

## The Sting of Death

Ponder: Victory in Jesus

Scripture: "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55, NKJV).

I strongly dislike yellowjackets. A type of wasp, the southern variety thrives in the area where I live. Being predators of insect pests makes them valuable to agriculture, but the downside is that the females sting! A few years ago, a yellowjacket flew into a brother's shirt pocket as he was standing at the communion table. He handled it better than I would have!

Scripture speaks of a sting infinitely worse than that of a wasp. Paul wrote, "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). Sin causes spiritual death (separation from God); and physical death (separation of body and spirit) exists because of sin.

Being "dead in your trespasses" (Col. 2:13) makes one a fit subject for burial in baptism (v. 12). After all, we don't bury someone who is alive, but someone who is dead! Sin killed him. Before baptism he was dead "in" sin; by being baptized he died "to" sin (Rom. 6:2-3).

Rom. 8:13 teaches us to "put to death the deeds of the body." Col. 3:5 specifies, "Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness."

The problem is, sin doesn't like to stay dead! It keeps coming back to sting us. I recently fogged our auditorium and killed about fifty yellowjackets. Yet as I was sweeping them up this morning, I found some still alive! And I know from experience that more will make their way inside to escape the cold. There's no end to the battle.

Just so, we must keep a constant vigil against sin. No one said it would be easy. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

Hymn: "Victory in Jesus"

Prayer: Loving Father, we thank you for our victory in Jesus. Please strengthen us in our continuing battle against sin. In Jesus' name, Amen.