

Misconceptions about Islam, Part 8

During the last two months, the Islamic Center in Stillwater lost three of its members. Additionally, a fourth death occurred overseas when a PhD student at OSU lost his mother. Deceased were 33, 70, and 33 years old. Death knows no age barrier. Given these recent losses, is it true that Islam does not respect life and death?

Death is often a frightening thought, but it is not something we should fear. When one truly understands death, the fear diminishes. Contrary to the common perception that death is the end of life, Islam teaches otherwise. As previously explained in the Stillwater News Press (05/25/24 C7 & 06/01/24 C7), Islam holds that every person will be accountable for their deeds (in this worldly life). Death is viewed as a transition — a passage to the afterlife. It stands to reason that there would be a transition between this temporary and eternal life. So, how does Islam deal with death?

While death is often seen as frightening, many Muslims view this life as more challenging due to its numerous temptations. They also believe that every human will ‘taste’ death. The Quran states, *‘Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages*

in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).’ [Quran 3:185] The use of the word ‘taste’ is particularly reassuring, as tasting something usually implies a small quantity.

As with all aspects of life, Islam offers guidance on death. When a Muslim is in the presence of a dying person, it is encouraged to ask the dying individual, if they are able, to remember God, the Creator. Islam teaches that the ultimate purpose of our existence is to remember and be mindful of God, the Almighty. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught, ‘Whoever’s last words are a remembrance of God and an affirmation that He is the One and only God will enter Paradise.’ It is only natural that as one prepares to leave this world, they should free themselves from worldly concerns and dedicate their final moments to God “if they can.”

People around the dying person should remain silent and respect the solemnity of the moment. This is also an opportunity to reflect on the reality of this temporary life and the inevitability of our own time. It is recommended to recite the following verses: *‘O (you) the one in*



Guest Column

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(complete) rest and satisfaction (27) Come back to your Lord, well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing unto Him (28) Enter you, then, among My honored servants (29) And enter you My Paradise (30).’ [Quran 89:27-30]

Muslims believe that the Angel of Death is responsible for drawing the soul out of the body. He asks the soul to leave the body, and if it is among the righteous, it is gently wrapped in silk and taken by other angels to God, where it remains until the Day of Resurrection. However, if the soul is destined otherwise, not to be among the righteous, it will be wrapped in a rough cloth and taken by angels deep into the earth.

After death, the body of the deceased must be treated with the utmost respect. In Islam, the procedures for preparing the body should be completed as soon as possible. The first step is to wash the body. A male will be washed by one or two males, and a female by one or two females. This process is crucial, and those who undertake it must

have a good reputation and sufficient knowledge of the Prophet’s teachings regarding this procedure. Anything they observe about the deceased’s body is considered a sacred secret; revealing it is a grave sin that can lead to hellfire.

After washing, the body of the deceased is wrapped in white cloth, though other colors may be used, with white being the customary choice. An exception to this practice is made for martyrs; their bodies are neither washed nor wrapped. Martyrs are to be buried as they are found after battle.

Muslims must also perform a special prayer over the deceased’s body. The body is carried into a mosque, where people gather and stand in lines. Typically, a next of kin or a close relative is asked to lead the prayer, which usually lasts 5 to 10 minutes. During the prayer, those present ask for forgiveness and blessings for the deceased.

Muslims will then carry the body, in a coffin or a hearse to the cemetery. At the cemetery, the body is removed from the coffin and laid in its grave which is usually four or five feet deep (there is a legal depth for graves, and each grave has to be inspected by an official from the state.) After covering the body with dirt people stand for about 20 to 30 minutes to

pray for the deceased and ask God to give the deceased the right answers! What answers you may ask?

In Islam, it is taught that everyone laid to rest in their graves will be visited by two angels who will ask three questions. The first question is: ‘Who is your God?’ The answer should be, ‘My God is Allah, the One and Only.’ The second question is: ‘What is your faith?’ The response should be, ‘Islam is my faith.’ The third question is: ‘Who is your messenger?’ The answer should be, ‘Muhammad (pbuh).’

In Islam, patience is a key teaching when dealing with death within a group or family. Patience in these times is greatly rewarded, and followers are encouraged to recite the Quranic verse: *‘Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: “Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.”’* [Quran 2:156]. Death is ever-present, and we often witness the funerals of relatives or friends, yet it is unexpected when death comes for us. Despite being a fact of life that many neglect, it is sometimes described as the only true certainty. It is surprising to see people focus on preparing for everything to be in order after they are gone while neglecting to consider their own fate and jour-

ney. But death is not the end of one’s deeds. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) taught us: ‘When a person dies, their deeds come to an end except for three things: ongoing charity (a continuous charitable project), beneficial knowledge (to others), and a virtuous descendant who prays for them.’

Giving to charity is considered one of the greatest deeds one can perform. Teaching others is another form of beneficial knowledge, including writing books or any other method of educating others. These actions are among the good deeds that continue to benefit a person even after their death. Remembering our parents in our prayers, whether they are alive or not, is also a valuable practice for their benefit. There are many ways to continue earning rewards even after leaving this world.

