

2023 Resurrection Sunday Service

"The Resurrection & The Life" John 11:25-26

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(4/9/2023)

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We have come here this morning to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

REFLECTION: What are some of your family traditions you have incorporated into your Easter celebration?

One of the greatest texts on the subject of resurrection is found in John 11:25-26:

John 11:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

This chapter brings us face to face with the **inevitable consequence of life—which is death**. On the one hand death is a reality that each one of us must face at some point in the future. But also, it's a grim reaper that has touched every one of our lives already by taking from us people we love and, in its wake, has left behind—pain, grief and loneliness while at the same time reminding us of our own mortality and the tenuousness of life.

As someone has said, **"Death is the specter that haunts the end of the corridor of every person's life."**

Death is no respecter of persons—it is completely non-discriminating in who it claims. It cares not if a person is small or great, rich or poor, young or old, male or female—no one escapes its grasp.

From the very beginning death has both mystified and terrified mankind. The Bible tells us that the human race has been taken captive by death which has forced people to live all their lives in bondage to the fear of death. Yet if death has any benefit here on earth—it forces us to grapple with the most important questions about life.

Questions like:

- "Why am I here?"
- What is life really all about?", and most importantly,
- What happens to me after I die?

➤ *Is death the end or is it merely a doorway into another existence?"*

These questions burn deep in the heart of every person. Questions that most people don't wrestle with every day—and yet they are never far from their consciousness.

And from time to time, they'll surface and force people to wrestle with them—maybe when the party is over, and everyone has gone home and the alcohol or the drugs have begun to wear off.

As they lie down on their bed, before they drop off to sleep, these questions seep into their mind and they ask themselves—

"Is this all there is to life? Is this what life is all about—to work all week to make money and then party on the weekend and get loaded on drugs and alcohol only to start the whole thing over again on Monday? Is this all there is to life. Is there a purpose in it all or do I only live to die? And then what happens to me when I die...?"

But before long they drift off to sleep and in the morning those questions are gone because now, they've got important things on their mind—like the meeting at work that day or remembering to pick up their clothes at the cleaners or take the car in for service—you know stuff that *really* matters!

REFLECTION: When pondering life and death; What keeps you up at night?

Its life that often keeps us from thinking about death—and its death that often forces us to wrestle with the really important issues of life.

Ecclesiastes 7:2 (NLT)

² Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties. After all, everyone dies— so the living should take this to heart.

Well, hopefully they will—hopefully they'll allow death to force them to honestly look at the meaning of life.

Ultimately, to ask themselves the question that **Job asked in the oldest book in the Bible—"If a man dies, will he live again?"**

Job asked the question—and in John 11 Jesus answered it when He said—

John 11:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ ... "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Talk is cheap and so Jesus proved He was (and is) the resurrection and the life—by raising Lazarus from the dead (the event John 11 is built around)!

Death is not final, and life is not meaningless.

Jesus, the Author and Giver of life, came to the earth to rob death of its sting and the grave of its victory by dying on the cross and rising from the dead—to not only give us eternal life in heaven someday—but real purpose and meaning to our lives here on earth right now!

Yet there are many skeptics, agnostics, and atheists who would look at this and say— “Hey, wait a minute, that’s a pretty radical statement! I mean who does this guy think He is?

‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.’”

Well, I agree, anyone who would dare make a statement like that would either have to be a liar, a lunatic or Lord—you’ll have to decide for yourself which is it. But then Jesus demanded a response to His statement when He said to Martha (and to all of us)—“**Do you believe this?**”

- **You see that automatically divides people into two groups—those who believe and those who don’t believe.**

REFLECTION: What does the statement: “Death is not final, and life is not meaningless” mean to you?

Jesus was a radical and you can’t be neutral when it comes to a radical—“**Do you believe this?**”—its either “Yes I do believe” or “No I don’t believe.”

But either way Jesus demands that you take a stance as to Who He is:

Matthew 16:13-16 (NKJV)
¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "**But who do you say that I am?**"

Salvation is always a very personal thing—it’s not something you can inherit from your parents who are Christians and saved—or because they raised you in a Christian home you’re automatically saved.

It has been truly said that **God has many children but no grandchildren** - you must come to terms for yourself as to who Jesus is and what you’re going to do about it.

