

Psalms 56:8

*Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?*

This is quite an unpleasant thought, and many people hate God because of it. "How can a loving God deliberately create a world full of suffering?" they would ask. And they try to shut God out of their minds by desperately chasing after all sorts of things to live for here, even inventing their own philosophies and religions to stop them thinking about reality. They've forgotten, or rather they don't realise, they're just seed. They're just dirt. This is not where we're meant to spend eternity. It's a temporary place.

The Lord has put us all into this condition:

Romans 3:23

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God....*

But He's also shown us the way out:

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So, we have a choice. We can either love this world of sin we've been born into, and for the short time we're here try to make the most of it by living for ourselves, our own gratification and our own pleasures, only then to face judgment for it all. Or we can hate this world and everything in it, and trust in the Lord's only way of salvation to get us out of it and bring us into a far better place:

John 12:25

*He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

The truth is that, in this world, without Christ, there's absolutely nothing to live for. If people refuse to accept the Christian message, much as I would love to help them, I can't. There's no alternative.

What can we take with us from here into the next world anyway? Nothing. So why cling on to it?

Mark 8:36

*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

Job 1:21

*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

1 Timothy 6:7

*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

We should be so, so happy that we're not in this present, evil world for very long. It's good to know that all this trouble and sorrow is here but for a moment, before we fly away to be with Christ which is far better:

Isaiah 26:20

*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.*

Philippians 1:23

*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better....*

So, in the short time we have left, let's not concern ourselves with what type of dust we are, whether we're sandy, or clay, or irritate easily or make good pottery. None of that matters. Let's rather make sure we become good ground, ready for Christ to receive us:

Luke 8:15

*But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

Luke 21:34-36

*And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

2 Peter 3:11-13

*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

## Dust Thou Art

We are but dust. The only thing that sets us apart from a piece of dirt on the ground is the fact that God breathed into us the breath of life:

Genesis 2:7

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

And after this life is over, we return to the ground again:

Genesis 3:19

*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Ecclesiastes 3:20

*All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*

And, what's more, our time here as dust is so short:

Job 8:9

*For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.*

Job 14:1,2

*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

Psalms 89:47,48

*Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?*

Psalms 90:9,10

*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

Psalms 144:4

*Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*

James 4:14

*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

So, why on earth has God put us all in this position, made of mere dust, and for such a short space of time? What's the point of it all?

Psalms 103:14-16

*For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

Surely, Solomon was absolutely right about everything under the sun, because if this is all there is, there really is no point in any of it:

Ecclesiastes 1:14

*I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

But there is a purpose behind everything the Lord ordains. Nothing is for no reason:

Ecclesiastes 3:1

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

These bodies will indeed return to the earth from whence they came soon enough. But that's not the end of us. These bodies are just temporary dwelling places. That "living soul" that God breathed into us will last forever:

Ecclesiastes 12:7

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

We do have something that will outlive the death of this body – an immortal soul. That's the real us. And, eventually, our soul will inhabit another body, which will be eternal:

1 Corinthians 15:44

*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

Our current body of dust is likened to seed or grain, compared to the full-grown plant. That means two things: Firstly, our eternal welfare – the growth of the plant – is so much more important than our temporal welfare as mere seed here:

Matthew 10:28

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Secondly, for this body of dust to become fruitful, the seed must needs die – and that means both physically die, and die to its selfish desires:

1 Corinthians 15:36,37

*....that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain....*

John 12:24

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

We must look after the seed, we shouldn't abuse it. But our only real objective in doing that isn't the comfort of the seed, but to make sure we produce a healthy plant in the next life.

Yet, despite all of this – the brevity of this life, the frailty of our nature, and the fact we're mere seed and not the full-grown plant yet – we still insist on filling ourselves with this world – things here and now – and we tend to ignore eternal things altogether.

Indeed, there's plenty to learn about here. In fact there's so much, we could spend all our days:

2 Timothy 3:7

*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

There's nothing wrong with learning a skill to earn a living while we're here. That's a good thing. God has given us natural laws to learn about:

Isaiah 28:24-29

*Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his*

*horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.*

But the point is that we're not going to be here for very long. We're going to be in the next world for far longer than we were ever here. Surely, surely there is only one thing needful for us to concentrate our lives on here, and that's the things of eternity:

2 Corinthians 4:17,18

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

All we have here and now is going to pass away from our sight and grasp so soon. In the next world, what's going to be the point of having learned anything we were taught at school? Or how to ride a bike, or swim, or drive a car? None of it is going to be helpful at all. None of it. Only knowing Jesus Christ is:

Luke 10:41,42

*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Colossians 3:1,2

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

And to keep us from loving this world too much, the Lord has also ordained this to be a world in which mankind fell into sin. The world is full of evil. And it's not just we that are fallen creatures, but the whole of Creation is fallen as well. It also groans, in a perpetual cycle of life and death:

Romans 8:19-22

*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

And a fallen world is, by definition, a vale of tears. It's full of suffering. There's nothing here to cherish or cling on to: