

spirit hope intimacy with God Jesus living in victory marriage & family missional living prayer sharing your faith sin & repentance spiritual warfare transformation the Word of God worship adversity Christmas & New Year church & community destiny the devil discovering meaning Easter faith fear God's sovereignty grace the Holy Spirit hope intimacy with God Jesus living in victory marriage & family missional living pain & suffering people & relationships personality type prayer sharing your faith of God worship adversity Christmas & New Year church & community destiny the devil discovering meaning Easter faith fear God's sovereignty grace the Holy Spirit hope intimacy with God Jesus living in victory marriage & family missional living pain & suffering people & relationships personality type prayer sharing your faith sin & repentance spiritual warfare transformation

by Berni Dymet



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Something to Really Look Forward To

Without hope, life simply isn't worth living. That's why hope that never fails is so important.

christianityworks



something to really
look forward to

by berni dymet

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CHAPTER 1

THE DEAD WILL RISE IN CHRIST

What's going to happen to you when you die?

It's an interesting question isn't it? What is going to happen to you when your time on this earth is done and dusted? It will happen in one of two ways. Either Jesus will return – at which point everything on this earth will be over, or (and perhaps you consider this option to be more likely) your body is going to give up the ghost when you breathe your last breath and your heart stops beating. It's this latter option that I'd like to chat with you about right now.

Hope is such an important thing. Without

hope, today is not worth living. And tomorrow ... well who cares? So many people – can I say, even people who believe in Jesus – are living without hope. And that's crazy, because our lives, whether we believe in Jesus or not, don't end with a 'beep'.

There is life after death. Either in the presence of Jesus for all eternity – Hallelujah! – or apart from Him, in a place of eternal punishment and anguish and regret; that place with Satan and his demons that we call ... *hell*.

So, where are you going to go after your last 'beep'?

Well, I believe, in fact I know, that last heartbeat is not the end. It's just the beginning of where you're going to spend the rest of your eternity. And there are two parts to that eternity for anyone who believes in Jesus. Firstly, part between when you die and when Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead, and secondly, the part after Jesus' return.

Let's talk about the first part. If you believe in Jesus, here's what will happen to you.



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Immediately upon your death, you will go to be in the presence of Jesus in conscious blessedness, having escaped your punishment because you have put your faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus; in the fact that He paid for your sins on that cross. Just like the criminal who hung next to Jesus on that fateful day. Do you remember what happened to him?

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Luke 23:39-43)

So, exactly when would this man be in paradise with Jesus? *Today* according to Jesus. The Apostle Paul knew it too, that straight after his

death he would be in the presence of Jesus:

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. (Philippians 1:21–23)

What happens to him when he departs this life? He is going to *be with Christ*. So, if you and I die before Jesus returns, and if we believe in Jesus, we go immediately to be with Him, in His Presence. Just sit there now for a minute and look at all your present circumstances – all your pressures and worries – through the lens of this truth.

Do you see? That hope – that *certain* hope – is meant to make a huge difference in your life.

Paul the Apostle wrote that letter to the Philippians while he was in a Roman dungeon on death row. Have a read of it some time. It's full of hope and rejoicing because it's written by a man who sees his present bleak circumstances through the lens of his certain hope in Christ.



Just picture this glorious
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Hallelujah!

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And at some point Jesus will return and we will all – those who believe in Jesus and those who don't – stand before Jesus in judgement. And when that happens, those who believe in Jesus who have died, will rise in Him:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16)

Just picture this glorious day. The dead in Christ will rise first! Hallelujah!

I was in a hospital a few months ago, visiting a friend who has since died of cancer. Hospitals have always seemed to be impersonal, sterile

places to me. He was in a room with three other men who were also dying. The smell of death is a powerful thing in this sanitised, brightly lit place with linoleum floors polished so much that they squeak when you walk on them. There's something stark and confronting about death, isn't there?

It's inevitable; it's not pleasant ... and yet at the other end of it, is this triumphant, jubilant day when all those who have died in Christ will rise again with Him. Hallelujah!

That's the hope. *That's* why you and I and anyone else who believes in Jesus can look at our present day circumstances through the same lens as the Apostle Paul on death row. *That's* why Paul wrote:

When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? Hallelujah!'

I know there are some people reading this who have lost a loved one ... and you miss

them terribly. Perhaps your wife or your husband. Well, the good news is that if they believe in Jesus, one day you will see them again – because they will be raised in Christ.