Matthew 22:42 (NKJV)
⁴² [Jesus asked the Pharisees]..."What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son, is He?"...

In other words, Jesus is asking these religious leaders:

***“What do each of you believe about Me?
Am I just the son of a man (ordinary human being)
or do you believe that I am the Son of God?”***

This is the most important question in life because it carries with it eternal consequences.

REFLECTION: How would you explain the term “salvation” to an unbeliever?

Now if you believe that Jesus was just an ordinary human being, the son of a man - a good man, a moral man, a great religious leader and teacher sent here by God to teach us spiritual truth but not the Son of God (God in human form) - ***then you’ve got a problem.***

- How do you deal with Jesus’ statement in John 11:25-26—***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”***
- Which He then drives home to your heart making it personal when He asked—***“Do you believe this?”***

You see that statement is so radical that it immediately separates Jesus from every other religious teacher in history.

In John 14:6 He said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life—nobody comes to the Father except through Me.”* He didn’t say, *“I am one of many ways that will get you to heaven,”* He said—*“I am the only way to heaven.”*

Jesus constantly made claims about Himself that were fundamentally intolerant and exclusionary—He never allowed Himself to be grouped with any other religious teachers and leaders in history.

How anybody can say that Jesus was a great religious teacher and yet reject everything He taught about Himself, and salvation is—ridiculous:

- ***“Who is Jesus Christ?”*** *“Well, I believe he was a great religious teacher sent here by God to teach us truth.”*
- ***“Well, Jesus said that He was the only true God in human form—do you believe that?”*** *“No not really, I believe we’re all gods on our way to enlightenment and god consciousness...”*
- ***“Jesus also said that He was the Savior who came into the world to save mankind from sin and hell—do you believe that?”*** *“I don’t believe in a literal hell—hell is right here on earth. But also, I don’t believe we’re sinners, or that there is any absolute right or wrong—it’s just whatever is right for you.”*

- **“Jesus said He was the only way to heaven—do you believe that?”** *“No, I believe there are many roads that lead to heaven.”*

I would say to that person: *“So, what makes Him such a great teacher in your mind seeing as how you reject everything He taught about Himself and salvation?”*

In his famous book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis makes this statement,

“...I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him, ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

I mean, not only did Jesus make outrageous statements about Himself but He went on to back them up with miracles which separated Him from every other religious teacher and leader that has ever lived.

What other religious leader in history ever did the things that Jesus did?

- *Did Buddha ever feed thousands with five loaves and two fish?*
- *Did Confucius ever calm the wind and sea with just a word?*
- *Did Mohammed ever raise the dead?*

What man in history religious or otherwise ever said that he would die and in three days rise again and then did it?!

If any other person in history would have made the statements that Jesus made you would have no problem immediately writing it off as the ravings of a madman - Napoleon, Einstein, George Washington, etc.

There is only one person in history Who could have made a statement like that and been taken seriously—*Jesus the Son of God.*

REFLECTION: How would you answer the question; Who is Jesus Christ?

If you are a skeptic or agnostic here today, you might be thinking—*“The words of Christ are ridiculous—‘I am the resurrection and the life...he who believes in Me shall never die’—all of His disciples died, and Christians die all the time.”*

Obviously, **Jesus had a different perspective of death than most people**—for example, He said that Lazarus was ‘sleeping.’

- The disciples said, “*That’s good, if he’s sleeping, he’ll get better.*”
- Jesus said to them, “*No he’s dead—I’ll use your term if you want.*”

But Jesus was trying to use another term to show them that what we call *death*, at least for the Christian—is not death at all.

Technically, **a person is considered dead *physically* when all brain activity stops**. At that point, their consciousness or soul has departed from their body and therefore from a physical, clinical standpoint—that person is dead.

Yet *spiritually* speaking a person is dead, not when their consciousness is separated from their body—but when their consciousness (soul) it is separated from God. **In this condition, even though they are alive physically—as God sees them, they are dead spiritually—dead to His voice, His touch, His leading etc.**

- **This is a description of the *natural* or unsaved individual—they have been born into this world consciously separated from God.**

It’s not that they never think about God or pray to God or serve God—it’s that they are not living with the conscious awareness of God’s presence in their lives on a daily basis—and therefore they don’t look to God to lead their life in any meaningful way.

