

Death of top pitching prospect

The purpose of death

Los Angeles Angels rookie Nick Adenhardt, just hours after fulfilling his dream of being a full-time big-league starter, was killed by a suspected drunk driver. The Angels postponed their next game against the Oakland Athletics, and moments of silence were observed at other major league ballparks.

"I still can't believe it, I'm numb," Angels center fielder Torii Hunter said. "He was just a kid. That's what hurts so bad. We're talking about a guy who hadn't experienced anything, and now he's gone."

Following injuries to three starters, Adenhardt was placed in the rotation. His father was so excited about his start that he traveled from Baltimore to see him pitch.

In his fourth career start, he pitched six shutout innings in a 6-4 loss to Oakland, and spent time afterward with his father and agent Scott Boras.



He summoned his father the day before and he said, 'You better come here because something special's going to happen,' " Boras said. "After the game, he was so elated. He felt like a major leaguer."

Most of us avoid making eye-contact with death. Though we might avoid the obituary section in the newspaper, eventually each one of us will face it. C.H. Spurgeon said, "We know that we will die. But we tend to imagine that it will be far off somewhere in the distance. But death will not spare us because we avoid him."

Unlike us, the Bible does not avoid the topic of death. The Bible tells us that death is God's just punishment for and against our sin.

C.J. Mahaney puts death into perspective. He said, "Each of us is born with a sin nature. And each of us is guilty of actual sins against God. But why death as God's just judgment against sin? Death is God's limit on creatures whose sin is that they want to be God. Death represents God's determination to limit our arrogance. Spiritual death leads to physical death which (in due time, apart from God's mercy) ushers in eternal death."

Nick Adenhardt died only days before Easter. Believers celebrate Easter Sunday as God's gracious provision for sin, death, and judgment. It proclaims that sin, death and judgment do not have the final word.

Without the resurrection, "we are still in our sins" awaiting only eternal condemnation and wrath. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead! The resurrection represented God's decisive demonstration that Jesus had not died in vain, that salvation had been secured on our behalf.

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet tribute to Nick Adenhardt. Go to www.youtube.com and search for A Tribute to Nick Adenhardt "The Dance"

WORKOUT

1. What stood out to you from watching the tribute to Nick Adenhardt?
2. Why do most people only think about death at a funeral? What lessons should people learn from a funeral?
3. How do you defend the resurrection of Jesus Christ to an unbeliever?
4. Why is our faith in vain if Jesus did not raise from the dead?
5. What is it about the resurrection that gives you hope?
6. Read Luke 24:1-7. Discuss the importance of the empty tomb and the presence of angels. What does the presence of these two things mean? How can we sometimes look for "the living amongst the dead"?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:17 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the sacrifice your son paid on the cross to pay the price for my sins so that I might live again. . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

"The essence of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures - died the substitute for us criminals, rose the representative of us pardoned sinners - died that our sins might die, and lives again that our souls may live." - C.H. Spurgeon

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