

John Wyatt Issues of Death Pt 2

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[0 : 00] What is the whole fascination and drive for euthanasia? Well I think in our society there is a great fear of suffering. There is a belief, we have lost a belief as a society that pain and suffering can have any kind of positive benefits.

It is seen as something entirely negative and evil. And that is why this wonderful desire for anaesthesia, I just want to be put out of my misery, I just want to be made unconscious, I don't want to know what is going on. But it is not just that, in fact I think a bigger fear are these second two fears, the fear of indignity, of ending life with the tube being stuck out of every orifice and having to wear nappies like a baby and feeling that I have lost any kind of my own personal dignity. And fear of dependence, which for many modern people is the biggest fear. fear of being and that we have come to believe that to be independent, to live your own life, to do it my way, to be captain of my ship is the best way to live.

fear of being and that actually dependence, and that actually dependence, to depend on other people is the worst way. As we will see that is not a Christian understanding, but it is something that is actually I am afraid has deeply penetrated the Christian world.

So I hear lots of Christian people say, I just don't want to be a burden to anybody, I don't want to depend on other people. I am very happy to care for other people, but ever I come to the end of my life and I become a burden, I become dependent on other people, then I just want to say to God, thank you very much, I have a great life, but it is time to go to heaven now, thank you very much, goodbye and good night.

[1 : 50] And it all sounds very spiritual, but it isn't, it is wrong. Because the truth is, that God designed us to be a burden.

We were made to be dependent. When you came into this world, you were utterly and totally dependent on the love and care of others. The very fact you are sitting here now is because somebody loved you, and somebody cared for you, and somebody wiped your bottom, and looked after you.

And then you go through a phase of your life when other people depend on you. And I think as I might have said last time, I am still going through that phase now. We have got three grown up boys, but I still seem to be discovering about dependence because the phone rings.

And they say, Dad, Dad, Dad, could you put a thousand pounds in my account please? A thousand pounds? Can I borrow the car for three months? So this period of dependence where other people depend on us seems to go on for a very long time.

But you know, most of us are going to end our lives utterly and totally dependent on the love and care of others. And other people will have to care for us. And you know, that isn't an evil thing.

[3 : 05] In some strange and mysterious way, it seems that it's part of the plan. It's part of the way that we were designed. That in fact part of our whole nature of being made out of dust, of being made as pathetic carbon-based life forms, is that we are dependent. We are dependent on one another.

And that's why we're called to bear one another's burdens. And so I think if you ever hear somebody say, I don't want to be a burden, you must say to them, you are wrong.

I'm designed to be a burden to you. And you're designed to be a burden to me. And the life that God has given us is a life of mutual burdensomeness. And that's of course why Paul writes in the letter of the Galatians, bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Mutual burdensomeness is what it should be. And you know, I really believe that it would be wonderful if church families, local church congregations, could really live this out.

Because that's one way in which we as Christians can be such a witness to this world which is mad on I do it my own way, I'm independent. That we need to demonstrate and model within the Christian community a different way of being.

[4 : 23] A way of mutual burdensomeness. It's interesting, physician assisted suicide is legal in Oregon, one of the states there, and in the US.

And it's interesting if you look at the reasons people give for physician assisted suicide in Oregon, these are the reasons. Notice that pain and suffering is not one of them.

It's much more to do with choice and control. Actually that's the legal system in Oregon is what is being proposed should be instituted here in the UK. In the same way.

Of course there are lots of social pressures driving this. An aging population we said, rising healthcare costs, family breakup increasing. So many elderly people are facing the end of their life utterly and totally isolated.

They may be in a home, they may be in their own homes, they may not have a visitor from one year to the next. Is it any surprise that in that kind of total isolation euthanasia seems like some kind of positive thing.

[5 : 24] So this is Lord Faulkner who is currently steering a bill through, about to, through the House of Parliament. Aiming for the legalization of assisted suicide.

And this is going to happen later on in the year. And humanly speaking the risks are very high. And I have to say that I think unless God does the most amazing miracle in our land, within the next five years or so I think that some form of euthanasia legislation will be passed here.

And because of the influence which we have in the world, many countries across the world look to the UK as being the guiding light about medical legislation.

So you can be pretty sure that once the UK falls, the same process is going to happen pretty well around the world. And it's something that I think I see as a great tragedy if it happens.

But it's something for which we need to be prepared and praying and thinking. So this is what the Faulkner Commission said. They recommended that these should be the eligibility criteria.

[6 : 33] You should be aged 18 or over and have a diagnosis of a terminal illness. You should be having a voluntary choice and you should have the mental capacity. And if provided you tick those three boxes, then the idea is that the doctor will give you a package of lethal drugs.

He will give you the mixture of barbiturates, muscle relaxants and so on that will kill you. But you have to take them yourself. Of course what happens to people like Tony Nicholson or people who are sick?

Well it has been suggested that the doctor might even rig up some kind of computerised device with a syringe driver, calculate the lethal dose, draw up the lethal drugs into a syringe, hook it all up through a cannula into a vein, connect it to a computer.

But you have to press the button, the final button. And even if you can't, maybe you have an eye blink detector. You just think of things there. Oh, I think I've got something in my eye. Oh, bang! Sorry, bad medical humour. But, would it be, is there really any difference when the doctor has done all that between the doctor who actually presses the plunger?

[7 : 46] I think in reality there's no significant difference. It's a fig leaf. The idea that the doctor, well it's not with me. I didn't kill the patient. I just calculated the lethal dose and drew up the drugs and put it in the vein and everything else.

Interestingly, in the first version, said that not only did you have those things, but you also had to have unbearable suffering. In the latest version, they've taken that suffering out completely and said you don't have to be suffering at all.

You just have to want to die, that's all. As long as you want to die, suffering is irrelevant. I'm not going to dwell on all this.

It's pretty obvious what the risks might be. Wrong diagnosis, the wrong prediction of life expectancy. As any doctor, experienced doctor knows, whenever we try and predict how long people are going to live, we virtually always get it wrong.

I can think of patients which I confidently diagnosed that death was going to happen within weeks or months and they were alive decades later. So, I think that, you know, doctors predicting of how long people are going to live is far less accurate than the general public believes.

[8 : 54] It's much more like the way that weather forecasting used to be, rather than the way it is. And what about the effects of killing on doctors? It's very interesting in Holland, where euthanasia,

intentional killing is actually legalised and about, on average, a family doctor in Holland will kill his patient, one of his patients, once every three years.

But it's interesting when you read about the accounts, I read about one doctor in Holland who said, when my patient asks me to kill him, I always say, no, no, let's change the subject, I'm not going to do it.

Eventually, it comes to the point where I can't resist it any longer. And then I say, okay, I'll arrange it for a Friday afternoon. I go to the house on a Friday afternoon. Some other guidance says, actually, when doctors go to do a home call to do euthanasia, they shouldn't drive themselves.

They should have somebody else to drive the car because the experience is still. The doctor is often very preoccupied and sometimes have accidents. He says, I go to the house, I do the deed, I fill out the forms, I inform the coroner, and then I go for long walks in the country, I listen to a lot of bark, I try and get my head round what's happened, and I get ready for Monday morning.

So it's interesting, isn't it, that that shows how different, even for a doctor who's done it before, that there is this awareness of some profound moral taboo, something that they have taken a drug and killed their patients and that is not normal, that's not normal medicine.

[10:32] There is quite a lot of evidence showing a rise in dementia and patients with dementia, patients with psychiatric illnesses and increasing figures. If you want to keep up to date with what's happening in this whole area, both internationally, the best is where this is taken from, which is called the Care Not Killing website.

Care Not Killing is an organisation which is devoted to try and oppose euthanasia. Many Christians are part of it, as well as other people who are opposed to euthanasia.

This is a cartoon I came across in a Dutch medical newspaper. It's the equivalent of the BMJ in Holland, so it's just the general magazine for doctors.

And it just shows a rather tired junior doctor, they still wear white coats in Holland, unlike here. And this poor elderly woman who's just been admitted, obviously in a terminal state.

And she's asking the doctor, would someone visit me for a last bit of comfort? And he just says, I'll call him to come, madam. And he's there.

[11:39] And it's just a sick bit of medical humor. But I think it's interesting, isn't it, that that sort of attitude, that's the only solution. That's what doctors do. We just give death as part of our job.

It's really quite common now in Holland. So the effects on the medical profession are really significant. Okay, now, what about responses?

Well, interestingly, I'm going to start the response, not the Christian revelation, but actually 300 years before Christ. And this is the Hippocratic Oath.

The Hippocratic Oath was composed about 300 years before Christ by a strange pagan group of physicians. And they wanted to differentiate themselves from all the other healers and physicians in the land, in the area.

Because up until the Hippocratic doctors, those who could kill were also those who would heal. And those who healed were also those who would kill. Because it's the same kind of knowledge about drugs and herbs.

[12:48] And this is still true in many parts of Africa. If you go to see the medicine man, you go to see the medicine man if you're poorly and you want to get some herbs to get better. But if you want to get rid of your rival, the person who's having an affair with your wife or husband, then you go and see the medicine man.

Because the medicine man is able to give you what you need in order to bump people off. So you never trust the medicine man. Because when the medicine man gives you this little packet and says, take this, you'll feel a lot better.

You're never quite sure whether this is really going to help you or whether somebody else has got to the medicine man first. And so the Hippocratic doctors wanted to differentiate themselves.

And so they took a solemn and binding oath to say, we will use our skill and knowledge only to heal and never to harm. And so they took this solemn oath by Apollo, by all these pagan gods, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, by all the gods and goddesses.

I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability of judging, but I will never use it to injure or wrong them. I will never give a poison to my patient, even if asked, and neither will I suggest such a plan.

[14:04] So, interestingly, both euthanasia and physician assisted suicide were very common in the ancient world. They're not a new idea at all. They've been around for thousands of years. But for the first time, the Hippocratic doctors said, we are going to be different.

We are not going to use these drugs to kill. And Margaret Mead, who's not a Christian, but a sociologist, writing about that said this, For the first time in the history of humankind, there was a complete separation between killing and curing.

Throughout the primitive world, the doctor and the sorcerer tended to be the same person. He with the power to kill had the power to cure. He who had the power to cure, as I'd say, would also be able to kill. With the Greeks, and she meant the Hippocratic doctors, the distinction was made clear. One profession was to be dedicated completely to life under all circumstances, regardless of rank, age or intellect. The life of a slave, the life of the emperor, the life of the immigrant, the life of the defective child.

And so, when the early Christian church came along, they realised that the Hippocratic oath fitted with their own understanding about the sanctity and value of human life.

[15:14] And so, interestingly, what happened is that the early Christian church took hold of the Hippocratic oath, and they Christianised it. And so, instead of swearing by Apollo and Hygieia and Panacea, they changed it to, I swear by Almighty God.

And the Hippocratic oath became the Christian Hippocratic consensus, it was called. And, in fact, everybody had forgotten about those ancient Greeks.

In fact, we would probably, none of us would have ever heard of Hippocrates if it hadn't been for the Christians. It was the Christian church who retained and maintained and promoted this understanding of a profession who was dedicated to life.

Why was that? Well, in Christian thinking, a human life is not just a gift of God's grace, it's a reflection of his being. Because human beings are made in God's image, then Christian teaching is something special and unique about all human lives.

And, in Genesis chapter 9, we have a verse which is said by Bible scholars and by legal experts to be pretty well the oldest extant bit of legal code or one of it that's in the world literature.

[16:27] And it's called the Lex Talionis. It says, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. Why? For, in the image of God, has God made man. So, in this verse, there's a link between the shedding of blood and a prohibition against the shedding of blood is linked to the image of God.

It's because of the image of God that the shedding of human blood is wrong. So, in Christian thinking, the destruction of an innocent human life is always wrong.

Not only because of the wrong to the individual and the community, but also because it's a profound insult to the being and character of God himself. And so, the theologian Gilbert Meiland said, within the story of my life, I have the relative freedom of a creature, but it is not simply my life to do with as I please.

Suicide expresses a desire to be free and not also finite. A desire to be more like the creator than the creature. So, this idea in suicide is, it's my life and I can choose what I like with it.

But of course, a moment's reflection says, did you choose to come into the world? Did you create who you were going to be? Mother, who was going to be your mother and your father? In other words, our life is something that's given to us.

[17:48] It is not simply ours to do with whatever we like. And so, in the Bible and in all societies influenced by Christianity, suicide is never glorified as a noble or honourable way to die.

