

“He Didn’t Make It”

“He/she didn’t make it” is a phrase we use to convey that someone has died; most often, that they didn’t survive an accident or some critical medical challenge or procedure. Like most people, I’ve heard or said it way too many times. And like everyone else, I know what we mean, but the phrase has come to bother me...

Exactly what is the “it” that was not made? Obviously, “continued physical life” is the intended antecedent. Believe me, I understand- we want our family members, loved ones, and brethren to continue living here with us. Thus, when such does not occur, “He/she didn’t make it” is a euphemism that we use in efforts to “soften” the news that needs to be conveyed- that the person has in fact died.

While I’m not suggesting that we’re wrong for using the phrase, or even that we stop using it, I do think we should think further about what we’re actually saying, and what such implies about our attitudes toward death. So consider a couple of points with me in these regards:

- **All of us are going to die.** Unless we are a part of those who are “*alive and remain until the coming of the Lord*” (cf. 1Thessalonians 4:13-17), everyone is going to die, Hebrews 9:27. So, it seems somewhat foolish to say that the deceased “didn’t make it” to an appointment that everyone keeps.
- **“It” is not the end.** We use the pronoun to refer to “continued physical life,” but the *end of physical life* is not “the end.” The second half of Hebrews 9:27, which has told us that *everyone is going to die*, says, “*and after this (meaning, death) comes judgment.*” My point is simple: Death is not the end. “OK, so?” If death is only “the end” of *physical* life, and we understand that *spiritual* life continues after it, why would we say “He/she didn’t make it”?
- **Unending *physical* life is not the goal.** The completion of *physical life* is but “graduation day” to eternal *spiritual life*. Note Revelation 14:13 in these regards, “*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! Yes... that they may rest from their labors...*” When a *faithful* person dies, they are said to be at “rest.” Why would we say they “didn’t make it” when they have, on the contrary, “made it” exactly to the point and place for which they have labored? “Rest” and *eternal reward* is precisely the point of *physical* life in Christ!

Perhaps a couple of examples will help. Do you suppose anyone said, after the apostle Paul’s death, that “he didn’t make it”? When he sensed that his *physical* life was nearing an end, he wrote, “*I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith,*” 2Timothy 4:6. Obviously, he did not view himself as not having “made it,” but the opposite! He **did make it** to the *end of the course* having remained *faithful*, which again, is entirely the point of life.

“But what about Moses? He *didn’t make it* to the Promised Land!” Oh yes he did! He didn’t go into the *physical* land of Canaan, but he **did make it** to the *spiritual* Promised Land of heaven, cf. Hebrews 11:23-28. Which is more important? The “reward” (Hebrews 11:26) to which Moses *looked* and for which he *strove* was not Canaan, but heaven.

Maybe we say such things, as “he/she didn’t make it” innocently enough- I’m certainly not accusing anyone otherwise. But then again, perhaps are our words are underlain with an all-too-physically-oriented concepts of “life” and its purpose.

A preacher was once called to the Emergency Room where a dear Christian lady had been taken in grave condition. A Christian brother met him and said, “She didn’t make

it.” The preacher replied with an understanding but reassuring smile, “Oh yes she did.” You know what the brother meant. Think about what the preacher meant too, won’t you? Physical death is not “*the end*” but merely the necessary “graduation day” to eternity with God for the faithful... and I hope and pray we all “*make it*” there. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)