

BEING A HOSPICE CHAPLAIN

As a hospice chaplain people often say, “That must be such a hard job.” Actually, it isn’t although there are some sad moments. Do you know the hardest part of my job? It’s not what most people think. It’s not the death of my patients. The hard part of my job is seeing the poor life choices many people have made and the deep regrets they have as they near the end of life.

There were years after I graduated from college that I’d occasionally have an anxiety dream that I’d enrolled for some class and then forgotten to attend class until it was time to take the final exam and I was in a panic because I was clueless about what the course was even about. That’s how many people die. They’re about ready to die and come before a holy God for their final exam and they haven’t even cracked the textbook. They’re clueless about what the Bible truly teaches. Many are just hoping they’ve been good enough and earned enough Brownie points to make it into Heaven.

On the other hand, I sometimes witness some of the most amazingly beautiful deaths one can imagine. They are few and far between but there are some patients who have passionately loved the Lord their entire lives and their bags are packed for Heaven. One of my all-time favorite patients was an elderly Black woman who’d loved Jesus since childhood. She was dying of liver cancer and one of her kids said, “*Mom, we just hate to see you wasting away like this.*” She said, “*Oh, no. Don’t feel that way. This is my finest hour.*”

I pray you will live your life such that your death will be your finest hour. If you’re a Christian the final exam you will take before the Lord at the Judgment Seat Of Christ will impact your life for eternity.