

Resurrection Without Death

John 5:25-29

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Introduction: Life is the major issue for people. I have never met anyone who was not interested in their own life and how it was going. In fact, our own lives consume us night and day. When we are young it centers on our future hopes and aspirations. What will we do with our lives? Who will we marry? What will we possess, where will we live and what will we become?

As we move along and settle many of those issues the questions about life change. Am I on the right path? Is there something I am missing? What will the lives of my children be like....what will they do with their lives?

Toward the end things change again! Will I have enough money when I can no longer work? Who will take care of me if I cannot take care of myself? When and how will I die? Will that be the end of my life, my hopes, my aspirations my joy?

Why am I preaching this sermon: Life is about life! Life is what we think about whether or not we realize it. Today, tomorrow....even yesterday are, will be and were about life and nothing else.

No one should have to guess what I plan to talk about: Jesus the creator of life knows this. Christ is the sole origin in the universe for what we know as "LIFE!" Why is it then, that Christ is primarily offered ONLY for the answer to those final questions we just mentioned..." When and how will I die? Will that be the end of my life, my hopes, my aspirations my joy?"

If life from beginning to end is this all consuming to all men, why do we relegate the relevancy of the designer and creator of life to one question right at the end? How have we managed to imagine that Christ offers only the final answers and that we are on our own to find answers to everything else? Jesus was not anything at all like that. Listen to just one thing He said about Himself when He preached in His hometown.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.

Let me read the text and then we will look at the present aspect of Eternal Life. I want to speak to you about resurrection without death.

John 5:25-29 ²⁵ "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not

marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Eternal Life Now

John 5:25-26 ²⁵ "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.

Truly, truly, I say to you: This was Jesus' way of stressing the factual nature of something He was about to say. He often used it before making sweeping and astounding claims about His person, His power and His purposes. He uses it 25 times in John alone. Here he introduces a teaching about eternal life

When I say "eternal life" everyone's mind goes to death. It is what happens after you die. That is when you get eternal life. AND....if that is true there is not much use for it in this life. In fact, as the saying goes...."we don't want to become so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good!...right?"

But the word "eternal" is specific and it does not only mean life that just goes on and on. It has that meaning, to be sure, but only God possesses Eternal Life in its complete meaning. Eternal life describes the nature of life that God possesses. It speaks of infinity in both directions. No beginning and no end as well as everything else God is!

An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live: Jesus hearers believed in resurrection in much the same way you believe in it. There will be a time when God resurrects all men....sometime....in the future.....after we die. BUT that will be then and this now and life is going on for me now and I am apparently on my own down here. When Jesus appeared before the closed and sealed tomb of Lazarus He had this conversation with Martha.

John 11:23-26 ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? Just to show He could do it? Just to awe the mourners? He did it to show that Eternal life is not just resurrection after you die. It begins in this world and it is available **IN THIS LIFE** and not only the life to come.

Martha believed, like many that there will be some event in the far away future in which her brother will come back to life, but Jesus tells her that He is the life giver and He gives that life now. Jesus does confirm that there will be a resurrection of the body in the last days but adds this stunning assertion.... "everyone who lives and believes in me shall

never die.” And then to prove His truthfulness and authority to make such a claim He turns to the tomb and shouts....”Lazarus!!! Come Out!”

When Jesus says **“and is now here”** He is teaching what He demonstrates to Martha and the crowd of mourners at Lazarus’ tomb. Eternal life with all its benefits begins during your physical life. If it is the voice of Christ that can give true, meaningful, fulfilling, joyful, purposeful, desirable life then why can’t it be heard now? The answer is that it can be. This is exactly why Paul said things like,

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 We preach Christ....crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We proclaim or make known to men the words of Christ that they may hear them calling and live. Not only can Christ still be heard when He speaks but He can still be seen when He is preached. Both are a work of the Spirit of God as Christ is proclaimed to men.

2 Corinthians 4:5-6 ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself: So what is the state of men in this world? God says they are dead while they live. Our parents give us physical life with its physical blessings, but Christ is able to give spiritual life that satisfies your spirit. The physical is able to mesh with the physical. When we seek spiritual purpose in what is at hand....the physical.....we find that it is always just out of reach.

By spiritual we mean the satisfactions of the inner man. Not the satisfactions of our physical bodies. Men desire peace not just absence of conflict around them. We desire abiding joy not just a good time. We want an inner sense of purpose not just something to keep us purposefully busy. The physical never satisfies the spiritual and we are primarily spiritual. Why is life so frustrating? We need spiritual life to go along with our physical life. Jesus told Nicodemus:

John 3:6-7 ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Paul said that....

Ephesians 2:4-5 ⁴ God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

So when Jesus says, **“an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live,”** He is teaching the truth of Eternal life as a present possession. He is speaking of life in the inner man that satisfies

what physical life alone can never do. And as surely as Jesus, who is God the Son could speak the physical creation into existence by His mere words, He also calls to men and grants them life when they hear His voice and put their trust in Him.

This is why Christ came to where we are because we could not get to where He was.

