從基督教倫理學看臨終與死亡

Dying and Death from the Perspective of Christian Ethics

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摘要:

基督徒可否施行主動安樂死，或撤除維生系統，或者應該對臨終病人施予極端的醫療嗎？教牧人員應該如何從基督教信仰的角度提供意見呢？美國醫學會代表在1973年公開反對醫師慈悲殺人，可是James Rachels卻主張主動和被動安樂死在道德上並無重大差別。本文首先澄清主動安樂死和自然死亡在倫理意義上的差別，接著闡述基督教信仰對死亡的態度。基督教從一開始，就清楚的表明基督教是一個相信並且傳揚死人復活的信仰團體（徒4:2）。耶穌基督的十字架和復活是基督教信仰的中心。在新約當中，死亡雖然仍被描繪成為敵人（來2:14; 敘1:18），但是這個敵人，在耶穌基督復活的歷史事件中已經徹底被打倒了（林前15）。保羅在自己的生命歷程中體驗到耶穌基督復活的力量，同時也感受到耶穌基督在十字架上的犧牲的愛，他知道這樣的愛和復活的力量也在他的身上。所以他說：「我已經與基督同釘十字架。現在活著的，不再是亞，乃是基督在我裡面活著。」(加2:20)。對保羅而言，死成為一種神奇經驗，因為體驗到死，所以體驗到復活。在保羅生命的末期，他已經跨越了對於生死的擔憂。本文最後主張牧師作為靈性指導者及上帝話語的僕人，如果自己能夠對生與死有深刻的體驗，就能夠認清楚牧師

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Abstract

When death is imminent, should Christians choose active euthanasia — withholding or withdrawing life support systems? Is there a Christian perspective on these issues which pastors can provide to those in such situations? In 1973 the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association (AMA) declared their opposition to mercy-killing. Yet in contrast, James Rachels insisted that there is no significant distinction between mercy-killing (or active euthanasia) and the withdrawal of life support system (or passive euthanasia), a practice which the AMA supports. This article seeks to point out such a difference between active and passive euthanasia. From its earliest days, the Christian faith has taught that in Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:26, death is the final enemy and it is destroyed. For Paul, death and resurrection represent a personal mystical experience, which leads him to proclaim his participation in Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Therefore he can say, “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). Through his spiritual journey, Paul surpasses the anxiety of dying and death. In its conclusion, this article suggests that Paul’s spiritual journey sheds light on end-of-life issues. Pastors, as spiritual guides, have the responsibility to explicate the moral significance of this message.

Keywords: Christian Ethics, Dying, Death, Euthanasia, Pastoral Ethics, Life and Death