If you have no desire to really live for God (not just go to church once in a while)—for Him to actively and consistently control your life but instead your whole life is wrapped up in the pursuit of pleasure, doing your own thing, and just living for yourself—**then as the Bible says you’re dead while you live.**

A person can be alive physically and be dead spiritually:

Ephesians 2:1 (NKJV)

¹ And you *He made alive*, [spiritually] who were dead in trespasses and sins,

- **The spiritual death of the human race happened through the sin of Adam.** God said to Adam, “*In the day that you eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will surely die.*”
- Here, **God was talking about *spiritual death***. Each person born since then has been born spiritually dead with a soul that is separated from God.

When Jesus said:

John 11:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

- What He was saying is as a Christian you might die physically (unless you’re raptured)—so even though your consciousness (soul) might someday be separated from your body—that doesn’t mean that you (the real you) will be dead.

- The body might be—but the body isn’t the real you anyway as we so often make the mistake of thinking.
- **The real me is soul (consciousness)**—I live in this body which God has given to me so that I can express myself on the earth in this physical dimension.

God has given me a body taken from the earth, for the earth that will someday return back to the dust of the earth.

But again, **this physical body is not the real me—the soul is the real me.** The body is only a ‘vehicle’ (like a car) which takes you from point A to point B.

The car is not the real you, it’s only a vehicle that you use to get from place to place—the same is true with our physical bodies.

REFLECTION: What does it mean to be “spiritually dead”? How can you help someone who is spiritually dead?

But someday, as a Christian, this body is going to wear out and then my soul is going to move out of this old worn out ‘tent’ (physical body) into a beautiful new ‘mansion’ of God (a glorified body) not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

This is what Jesus meant in v.25 when He said, “**He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live**”—He was talking about physical, bodily resurrection (which for the Christian will take place at the Rapture). But then He went on to say:

John 11:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die...**[spiritually]

This is the hope of every child of God—because I live and believe in Jesus I will never die.

That doesn’t mean there won’t necessarily be a funeral service someday for this old body—I just mean that the real me won’t die because Jesus has given me eternal life and eternal life, by its very definition—can’t die because it’s life for eternity!

So instead of a funeral service maybe we ought to call it a *moving* party because all I did was move out of an old worn-out tent (physical body) into a beautiful new mansion (a glorified spiritual body) promised to me by Jesus!

- Not just the good man and moral teacher ‘Jesus’—but Jesus the Son of God Who died on the cross, rose from the dead, Who is the only way to heaven, the One Who called Himself the Resurrection and the Life—**Do you believe this?**

“O yes I certainly do believe—I’ve always believed in Jesus!”

One of the problems that people have when it comes to salvation, is an incomplete understanding what it means to truly believe in Jesus.

The Bible says that *‘the demons believe and tremble’* - which of course includes the devil himself.

You realize that Satan believes everything we evangelical Christians believe about Jesus:

- *That He is the Son of God.*
- *That He was born of a virgin.*
- *That He died on the cross for the sins of humanity.*
- *That He rose the third day from the dead.*

I mean **he believes everything we believe about Jesus—and yet he isn’t going to heaven.**

Listen: Saving faith which is not just head knowledge but a life commitment to Jesus—something Satan has refused to do

John 11:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Martha gave the right answer in verse 27:

John 11:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

>>> So, let me ask you again—*‘Do you believe this?’*

REFLECTION: Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? Why?

I hope you do! And if you do, and you want to receive Jesus into your heart as your Savior—pray this prayer with me in your heart...

To the Christian, Easter or as we call it here at Calvary - 'Resurrection Sunday', isn't one day on the calendar - it is an everyday way of life.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

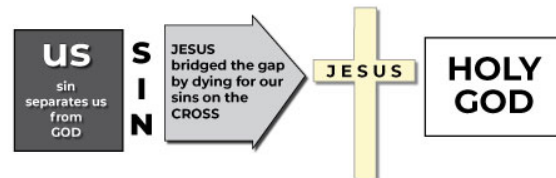
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THE WRONG WAY TO GOD



"I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to The Father except through Me." John 14:6

THE ONLY WAY TO GOD



"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16