If life is about life why not go to the source to discover its meaning and purpose? Why buy a counterfeit when you can have the genuine article for free. Do not try to satisfy your inner man by means suited only to your outer being. It is an exercise in frustration and for many it is the lifelong pursuit that will always disappoint.

Eternal Life to Come

John 5:27-29 ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. ²⁸ "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man: Perhaps you think that the term "Son of Man" was Jesus' way of emphasizing His humanity, but the opposite is actually true. Jesus uses the term from the book of Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14 ¹³ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

The Son and the Father are one in essence and purpose, but they do different things. The Father allowed Daniel to see that all ruling power and Glory were given into the hands of the Son. That Son stepped into the human baby conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary and was now living on the earth. Jesus is the only human ever fully qualified to Judge creation because He made it, sustains it and owns it....and that would include you, me and every human being.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice: As we have noted, the Jews believed in the resurrection. That was not a problem. So why does Jesus say "do not marvel?" Because what they did not want to believe was the fact that The God of Creation was standing before them as a flesh and blood human being and that HE....He would call all men out of their tombs.

They will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life: A resurrection of life speaks of a physical resurrection that matches the spiritual one that God has given us when we put our trust in Christ. When Jesus said to Martha..."Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live," He was speaking of the resurrection of those who have received eternal life by trusting the life giver during their

physical life. When He added, “and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die,” He was speaking of this reality. Those who die physically do not die spiritually and they are resurrected of life in heaven with Christ forever.

Jesus is not teaching that salvation is based on works. Men never gain eternal life by doing good. They do good because Christ has given them eternal life. He has granted believers a share in His own life and His life is perfectly good. Jesus always taught that eternal life is given on the sole basis of trust in His goodness, holiness and good works and never ever in our own.

John 6:28-29 ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

The rest of the New Testament confirms that at every turn.

Romans 4:2-5 ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment: Jesus is still talking about authority to execute judgment when He speaks of the future physical resurrection of evil doers. Theirs will not be sweetness and light. Many have always believed that they will escape judgment through death. But, this is a serious error with eternal consequences. David described people who think this way when he said....

Psalms 73:6-12 ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. ⁷ Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of *their* heart run riot. ⁸ They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. ⁹ They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. ¹⁰ Therefore his people return to this place, And waters of abundance are drunk by them. ¹¹ They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" ¹² Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased *in* wealth.

Perhaps you have been angry or anxious about how so many very wicked people seem to sail through life untouched by the troubles you and others have. They die in their sleep in their warm beds having killed, hated, stolen and mistreated countless victims. They have escaped justice! They have gotten away with it all! BUT....not so fast.

The years past...generations come and go as their bodies rest in the grave...until...on some future morning they are awakened by a voice. Suddenly they are physically alive again and standing before a judge's bench that appears to also be a Huge White Throne. On it sits The Son of Man. He is Jesus Christ. Hated during His earthly life and still despised by the world when He is preached, loved and worshiped by His people. John takes us to watch the actual future event as it unfolds.

Revelation 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Wait a minute! Why are they called dead if they are alive again? For the same reason that you and I need new birth. For the same reason that we are said to be "dead in our sins" until Christ gives us life. These are those who have rejected Christ at every turn. They want their purposes to prevail and hope to gain life apart from the source of all life. In short they have no use for Christ as life giver and savior. They must now face Him as the Judge of all creation.

CONCLUSION: Every thought, hope and desire you have concerns your life. In fact it is all you ever think about. Even when we are giving our life to care for a child or love a spouse it is still about life. Each person gets one. It is a physical life to live in a physical world. The tragedy is this....God made us in His own image and the longings of our heart are only ever satisfied by coming back to God....and the only way back to God is through trust in Christ.

Jesus left heaven to become a man and bear the sins of men. He paid with His own life so that we would not have to pay with ours. He also lived the life of good works and love that we can only talk about. AND....He gave that to the Father with your name marked on it. Christ lived perfectly on your behalf and He died for your sins...On Your Behalf!

2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is very important to you today. If you seek fulfillment and purpose in the physical world you will never find it. You will not find it because the physical world God made was intended to support our physical life. It provides also many pleasures to be sure....God is kind and graciously gives life to all men, but it cannot meet the inner, deeper needs of the human soul for purpose, forgiveness, love, peace and joy. These are spiritual in nature and God alone possesses them.

If you think good works will get you to heaven you will fail. If you think religion of any kind will get you to heaven you will be shocked by the teachings of Christ. The religious of Christ's day were.

Resurrection of your body is a certainty, but the nature of its resurrection is not. Jesus said that the hour is now...to hear His voice and give yourself to Him. This is spiritual resurrection without physical death. Christ alone will then satisfy your inner man because the world cannot do so.

If you worry about your life...you are normal. What else is there after all outside of our lives. BUT...the things you most need and hope for are found by trusting Christ with your most precious possession...your own life. If you give it to Him He will not only raise your body in the last day and give you eternal joy with Him, but He will begin to satisfy the most pressing needs of your life. He does this by sending God the Spirit into our lives to produce the very things there that the world cannot produce.

Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Jesus' voice is still heard today. The preaching of Christ is intended to make it heard. So hear it echoing down through the centuries. It is the call of Christ to Eternal Life.

John 7:37-39 ³⁷ on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ ...He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;