

HE'S ONLY A PRAYER AWAY

by

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CHAPTER ONE

I See Dead People

Just before he died, Sam Cooke recorded a song that is now a classic. He said:

I was born by the river, in a little tent
And just like that river, I've been running ever since
It's been a long, long time coming, but I know
A change gone come, Oh yes it will

It's been too hard living but I'm afraid to die
I don't know what's up there, beyond the sky
It's been a long, long time coming, but I know
A change gone come, Oh yes it will

Death. It is something that many of us don't want to talk about. We are afraid of it. We don't understand it. It is a mystery to us.

Sometimes we feel guilty and even blame ourselves when someone that we love dies. We say things like, "If only I would have been there." Or, "Maybe if I would have been a better son or daughter; a better brother or sister; a better father or a better mother."

The story was told of a young man that lived in New York City. One day, he went to the market for his aging mother. While he was there, he noticed a strange looking man that was staring at him and following him around the store. When he looked closer, he realized that it was the angel of death.

It frightened him so badly that he ran out of the store, leaving all of his groceries behind. When he got home, he told his mother what had happened. She immediately took him to the airport and put him

on a flight to Los Angeles. Then she went to the market and confronted the death angel.

She asked him why was he following her son around the store and scaring him. The death angel said, "I'm sorry Ma'am. I didn't mean to frighten him. I was just surprised to see him here in New York. You see, I have an appointment with him tonight in Los Angeles."

Death. As mysterious as it is, there is one thing that is certain. We all have an appointment with it. It doesn't matter whether you are young or old, black or white, pretty or ugly, short or tall, big or small, behind prison walls or walking the streets. One day, death is going to come knocking on your door. The only question is will you be ready.

To some of you, this might sound like a eulogy or a sermon that should be preached at a funeral. Well, in a sense it is, because believe it or not, I see dead people. Yes I do. Let me explain.

There was a movie that came out a while back called, “The Sixth Sense”. Bruce Willis played the part of a child psychologist, named Dr. Malcolm Crowe.

One night, while he and his wife were celebrating an award that he had won, he was shot by one of his former patients that had broken into their home. Dr. Crowe falls back onto his bed.

In the very next scene, six months has gone by. Dr. Crowe has another patient, a very strange eight year old boy, named Cole, who has a secret. He can see things that no one else can see.

Cole is afraid to tell anyone his secret because he knows that no one will believe him. He knows that people will think he is crazy.

But one day, Cole gets to the point where he can't keep it to himself anymore, and he says, “Dr. Crowe. I'm ready to tell you my secret now.” He looks at the doctor, and in a voice that is just above a whisper, he says, “I see dead people.”

Dr. Crowe looks at Cole the same way some of you would be looking at me if we were in the same room. But that doesn't faze Cole because he knows that he has to tell somebody what he sees.

He said, "I see dead people. They are walking around like regular people. They only see what they want to see." Then he said something that messed me up. He said, "They don't know they are dead."

Dr. Crowe asked him, "How often do you see them? Cole said, "All the time. They are everywhere."

Of course, Dr. Crowe thought Cole was crazy. But before the movie was over, Dr. Crowe realized that he, himself was dead too. Yes, he was one of the dead people that Cole was able to see. He was walking around like regular people. He only saw what he wanted to see. He didn't know that he was dead.

I want to tell you something. I have a secret too. I'm kind of like Cole. I see dead people. Don't

get me wrong. I'm not talking about the kind of dead people that Cole saw in the movie. I don't see any ghosts. I see people who are dead in their sins. I see people who are lost and on their way to hell. I see people who are separated from The Almighty God. I see dead people.

When I'm driving down the street, I see dead people. When I'm walking through the mall, I see dead people. When I'm in the grocery store, I see dead people. When I'm at the post office, I see dead people. In the jails and in the prisons, I see dead people. In the schools and in the playgrounds, I see dead people. Everywhere I go, I see dead people

They are everywhere. Dead people. They are walking around like regular people. They only see what they want to see. They don't know that they are dead. Some of them are reading this book right now. Dead people. Not only are they dead, they are wondering around in a world of hopelessness.

The Prophet Ezekiel saw dead people too. They had been dead for a very long time. He described it in the 37th chapter of his book. He said, “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me own in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.”

Where is this valley that the LORD led Ezekiel too? The Bible doesn't say, but today I believe it could be located on any street corner, in any community, in any city. It could be in any school, in any city, or it could be located in any prison in any state. Dead, dry bones.

In verse two, he said, “There were very many in this open valley, and lo, they were very dry.” They had been cast away and long since forgotten about.

But in verse three, God asked the prophet an interesting question. He said, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I don't know if you know this or not, but whenever God asks a question, He already knows the answer. That's why he said to Ezekiel,

“Prophesy upon these bones. Preach to these dead people. Say unto them, “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.”

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). He said, “I come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Thus saith the LORD God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live” (Ezekiel 37:5).

If you are one of the walking dead, you can have life. All you have to do is call on the Lord and repent of your sins. It doesn't matter where you are, He will hear you. Remember, He's Only A Prayer Away.

