



Links Players

Immortality - Spot of Bother

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:53–55, ESV)

The late Peter Alliss, legendary British golfer, ABC and BBC Commentator, and Hall of Fame Inductee, was fond of saying, "He is in a spot of bother" when observing a player who had hit his ball into the heather.

Peter was quite the character! His brand of humor usually elicited a chuckle. His extensive knowledge of golf's history was impressive. Peter's occasional off-handed remarks sometimes got him in hot water. I'm not sure we will ever see another one quite like him.

Peter died unexpectedly on December 5th, 2020, at 89. Perhaps his death didn't impact the world of golf as much as Arnie's, but it certainly produced sustained reflection for many on both sides of the pond.

As John Donne wrote in his famous poem, For Whom the Bell Tolls, "Each man's death diminishes me, For I am involved in mankind. Therefore, send not to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." This means that, in more straightforward prose, the "Grim Reaper" comes for us all.

Many, if not most, avoid the subject of death. However, the reality of death cannot be dodged. Like tournament golf, life has a shelf life—the intensity of golf would evaporate if it didn't have a hard stop at 72 holes. The sad reality of death heightens our intense desire to live forever.

Facing life knowing that one day we will die doesn't have to create a sense of dread in us if we know the Cosmic Warrior who conquered death and offered immortality to those who yield their life to him.

Now, if Jesus had done all these extraordinary things only to keep immortality to himself, we would not have an "ice cube's chance in hades" of beating death.

John Owen, the 16th century Puritan, entitled one of his books, The Death

of Death in the Death of Christ. This title gets to the heart of the matter. Jesus entered death to conquer death, and he did it to restore immortal life in body and soul to those who repent and believe in him.

Years ago now, I knelt at the bedside of one of the godliest women I've ever known; she was within hours of dying. Weakened by cancer, she mustered the strength to whisper to her husband and me, "Win-Win'—to live is Christ, to die is gain."

I often think about being next to my friend as she was staring death in the face. She never wavered. She was the personification of peace. Words cannot describe what I sensed that day. But suffice it to say, "She was on the stoop of heaven, and her husband and I knew we were there with her.

Prayer: Lord! Move by your Spirit to awaken hearts to the reality and gift of immortality in Christ Jesus!

READING: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-28.

1. More than likely, we all "lost" friends with whom we played golf for years. Call to mind some of those friends and reminisce about those former days with them on the Links.

2. After reading and meditating on 1 Corinthians 15: 1-19, what are the major points of Paul's argument against those who maintained that the body is not raised from the dead? Notice and discuss his appeals to Scripture, Eyewitnesses, and Logic!

3. Application: What do we look forward to? (see vss. 20-28)
