

When the apostle Paul was facing a certain death in a Roman dungeon, He wrote ^{this} concerning ~~that~~ that prospect ~~this~~: "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand (2 Tim 4:6)." The way Paul described death which is so real, so certain, and such a vivid reminder of the limitation of man and the effects of sin is very interesting and worth fixing our attention on for a moment this afternoon. Death, he says, is a departure. This is a very descriptive word. It literally means an unloosing in order to take a journey. Death, he says, ^{is} a journey. Now a journey, of course means the departure, ~~the~~ the journey itself, and the arrival at some destination.

The departure or the leaving is the unloosing from all the opportunities, joys, and experiences of life. ~~But~~ But it also means an unloosing from all the limitations of life in these bodies of ours. When death comes the limitations are over, for death is a loosing from all the experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, of life.

How long is the journey? ~~It~~ It is instantaneous. ^{is} After death the destination is arrived at in an instant. For the believer in Christ the departure from earth means an immediate arrival in the presence of the living Christ in heaven. This same apostle Paul in another epistle said that to ~~depart~~ be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Leaving earth means for the Christian arriving in heaven. For Grandmother it meant from St. Anthony's to heaven, and may I say, without ^{even} a stop ~~even~~ on Henry St. Immediately present with the Lord, not ~~someway~~ It is a journey which could not be shorter, and there are no intermediate stops along the way. ~~And to depart~~ (the only other place in the N.T. where this word depart is used) and be with Christ, Paul says, is far better.

How can we be sure that Grandmother is there today. Because the Word of God says so. It is Paul again who tells us that to depart is to be with Christ and this is far better (Phil. 1:21). This is the only other time this word depart is used in our New Testament. God's Word says she is there, and God has never been untrue to His word.

But Grandmother's own life tells us that she is in heaven today. Most of us here have been in one way or more the beneficiaries of the multitude of her good works. Her full life was a continuous ~~great~~ exhibition of good deeds. But ~~except~~ these in themselves do not guarantee that she is with the Lord, for salvation is not by works of righteousness which we have done but it is according to His mercy that He saves us. And yet her works testify to the change which the Lord Jesus worked in her heart.

One Christmas vacation 16 or 17 years ago when I was home from seminary, for some reason the entire family was going to some function except Grandmother and me. So I spent the evening with her here in the house. In the course of our conversation I was telling her of the practical Christian work in which I was engaged along with my studies and particularly of the many children we were reaching each week with the gospel message. ~~that~~ Many of them were receiving the Lord into their hearts and were being saved. After I had finished she said, "That's when I received Him as my Saviour, as a child, and that's the best time." She did not often speak of these things, but her life ^{was} abundant evidence that she belonged to the Lord and served Him all her days. This is why--the testimony of God's Word and the testimony of Grandmother's own life and lips-- we know that her ~~destination~~ journey took her to heaven.

We most earnestly hope that all who are here to honor her today have that same simple but sufficient faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour that Grandmother had-- faith which will guarantee that when you depart on that journey of death you will arrive in an instant in heaven. Quote 2 Tim 4:6 and Phil 1:21.