who have that answer, we should be the people who, from the jaws of death, we snatch life. We say yeah, we are going to die, but right now, we are going to live. We are going to live it to the fullest to the glory of Christ, knowing that when we die we get to live forever with Him. So, let's be those people that even though we know we are going to die we don't sulk on that but instead we celebrate the life we have.