

Dr. Wayne Dyer shared a parable that I think appeals to modern thinking: In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?"

The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery . . . is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. Moreover, if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother, and she will take care of us."

The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists, then where is She now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist."

Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist."

To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above."

Before we get too far into that analogy, it is important to note that conversations about babies and wombs are generally avoided by preachers. Quite often with pregnancy, things don't go as we may plan. Childbirth has always been the single most frightening thing that is a "normal" part of the human experience.

There are many so many emotions related to babies: There is hope, of course, but there is also fear, disappointment, wonder, sadness, anxiety, regret, joy, and so much more.

I invite you to bring all of that into this conversation about what comes after **this** life. Because, those emotions inform our conversations about faith and God, and sometimes, we can't help but ask: If God is all-loving, why did that terrible thing happen?

I am quite certain that is precisely what the women felt as they walked towards the tomb on that very first Easter morning. "Jesus was such a wonderful human," I'm sure they were saying, "why would anyone want him dead? Christ did so much good!"

Each of those women had been touched in profound ways. Some of them experienced a personal miracle, most of them witnessed one, and their hearts were still warm with our Savior's teachings. Where was God when we needed help the most?

The body of our Savior was laid in a tomb on Friday afternoon. These women had Friday night and all day Saturday to wrestle with these questions. Now, it is Sunday morning! They walked to the tomb with so many emotions to tend the remains of their beloved.

"Life after death is illogical," to paraphrase the first unborn child in that modern parable. "If there is a Creator 'in whom we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28) why can't we see the fingerprints of God everywhere?"

Well, maybe, it's because I'm just looking in the wrong place. Isn't that what an angel asks the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

That one question forces me to ask subsequent questions: Why do I look for God on the nightly news? Why do I look for the hand of the Almighty in world leaders? Why do I look for a Savior in the bottom of a glass, or a pill, or whatever?

"Sometimes," to paraphrase the second unborn child, "Sometimes, in the silence, when I really listen, I can perceive our Creator."

A few women went to the tomb that original Easter morning, expecting to meet death; instead, they become some of the first to share the powerful hope of life after death. Do you believe in life after death? Do you believe in heaven?

A few weeks ago, someone after the 8:00 service asked, “How are you?” Now, most of the time, I just say, “Fine! I’m fine!” Because, that’s really what is expected, right? “I’m fine!”

I took a moment to really ponder, “How am I, really?” I responded something like, “It depends on what I look at. If I focus close, on my immediate family, things are pretty good. If I zoom out to our state, the nation, and the world, not so good, but when I zoom out to eternity, to quote St. Julian of Norwich, “All is well. All manner of things are well. All will be well.”

The funny thing about St. Julian is she shared that wisdom as the Black Death ravaged England, killing exactly half of her population. But, when you have the perspective of eternity, you can cope with even the greatest of tragedies in the present moment.

Can you zoom out far enough to see life from an eternal perspective? Are you able to imagine what it will be like? I am convinced that we will meet our Creator, we will see the loving hands of our Savior that were pierced for us, and we will be surrounded by those we cherish most.

Do you believe in the Resurrection of the Dead? Do you believe in eternal life? Are you looking in the right place to find what you seek? Then, what might be the impact on your life by seeing everything from the perspective of eternity?

Let’s quickly look at Peter because he is the first to begin to understand. He rushed to the empty tomb, sees the linens, and walks away in amazement because he was now putting together the pieces from our Lord’s teaching about death then rising to life again.

But, you remember Peter, right? Who denied even knowing Jesus to save his neck? Then, in our Reading from Acts today, he practically asks to be killed. “I not only know Jesus,” he says, “I know that Christ is Lord of all, the judge of the living and the dead. You murdered our Savior out of hatred, but the Lord died and rose out of love.” Is this the same Peter?

Yes! But, Peter had been so changed by witnessing the Resurrection of our Savior that he almost welcomed death because he knew the grave is not the end. Peter could now see

everything from that eternal perspective. Do you have that eternal perspective? People who do are generally, generally, much more kind and loving. People who can't . . . well, those are the individuals to avoid when you're driving.

Let me encourage you this Easter season to be like those unborn babies in the parable. Have real conversations about life on earth AND about what lies on the other side. Be selective where you look to inform those conversations. God is the only true expert when it come to the view from eternity, but when we see our problems from the perspective of heaven, it puts everything into proper focus.

May this view give comfort and peace by knowing your loved ones who died are in the everlasting care of our Savior. May it bring you hope for what comes when this life is over, and may it give you courage to face your struggles today. Alleluia! Christ is Risen!