

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ **“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”**

⁵⁶ **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** (NIV 84)

Theme: God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.

Whenever someone talks about Emma, they talk about how much she was loved and how much she loved everyone else. “Ma” she was called by many. She loved to sit down with a cup of tea and talk with anyone. Emma loved company. And I’ve been told that Emma especially loved Thanksgiving. That is because the whole family got to be together. Every year she looked forward to the time when she could give thanks to her Lord with her family. And she was disappointed when it looked like she wasn’t going to at her home for Thanksgiving this year. But Emma didn’t make it to see Thanksgiving this year. On Tuesday, just two days before one of her favorite days, she was called home to her Savior’s side.

Why didn’t God allow Emma to enjoy one more holiday with her family? It would have meant so much to her and all her loved ones. But it didn’t happen. Emma is gone. So this year’s thanksgiving just wasn’t the same. It put a damper on the whole Thanksgiving holiday. What is there to be thankful for, anyway? How can God be so cruel? How could I give thanks to God at a time like this?

You are sad because you will never see Emma on this earth again. Emma’s life has ended. That is what death is. It’s an end. And this is the case not just for Emma, but for all of us. We will all end up like Emma one day—it’s the natural result of sin. And death lasts forever. Emma isn’t going to suddenly rise from the dead and live for 10 more years. Death’s victory is that it is permanent. Its victory is that no one is immune. So what is there, exactly to be thankful for?

Listen to Paul’s words in verse 57, **Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** You can give thanks to God because death has been defeated. You can give thanks to God because Christ defeated death when he rose from the dead. Through Christ, Emma has this victory over death. Emma may have died, but now she lives. She is now with her Savior in heaven. Her body may be laying right there in the casket, but her soul is with Jesus. Death had no power over Emma. It isn’t permanent, her body will rise again to join her soul in heaven. Death wasn’t the end for Emma; it is only the beginning of eternal life. She can join Paul in saying **Where O Death, is Your Victory?** Thanks be to God that Emma has the victory over death.

So we thank God, for Emma can say, **Death has been swallowed up in victory.** For Emma, Death lost its sting.

Because Emma has been given the victory over death, she has been changed. No longer perishable, but imperishable. No longer mortal, but immortal. No longer in pain and sorrow. But in joy and exaltation. Emma is now enjoying life in heaven. And it will never end.

And how is this possible? Through the work of Jesus Christ. He came down to this earth and lived a perfect life. And not once did he sin. But he was put to death on a cross. And on that cross he took all your sins upon himself. He became guilty of everything you have done wrong. He then suffered through hell so you wouldn’t have to. Three days after Christ died, he rose from the dead. And because he rose from the dead, we know that we too will rise from the dead. Emma believed this. She loved Jesus. She went to Church consistently to listen to his word, even when she couldn’t see all that well. And now, she is in heaven. Just like all who die in faith. Right

now she is joining together with all believers in singing praises to Jesus Christ. For all who believe in Jesus will be taken from this earthly, temporal life and be given the gift of eternal life in heaven.

Emma may be enjoying herself right now, but her death still stings for us. Emma is no longer here. We will no longer be able to enjoy her company again on this earth. Emma's death is painful for all who loved her. It stings because we look at death like its an end. We see death and we say, "Emma is no more." It is the end of her earthly life. We will never see her smiles. We will never hear her voice. We are going to miss her. Death stings. It stings those who are left behind.

But death also stings for those who die in unbelief. For **the sting of death is sin**. It stings for those who reject Jesus as their Savior. It stings because their sins still count against them. Their sins have not been washed away through the blood of Christ. It stings because all those who do not believe will suffer in hell forever. And their unbelief condemns them. Death stings because it leads to eternal death. Like believers, death isn't an end for unbelievers either—it is the beginning of eternal damnation.

But death wasn't painful for Emma. Death did not sting for her because she was brought to believe in Jesus as her one and only Savior. The sting of death is sin. And in God's eyes, Emma had no sin. That is because Jesus lived a perfect life for Emma. Through the blood that he shed on the cross, all of her sins have been paid for. And her his perfect life. When Emma died, God welcomed her home as his dear child. And he will do the same for all of us. For **all who believe in him will not perish, but have eternal life**.

So for Emma, death did not sting. Her sins had been removed. And no sin, not sting of death. She can say along with Paul, **Where, O death, is your sting?** Death did not win a victory. Death didn't end her life, it began it. Through Christ, Emma has the victory over death. Because Christ rose, Emma will rise too. Her body will join her soul in heaven. Through Christ, the same stands for us as well. Christ has given us his victory.

What did you have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving? You can be thankful, that even though you didn't get to enjoy her company a few

days ago, Through Christ, you will again soon. And then you can say along with Paul and Emma, **Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?** Amen.

To him, who is the Resurrection and the Life—to the who saved us and brings us to heaven, Jesus Christ—to him be honor, glory, and praise, forever and ever. Amen.