



There once was a king who had a favorite jester in his court. Because of all his good work for many years, cheering up the king and making him happy, the king finally retired him, gave him some property and a good income, and sent him off to see the world. For his journey, the king presented the fool with his favorite walking cane—a very beautiful wooden cane with gold inlay.

"I want to give you this," he said, "as a special present to you from me, because you have been such an encouragement to me and such good company all these years." Then he continued, "You're going away now because I have released you from my service. Take this cane with you. It's my special gift to you for being the greatest fool I ever had!"

Some years later the king's fool heard that the king

was dying, for he too was quite old. The fool came to the king's deathbed and began to sympathize with him.

"Are you ready to go?" the fool asked the king.

"What do you mean?" the king replied.

"Well, since I last saw you," the jester explained, "I have met Christ and have received Him as my Savior. I am now ready to die because I know I'll go to be with Jesus in Heaven." Then he asked, "Have *you* made preparations for this journey into death? Have you received Jesus as your Savior? Are you ready to die?"

"Preparations? What preparations would *I* need?" the king exclaimed. "I don't believe in all that 'Jesus' and 'Heaven' talk. My kingdom is *here!* I *know* it's real. That's all that matters to me!"

"I'm sorry to hear that," the king's jester said quietly, "because you don't realize the mistake you are making, or all that you are turning down—forgiveness of sin and eternal life with the King of kings." Then he continued, "Do you remember when you once sent me off on a long journey, and you gave me this walking cane as a present because you said that I was the greatest fool you ever had? Well, I have returned from that journey and made my preparations for the next—a journey that we all must take. It is our longest journey, and one from which we will never return. But you have not made preparations for it. So here, I want to give you back this cane. You're a greater fool than I am!"

So many people try to hide from death. They don't like to think about it. It's something that is going to happen to everyone sooner or later, but most are not ready for it; they've made no preparation whatsoever.

But there's no reason to ignore death, to fear it, or to refuse to think about it. For those of us who know the Lord, death will be sweet release to a new world and a new life! The moment we die, our spirits are set free—liberated from our earthbound flesh with all its problems and woes into the world of the spirit. You will have graduated from this grade of earthly life.

Just make sure you're prepared by receiving Jesus as your Savior. Then you will be ready when He comes for you, and in the meantime you can live life to the full, knowing you're safe and sound and Heaven-bound! Receive Jesus today!

By David Brandt Berg

A Promotion!

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I don't like to use the word "die," because it's not really death. Actually, we who believe in Jesus don't really die, for the Bible says "whosoever lives and believes in Me [Jesus] shall never die" (John 11:26). It says in another place, "They shall not see death" (John 8:51). And in another passage St. Paul says, "Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:55–56).

For us, death will have no sting because our sins are forgiven, and the grave will have no victory because

we have conquered the grave through Christ and our salvation and our eventual resurrection. Our spirits are immediately free to go to be with the Lord, so it's not really death for us in the same way it is for others. We don't really die in the sense that they die.

That's why I don't like to call it "dying" or "death." I prefer to call it "graduation," "passing on" or "promotion." It's just like passing from one room to another, and it's a very beautiful experience for those who know and love the Lord.