Or perhaps you're getting pretty close to the end of your life, through old age or sickness, and you're staring death down the barrel and that's a scary thing for you.

Or perhaps you're just facing a trial in your life, wondering what hope you have for the future.

But wherever you are on our journey through life and towards death, the important thing to know, the thing that Jesus wants you to know, not just in your head but in your heart, is this. Death is not the end; it's just the beginning.

For anyone who believes in Jesus, it's the beginning of an eternity praising Him, worshipping Him and celebrating with Him. It's the beginning of an eternity without fear or tears or sickness or pain or illness.

It's the beginning of an eternity that, compared to our fleeting lives on this earth, is so



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awesome, so ‘forever’ that you just can’t compare the two. That’s why Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote this to his friends in Rome:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

Friend, the eternity that lies ahead for you is as glorious as it is certain. That’s what Jesus wants you to know today. That’s the hope, the certain hope that He wants to fill your heart with today.

CHAPTER 2

THE LIVING WILL BE TAKEN UP

Now the second possibility is that Christ returns before you die. I know that we consider that to be the less likely of the two ways in which our lives here on this earth will end, but it is a very real possibility. Jesus promised that He would be back.

So imagine that you get up tomorrow, it's a day like any other day – or so you think – but completely unbeknown to you, it's not just *any* day. It's the day that God decides to send Jesus back to this earth. The thing that we Christians call the 'Second Coming'.

Jesus Himself described what it would be like. Not some guy on television claiming

to be Jesus. But a huge, cataclysmic event that none of us – not you or me or anyone else – will possibly be able to miss:

Immediately after the suffering of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:29–31)

I'm imagining that's going to be kind of hard to miss, isn't it?

You're getting ready to go to work; you're brushing your teeth, thinking about what the day holds. If you're anything like me, your mind is already running through your to-do list and then ... your mundane, everyday reality will be totally interrupted; totally disturbed; totally come to an end.



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And not just your day. It's going to be exactly the same for all the other 7+ billion people on planet – it's going to be over, because Jesus has just returned. The 24-hour news cycle? Over. The newsreader on TV? Nothing left to read.

Can you imagine? Are you ready? Because it can happen at any moment:

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1–5)

So here's the question: If you believe in Jesus and you are still alive on that day when Jesus returns, what's it going to be like? And more importantly, what's going to happen to you on that day? That's worth knowing I think. Well,

the Bible has the answers. In fact, Jesus has the answers:

Then he said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. They will say to you, 'Look there!' or 'Look here!' Do not go, do not set off in pursuit. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking, and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all of them. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed all of them – it will be like that on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

On that day, anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down

to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it. I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left.' Then they asked him, 'Where, Lord?' He said to them, 'Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.' (Luke 17:22–37)

It's pretty dramatic. Do you see the picture that Jesus paints? It's a business-as-usual day. Everybody is going about their normal business and then ... one will be taken up and the other left. The Apostle Paul describes it this way:

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51–53)



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Are you ready for that? In your heart of hearts are you looking forward to the day when the Lord returns?

There are two things that I'm sick of. I'm sick of these doomsday people who keep predicting the day on which Jesus will return. I think to myself – *What, are they nuts?! Jesus made the point, you're not meant to know when ... just be ready.*

But at the other end of the scale, I'm so desperately concerned about people who believe in Jesus and yet don't seem to believe in the imminent return of Christ. We behave as though this life is going to last forever. We behave as though the rest of eternity is a million years away. ***It's a lot closer than you think. In the context of eternity, it's just around the corner.*** It could be this very day, this very hour that Jesus returns. That's the certain hope that you and I have if we believe in Jesus. That's the future that lies ahead.

Jesus could come back today, tomorrow ... next week.

I don't know whether you're enjoying your life so much that you're completely immersed in it, or whether you're having such a rotten time that you're drowning in your misery, or whether you're somewhere in between. Wherever you are, whatever's going on in your world, if you believe in Jesus, you have a certain hope that Jesus is coming back for you soon. And that ... that's meant to make a difference.

As I was writing this booklet, I was about to head off on a couple of weeks' leave. I love doing what I do – but it's hard work and I needed a break. So with my wife, I was heading off for 12 days – away from emails and writing and recording radio programs, and managing a global team, all the things that I love – just to take a break and have a rest.

I can't tell you how much I'd been looking forward to that. The sun, the ocean, the rest, the time with my wife. Awesome.

But here's what I was thinking about – if Jesus had returned the day before I headed off on my holiday, would I have felt robbed ... or rewarded?