In the end, while the topic of death can be difficult, it’s important to remember that our journey does not end with death. Just as hospitals use Automated External Defibrillators to revive hearts and bring people back to life, there is a belief in many traditions, including Islam, that remembering death revives souls.

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After a slew of controversies, the SBC turns to a low-key leader

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – As he stepped up into the old-fashioned wooden pulpit on a recent Sunday, Pastor Clint Pressley wasted no time.

After quickly thanking the student discipleship minister who had brought many of the church’s Camp Paradise teens to the 11 a.m. service at his church, Hickory Grove Baptist, Pressley turned to the task at hand.

“Mark chapter 14,” he intoned in his Southern drawl. “If you’re a guest with us, we read the Bible and then we just talk

about the Bible. You’re gonna find it feels a lot like a Bible study. Mark 14 starting in verse one ...”

After relating the first 10 verses that tell the story of the woman who anoints Jesus with a bottle of expensive perfume, he drives home the passage’s lesson with a series of questions: “You have one life to live,” he said. “Pour it out. Have you done what you could? What’s holding you back? I want your life to be all-out devotion to God.”

Pressley, 55, the newly elected president of the Southern Baptist

Convention, is a hard-working pastor of North Carolina’s fifth-largest Baptist church, whose main campus lies on a busy commercial corner of a modest suburban neighborhood of 1950s ranch homes.

Southern Baptists, the nation’s largest Protestant denomination, has a faced a series of challenges in recent years: declining membership, a sexual abuse crisis, a crackdown on women pastors, a condemnation of in vitro fertilization, an embrace of Trump and MAGA politics. Yet at its last meeting

in June its members elected a traditional preacher who wears three-piece suits, a tie and monogrammed cuffs and mostly stays out of the limelight.

“In a time where we have so much cultural chaos, Clint’s steadiness and his reputation for integrity really impress a majority of Southern Baptists,” said Nathan Finn, a professor of faith and culture at North Greenville University in South Carolina and the recording secretary for the SBC.

Pressley does not have a national following or a big social

media presence. Though he is a trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has served in various other denominational roles, he is not trying to use the presidency, which he may serve for a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms, as a platform for influence.

“Really, my hope is to clear some of the fog of negativity and get us back on those two things we have: our confession and our mission,” he said of his mostly symbolic new role.

—Religion News Service

Worship at the church of your choice this week

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.



Psalms 147:3

Stillwater Bible

Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers

JB Bond, Senior Pastor

Sundays

Worship Service8:30 a.m.

G.R.O.W. Groups9:45 a.m.

Worship Service11:00 a.m.

Kids' Church11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297)7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute6:30 p.m.

Impact Youth6:30 p.m.

Bible Kids6:30 p.m.

7617 W. 6th Ave.

Stillwaterbible.org (405) 564-5794

Crosspointe

CHURCH

Sunday School - 9:30

Sunday AM Worship - 10:30

Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00

Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

1807 N. Jardot

gocrosspointe.com

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CHURCH

701 S. DUNCAN • 405-372-5212

SUNDAY

Bible Study • 9:30am

Worship Service • 11:00am

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

Begin at 6:00pm

Watch our worship service on Facebook

www.fbcstillwater.org

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METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org

400 W. 7th • 372-5854

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship8:30am & 11:10am

Sunday School10:00am

Closer Walk10 am Family Life Center

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

BAPTIST CHURCH

4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

Sunday School

9 am

Worship Service

8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST

CHURCH

Independent Baptist

Expository Preaching

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday10:30am

Thursday7:30pm

723 E. 17th

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580

www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School

11:00 a.m. - in person, online

On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3

and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

Sunnybrook

Christian Church

421 E. Richmond Rd • 377.0923

www.sunnybrookccc.org

SUNDAY SERVICE SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45 am 8:30 am

11:15 am 9:45 am

KIDS CHURCH 9:45 & 11:15 am

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Stillwater

Church of Christ

stillwatercoc.org

Your place for

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SUNDAY

Meeting Times

Bible Study9:30 AM

Worship10:30 AM

Bible Study5:00 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible study7:00 PM

821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

Southside Baptist

Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.

Perfectly • Purposely • Placed

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM

WEDNESDAY

YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30

Paul Hutchinson - Pastor

Address - 1223 S. Perkins. Rd.

Phone: 408-372-2411

Email: southsidesillwater@gmail.com

The Islamic

Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.

Friday (Weekly) Prayers

1:40 PM - 2:10 PM

For Daily Prayer Times

www.icstillwater.org

St. Francis Xavier

Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass 8:30 | 11:15 a.m.

1 p.m. (en español)

Tue & Thu Mass 12:10 p.m.

Wednesday Mass 12:10 p.m.

6 p.m. (en español)

Friday Mass 12:10 p.m.

Saturday Mass 9 a.m. | 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)

Confessions

Tues-Fri | 11:30-12 p.m.

Wednesday | 5 p.m.

Saturday | 9:45-11 a.m.

405-372-6886 www.sfxstillwater.org

Zion Lutheran

Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor

504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703