And self-destruction is a harm to avoid and not a human right to be assisted. And if you think in scripture, there's really no example of a godly, heroic suicide.

Possibly the closest you get to is Samson, who pulls down the house in order to destroy God's enemies, and destroys himself in the process.

But Samson is a deeply ambiguous and complex character. But if you think generally of suicide, you think of Saul, you think of Judas Iscariot. Suicide is seen as an act of despair, an act of hopelessness.

And it's not the same as, it's never glorified. And yet, suicidal thoughts are actually quite common in God's people. So Elijah says, it is enough, God, take my life.

[18:55] But God doesn't say, okay, I'll do it. Instead, he's sent on a sabbatical instead. And Job curses the day he was born. But has to learn that God is in control of his life.

So suicidal thoughts are actually quite common in God's people. And I have to be honest and say, I went through a period of intense depression and ended up in a psychiatric ward. And I too had suicidal thoughts.

And I thought it would be much better for everybody if I just ended it here and now. But thank God somebody didn't turn up with a piece of paper and just sign here and here are the drugs. But instead I was treated with love and compassion and care and healing.

And so I'm sure there are people sitting here who've had suicidal thoughts and at times you've felt that maybe it isn't just better to finish it all.

But the answer is not suicide. The answer is to discover the community. To discover that we all matter to one another. And this is seen beautifully in this picture by John Donne.

[19 : 58] From a poem. No man is an island, an entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clog be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less. Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind.

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. That's the funeral bell. That's the funeral bell. He's hearing the funeral bell tolling. Never send for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.

So there's a Christian understanding of society. That we're all locked together. That what I do with my life affects you. What you do with your life affects me. And that's what we discovered in the church this afternoon.

Which was packed to celebrate the life of a 16 year old girl who had committed suicide. Tragically. The amount of love and grief and care that was being expressed in that church was a sign of the bonds, the links between us all.

We're not just individual people doing our own thing. We're locked together. Whether we like it or not, we're locked together. And actually that's part of God's plan. That's the way it was meant to be.

[21 : 09] That we bear one another's burdens, we support and we care. So dependence is not an alien subhuman condition. It's part of the narrative of every human life. And yet the most amazing thing then is that God does not just teach us this.

No, he enters into the human experience. And he experiences it himself. So he makes himself the God of the universe. The God who has angels, myriads of angels at his compound.

He makes himself a tiny, pathetic, utterly vulnerable baby. And he can do nothing for himself. And he needs to have his bottom wiped.

And he needs to be fed. And he needs to be looked after. And he needs to be kept warm. And at the end of his human life, on the cross, with his arms outstretched, the God of the universe says, I am thirsty.

And he can do nothing for himself. And yet, what the Bible teaches us is that even at that moment of total dependence, Christ is the second person of the Trinity upholding the entire universe by the word of his power.

[22 : 24] So his dignity and his status as God eternal is in no way affected by his dependence.

And so please remember this, brothers and sisters. Because if you find that at some stage in the future, you become utterly and totally dependent, and you need to be cared for, and you need to be washed, and you need to have your bottom wiped.

Your unique dignity and status as a princess or prince of the most high is in no way touched by your dependence. And what's more, God himself has been there before us.

He has experienced, he doesn't just tell us that dependence is a jolly important thing. He actually experiences it himself. And as somebody said, he was with us in the darkness of the womb, as he will be with us in the darkness of the tomb.

That God himself goes before us. And so, Christian thinking about death has this very strange and interesting ambiguity. On the one hand, it's an enemy which we fight against with all our wisdom and our ingenuity and our courage and our strength.

[23 : 37] And yet, in God's strange providence, it's sometimes death can change from an enemy into a severe kind of mercy, a strange kind of healing, a gateway into the next world.

And so, the art of Christian medicine is that we struggle against death, trying to hold it back. Many times in my career, I've been called out of bed in the night, and I've rushed to the hospital, and I've stood there struggling against death, all day and all night, trying to keep it away.

And yet, we try and seek the point at which the time has come to take away our hands and let death occur. And it becomes a strange kind of healing.

And this was embodied very beautifully by this lady, Cicely Saunders, who was a Christian and who was very concerned about the care of dying people.