So many of us are so caught up in the things of the world, in our day-to-day reality, that our hearts aren't filled with the hope of Jesus' imminent return.

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Would I have wanted to say to Jesus – ‘*Look Lord – I’ve got a 12 day holiday planned, can you please come back at the end of it. In fact, Lord, as I look at my diary, hmmm, busy that day, meeting, speaking engagement – I’m thinking next month would be a much better time. Does that work for you? Let’s get it into our diaries and it’s a date.*’

Do you see my point? So many of us are so caught up in the things of the world, in our day-to-day reality, that our hearts aren’t filled with the hope of Jesus’ imminent return. And I have to tell you – that is such a tragedy.

Listen to what Paul says:

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

(Colossians 3:2-3)

Come on. Set your gaze, your vision, your hopes and your dreams on the things that are above, on the certain hope you have.

Because Jesus is coming – ready or not.

CHAPTER 3

A CHANCE TO REPENT

Without hope for the future, our lives cease to have value and meaning and purpose. People who take their own lives invariably do so because they've completely lost hope.

But look at the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Have you given your life to Jesus yet? Would you like to? Well, I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't give you the opportunity to do just that.

So if you want to step into the hope that you can have through what Jesus did for you on the Cross, then why don't you pray this

prayer in your heart to God:

Lord God, as You've shared this amazing picture of what is to come with me today through Your Word, I just know that I can't put this off any longer. I've been running and running from You but it hasn't been working and today Lord is the day that I've come to my senses. Today I want to say sorry for all the things that I've done wrong and turn my life over into Your hands. Please forgive me through the price that Jesus paid for me on the Cross and give me a new life. Put Your Holy Spirit in me to give me the power to live my life for You. Lead me wherever You will. Call me to whatever You would call me to. And give me the courage to take up my Cross and follow You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you have just prayed that prayer, then you are forgiven, you have a new life in Christ, all the old things have passed away, the slate is wiped clean and all things are new. And you have just stepped into the certain hope of resurrection after death and a life eternal in the very Presence of God. Welcome to the rest of eternity with Jesus!



Let me encourage you to find a Bible-believing Church and become part of a dynamic, vital faith community to worship and serve God and to grow in your relationship with Him.

Because none of us can walk this walk with Jesus on our own.

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Let me encourage you to find a Bible-believing Church and become part of a dynamic, vital faith community to worship and serve God and to grow in your relationship with Him. Because none of us can walk this walk with Jesus on our own.

Sure, the moment that we accept Jesus Christ into our lives, He pours His Holy Spirit into us. But He also means for us to learn and to be encouraged and held accountable by other members of his family. I can be a bit of a loner sometimes, and I have to tell you sometimes the people at church can drive me a bit batty. And so the easiest thing in the world would be for me not to belong to a church at all.

But over the last almost 20 years walking with Christ, what I've learned is that the transformation of my life has happened in community, as I've been part of God's family. That's why being part of His church is so incredibly important. Giving your life to Jesus isn't a one-time thing that you do for a few weeks and then forget, any more than permanently losing weight is about a 3-week crash diet.

Giving your life to Jesus is about living the rest of your life for Him. Jesus promised that it wouldn't be an easy thing to do. He promised us that the path would be narrow and hard. He promised us that we would be persecuted. He promised us that taking up our Cross and following Him would be a tough gig.

So – here's the thing. If you have just given your life to Jesus, get together with some fellow believers and let them help you on the journey.

In fact if you've just given your life to Jesus you might like to listen to a series of 10 messages I've recorded called *So Now What?* And probably the best thing that you can do right now is have a listen to them. They're all about the things that you need to do and to put in place to lay some solid foundations early, in your relationship with Jesus.

You can get a hold of those messages online, in the Jesus section of our website at christianityworks.com. I really encourage you to get along and have a listen. Establish a prayer life, get into God's Word, read the Bible every day



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and become part of a vibrant Bible-believing church.

Because I want to see you in eternity. I want to hear you say to me – ‘Hey Berni, remember that booklet you sent to me? It changed my life. I’m here now, because God used that message in my life.’

I want those promises of eternity to be for you!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.

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Berni Dymet

Something to Really Look Forward To

All too often we get so bogged down in our day to day reality, that we struggle to find any hope in our hearts for the future. And hope is absolutely critical in our day to day well being. Because without hope, there's nothing.

So join Berni Dymet in this booklet as he opens the Bible to discover something we already know. Christ is coming back. No ifs. No buts. No maybes.

And that ... that is something that we can really look forward to. Really!

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