



## *Wells of Salvation Ministries*

Sermon Outline 15      Author: Edmund E. Wells

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### “A Turn For The Hearse”

Scripture – II Kings 20:1-5      Texts – II Kings 20:1, Mark 1:15, Matthew 28:6.

Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live. ...repent, and believe the gospel.  
Come see the place where the Lord lay.

**Introduction:** Recently, it was my privilege to speak for Career Day at a parochial high school in western Ohio. While waiting in the lounge before speaking about creative writing to an alert group of teenagers, I noticed a sign giving directions for finding the East Exit. It read – “Turn Right Walk Towards Cemetery.” These words became an inspiration for me. All of us have taken the wrong road – we’ve all “sinned and come short of the glory of God” – we need to turn right. And all of us, if Christ delays His return, will eventually fall victim to death, “for it is appointed unto man once to die.” We’re all headed for the cemetery. A short time before he died, Hank Williams, the king of country singers, recorded the words, “I’ll never get out of this world alive.” And he didn’t -- nor will we! I suggested this in a poem some years ago. (Through Death To Death). We may go to the grave, but if we have turned right first, that grave will never hold us!

i. The apostle Peter presents a good example of why and how we should turn right. Christ had prayed for him; Christ had warned him, but he still failed. He had to:

#### I. Turn Right

1. From self-reliance
  - A. Admirable quality
    - a. We must help ourselves
    - b. In our society, too many are helplessly too dependent!
    - c. Emerson was the great preacher of self-reliance
      - (1) We could use his message now
        - (a) Welfare lines would shrink, and taxes would shrivel!
  - B. Insufficient
    - a. Peter – though all be offended because of thee, I never will. Though I should die with thee, I’ll not deny thee
      - (1) He meant well – spirit was willing; flesh was weak
    - b. God will help those who help themselves, then look to Him
      - (1) Peter didn’t look beyond self
      - (2) Paul – do all things through Christ who strengthens
2. From self-complacency
  - A. Unaware of peril
    - a. Christ found him sleeping three times
    - b. Christ advised him, watch and pray
  - B. Unmindful of Christ’s anguish

- a. Christ said He was sorrowful unto death
  - b. Watch with me
  - c. Could you not watch with me one hour?
- 3. Self-defense
  - A. Good, if it is not to avoid the cross
    - a. God does not expect us to needlessly waste our lives
  - B. Poor substitute for God's protection
    - a. Sword of steel could never match the sword of the Spirit
      - (1) One reached the head
      - (2) The other reaches the heart
    - b. The battle is the Lord's
      - (1) Vengeance is His
      - (2) Victory is His
- 4. Self-preservation
  - A. Peter and all others forsook Christ and fled
    - a. Their aim was living, even if it meant leaving Christ (Martyrs)
    - b. Christ and His cause could fend for themselves
  - B. Peter followed afar off
    - a. He wanted to be a Christian; he was afraid to be one (Nicodemus)
      - (1) Tried to conceal his religion
      - (2) His big talk was backed by small action
    - b. He hid among his Lord's enemies
- 5. Self-comfort
  - A. Sat down when Christ stood
    - a. At ease in Zion
    - b. Hadn't learned his lesson from sleeping in Gethsemane
    - c. Who stands up for Jesus now?
  - B. Warmed himself at the enemy's fire, while the heart of Christ knew the chill of fear
    - a. Men love pleasure rather than God
- 6. Self-destruction
  - A. His willful selfishness paved the way for his fall
    - a. Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall
    - b. He who plants his feet on earth will rise no higher
      - (1) Heaven holds our hope!
  - B. After protesting his courage, sleeping, sitting, bumbling around trying to fight in the Garden
    - a. He denied knowing Christ – lied
    - b. He broke the commandment to prove his being a sinner – cursed and swore
    - c. He lost God's grace from his heart
- 7. Self-abasement
  - A. Went out – embarrassed, humiliated
    - a. Crowing cock woke him up, recalled Christ's warning
  - B. Wept bitter tears of repentance
    - a. This was the right turn he needed
    - b. This is the right turn that Christ said we all need!

- ii. If Peter serves as a good example of why and how we should turn right, he also displays how we should...

## II. Walk Towards The Cemetery

1. Where Christ lay
  - A. In thought
    - a. Angels sent message of resurrection, by the women – Mark 16:7
    - b. Mary Magdalene brought him word of Lord's empty tomb – John 20:1, 2
  - B. In act
    - a. Hastened – with John
      - (1) We should share our religious experiences
    - b. Observed open grave
    - c. Saw grave clothes separate from head napkin
  - C. In faith
    - a. John believed – John 20:8
    - b. Peter wondered – Luke 24:12
    - c. We believe, we wonder at the miracle
      - (1) Since He lives, we live
2. Where we shall lie
  - A. Regretting failures
    - a. Christ asked Peter of his love for Him – three times, the number of times he denied the Lord
    - b. We regret every year spent in sin
  - B. Working for Christ
    - a. Feeding the lambs – new converts (Pentecost)
    - b. Feeding the sheep – established Christians (Cornelius and Jewish Assembly)
      - (1) More experience required
    - c. Leading the flock
      - (1) Writing two inspired letters
    - d. Enduring hardship (Prison)
    - e. We must encourage sinners to seek, Christians to follow Christ
  - C. Making mistakes
    - a. Peter withdrew from Gentile Christians, to avoid criticism
      - (1) Paul reprimanded him
    - b. None of us are perfect; we keep trying
  - D. Remaining faithful
    - a. In face of death
      - (1) No self-saving maneuvers
    - b. With humility (Peter's manner of crucifixion)

**Conclusion:** As Peter, we must repent – turn and live right, if we are to die right. Man knows that living leads to dying, but Christians know a more advanced truth – dying leads to living. Turn right and walk towards the cemetery, for on the other side is life forevermore!