And back in the 1960s, Christian doctors were confronted with this terrible dilemma. They were watching people die in agony from cancer, advanced cancer and other things. And they only had two choices. Basically, you could stand by and watch them die in agony, or you could kill them to put them out of their misery.

[24 : 51] Now, what do you do when you're confronted with two totally unacceptable choices? Do you just choose the lesser of two evils? No, you don't. When you've got two unacceptable choices, what you've got to do is you've got to invent a third way, a better way.

And that's what Cicely Saunders did. And she invented a completely new way of caring for dying people. And she said, you don't have to kill the patient in order to kill the pain.

And she used to talk about, these were some of the slogans, Not only will we help you to die well, we will help you to live before you die. To live before you die became one of the great slogans to helping people to make the most of those last few days.

Palliative care developed as a response to the statement, there is nothing more that we can do.

This is never true. There is always more that we can do. And so Cicely Saunders talked about total pain. Physical pain, psychological pain, relational pain, spiritual pain.

So here's this elderly person dying of cancer. They're in physical pain because the cancer is invaded into their bones and is causing physical pain. But they're also in psychological pain because they become depressed and feel their life is pointless and what's going to happen to me in the future and is this all there is?

[26 : 06] But they're also in relational pain because the last time they saw their son was 30 years ago and they had this terrible accident and I haven't spoken to him since. And now I'm going to die and I'm never going to see him again.

And they're in spiritual pain because they're feeling, are I going to meet my maker and what about all these sins I've done in my life? And so what Cicely Saunders said is that we have to treat all the pain.

So the physical pain we're going to treat by physical means, by using drugs properly. But the psychological pain we're going to treat by counselling and by talking therapy and by helping people to understand them.

And the relational pain we're going to get on the phone and we're going to find this son in Australia and we're going to say your dad is dying, will you come and see him? Will you put things straight? Will you meet him?

And the spiritual pain we're going to involve and we're going to bring you into the chapel and we're going to pray together and we're going to explain that Christ can bring forgiveness and so on. So the whole, this was holistic caring and it was a wonderful revolutionary thing and it's gone around the world.

[27 : 06] This way of caring is now seen as a wonderful Christian way of caring for dying people. And one of the slogans which came out and I think this is a, has meant a great deal to me and I recommend it to you.

If you don't remember anything else, maybe you could remember this. Suffering is not a question which demands an answer. It's not a problem which demands a solution. It's a mystery which demands a presence.

Suffering is a mystery. Ultimately, the nature of suffering, why one person suffers and one person doesn't and why this happened and why that happened. Ultimately we can't explain it. And what's more, we even shouldn't try to explain it.

But what we can do is we can be the presence. We can be the hands of Jesus. And, erm, I can't remember whether I told the story of the little girl who was going to sleep in the bedroom and was frightened last time.

But I'll tell it to you again anyway. So this little girl is going to sleep in the bedroom and she's frightened because it's dark. And she calls downstairs to her mum who's downstairs. She says, Mummy, Mummy, I'm very frightened. Can you come and look after me and give me a cuddle?

[28 : 18] And mummy's very busy. She says, I'm terribly sorry dear, I'm very busy. I can't come now. So there's a pause and then this little voice comes down the stairs. Mummy, can Daddy come and give me a cuddle? It's very frightening in here.

It's dark. I want to need somebody to give me a cuddle. No, I'm sorry. Daddy's terribly busy too, don't you? Because mummy is a very pious lady, she says, But just remember that God is in the room and he's there and he will give you a cuddle.

And then there's a pause and then this little plaintive voice comes down the stairs. But mummy, I need someone with skin on. And actually I think that's a rather profound story because the point is that because God has made us a physical beings, with physical arms and physical legs and physical bodies, we need God's love to be expressed to us with skin on.

We need physical arms around us. We need words, physical words to be said to us. And our calling as carers, and all of us have a call to be carers in some sense rather, is to be God's love with skin on.

It's to be the presence in the mystery of suffering. So when we're caring for dying people in palliative care, we are neither trying to kill them as rapidly as possible, bump them off quickly, nor are we trying to keep them alive as long as possible.

[29 : 39] Actually what we're trying to do is to maximize the value of these whatever days are left, even if it's only minutes or hours, to make the most to live before you die.

That's the essence of palliative care. And I'll just close about this story. Stuart, who's the guy on the left, the guy in his thirties, was a close friend of mine at all souls.

And I knew him quite well. He was a musician, a professional musician, an academic. He was very introverted, quite shy. He wasn't a sort of super spiritual type at all. He was doing a PhD and some medieval music.

And then he got a horrible kind of cancer, a lymphoma. And it went sweeping throughout his own body. He had chemotherapy, his hair fell out. It got better and then the cancer came back again. And the doctors tried some other drugs and it wasn't working. And they were talking about some new experimental treatment. And I was speaking to Stuart, who I got to know quite well. And I got the impression that actually he was much closer to death than he realized.

[30 : 47] And I remember saying to him, If I could give you three months of pain-free, useful life, and then you were going to die, what would you do with those three months?

And I expected him to say, I'd really like to finish my PhD or something like that. And to my utter surprise, he said, He said, you know, if I really knew that that was going to happen, Do you know what I'd do?

Is I'd stop all that academic work completely. I'd get out my address book. And I would write a letter to everybody I've ever known in my life. And I would tell them about what's happening to me and that I'm dying.

And I would try and explain to them about my Christian faith. And that I had a belief that I was going to meet God. And I was utterly amazed, because this was not the steward that I thought I knew. But that's exactly what happened.

And he started receiving palliative care. He was at home. And he started writing letters. And every day he used to take a whole pile of letters. He was working through his address book.

[31 : 45] And then as time went by, and he still only got halfway through his address book, and he realized time was running out. This was pre... this is about ten years ago. So he photocopied this letter.

And this is just a bit of the letter. Explaining what was going on, and just topping and tailing it to all these people. And then he got weaker and weaker, and he died peacefully at home. And there was a memorial service at All Souls Church.

And over 400 people turned up to pay tribute to Stuart. Including many, many people. And the only reason they were there is because they got a letter.

And it was a very intense, and weepy, and yet wonderful service. And I remember sitting in that service, drying my eyes, and thinking, you know, I'm rather envious of Stuart.

I don't want to go before my time, but actually I wouldn't mind going in the way that Stuart went. Because actually through this whole process, Stuart was growing and learning, and as a person, and as a Christian believer.

[32 : 50] And so, here is a strange mystery. Dying well, and dying faithfully, is an opportunity. It's an opportunity for reordering priorities.

For restoring broken relationships. For saying goodbye. For fulfilling dreams. For finding new meaning. For preparing to meet God. And that's part of God's plan.

And that's why, do you see why, going out like a light in the middle of the night, without any warning, isn't necessarily the best way to die. Because actually, when you're dying, you have the right to have a life.

You have some amazing conversations. You have the right to have relationships put right that have never been put right before. You have the right to ask forgiveness. Dying well is an opportunity. And therefore, it's something that we shouldn't run away from. And so, when we're caring for the dying patient, we should provide pain relief, we should provide provision of food, we should provide compassion, humanity, and the avoidance of abandonment.

[34 : 02] And, I have a picture, I haven't got it on this slide, but it just shows a horizon.

And on the distant horizon is the first blush of dawn. And it's illustrating the verse in Proverbs, Proverbs 4, verse 18 I think it is.

And it says this, The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which grows into the everlasting day. You know, in secular thinking, the way our life grows is that it starts from nothing, and then bit by bit it gets bigger and bigger, and you learn, and your body gets stronger, and you learn things, and you get better and better, and everything is getting better, and then you hit 25. And from that time onwards, you're on the slow, slow, downhill thing. And basically, you're getting wrinkles, your cells are dying, you're losing brain cells, your muscles rotting, down and down, and down, and down, and down, and down, and eventually you die, and that's it.

But in Christian thinking, in Christian faith, our eyes are on the distant horizon, like the first gleam of dawn. I don't know if you've ever had that experience. It's happened to me many times.

[35 : 29] I've been driving through the night, and it's been long, long, and it seems it goes on, and it goes on, and it goes on, and you think is this night ever going to end? And then you see it, just on the horizon, you see that first blush, and you know, inexorably, moment by moment, second by second, minute by minute, the dawn is coming.

Nothing can stop it, it's coming. And that's the image in that verse, the path of the righteous, is like the first gleam of dawn that grows into the everlasting day. May God help us to live our lives in the first gleam of dawn. Amen.