

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #25

John 5:24-30

I am certain that if we took our collective experiences and put them together today we could literally say that we have attended or participated in hundreds and hundreds of funerals. As a minister, I have personally conducted many funerals for people I have loved; so many that I cannot even count them all. At every graveside service I have been involved in, everyone there would love it if the coffin would open and the dead person would come back to life. But it doesn't happen. In spite of the tears, in spite of the wishing, in spite of the prayers and Scripture reading, in spite of gunshots and even trumpets that play taps - that coffin never opens and the person does not come up out of it. They are dead. A dead body lacks life. It is not as if the person is sick and you hope he gets better. A dead body is dead and the condition will not improve. In all reality, the plight of one physically dead is the plight of us all. We were all spiritually dead and in and of ourselves, we had no chance of improving our condition. **There is only one Person who could actually give life to someone dead and that is God, and since Jesus Christ has the power to give dead people life, it proves He is God.**

When those Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath (5:16), they had no idea as to the deep discussion that Jesus was about to have. He was out to clearly establish that He is God. That is exactly what this passage of Scripture is designed to communicate. The primary point is this:

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD AND THAT REALITY IS ESTABLISHED BY THE FACT THAT HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE LIFE TO THE DEAD.

Jesus Christ is the Life-giver. He is the only Person who can give you eternal life. To accept Him is life but to reject Him is death. Now we may recall that verse 24 is really stressing that theme. Jesus is telling all who hear Him that whoever believes on Him will have eternal life and will not ever face the condemnatory wrath of God.

Notice the repetition of the “truly, truly” (v. 24) formula, in this context. This is dogmatic certainty. These things are not open for debate. This is not open to discussion. This is dogmatic reality. This same principle of never facing condemnatory judgment was restated by Paul in his famous Romans 8:1 verse which says there is therefore “now” no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Now there are **three main theological truths** that Christ wants to drive home:

TRUTH #1 – Jesus Christ has the power and authority to give present spiritual life. 5:25-26

The focus of these verses is that the getting of life is an action of God, not man. Man has no ability to give himself life. Again observe the “truly, truly” formula. This is not hypothetical theory, this is factual, dogmatic reality. This truth is very important and very certain. Jesus Christ is telling us that He has the ability to speak to the dead and have them come to life, and those who hear His voice and believe in Him shall live. This immediately tells us not everyone will hear His voice and not everyone shall live.

Now when you first read verse 25, it appears to be very similar to verse 28 in that both say “an hour is coming.” But there is a difference between verse 25 and verse 28 in that verse 25 contains the words “and now is.” Those three little words inform us that in the present time, Jesus Christ has power to give some type of life to one who is dead.

The particular life being referred to in these verses is spiritual life, not physical life (John 11:25-26). Listen, we are living in the “now is” time and right now you can have eternal life. But in order to get eternal life, you must listen to what Christ is saying - namely **you must believe only in Him for life**. He is the only One who can give a sinner life.

The Apostle Paul, in referring to the matter of spiritual death, said we are born dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13). Jesus said whoever believes in Him will have eternal life and has passed out of death into life. You do not get this life through water baptism, by giving money, by partaking of the Lord’s Supper, through some confession, or some emotional crying or by promising you will try harder and never do the wrong again. You do not get this life by joining a church or going to church or singing in a choir. You get life by faith in Jesus Christ. At the moment you totally trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, you have life and are part of the living church, the body of Jesus Christ.

So at the precise moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins, you pass out of a death sentence and into a life sentence. A dead man cannot do anything to change his status. He is lifeless and hopeless. There is always some hope if one is sick and alive, but there is no hope once one is dead. There is no hope for any person apart from Jesus Christ because He is the only One who can give life.

Now the “for” which begins verse 26 explains how it is possible for the Son to give eternal life - because God the Father has turned this entire matter of giving life over to God the Son. Jesus Christ is not just an agent of God in giving life; He is the God who is the source of life - both spiritual and physical.

All kinds of life have God as its source. Physical life has God as its source. Spiritual life has God as its source - we are borne not of the will of man or flesh, but of God and eternal life has God as its source. Eternal life is life forever with God.

When it comes to the subject of eternal life, we must realize that we are all born sinners and born spiritually dead, separated from God because of sin. In order for any of us to have eternal life, God must give us this life. Eternity is His place. We have sinned against God. So in order for one to have eternal life, God must grant it to the person. Only God can give life. **The ability to give life to something dead is only a prerogative of God.**

Everything else with life must get that life from another source other than themselves. God the Father has life in Himself. God the Son has life in Himself. Not only does He have life, but He gives life. He will give eternal life, right now, to all who will believe in Him for life. No matter how dark one’s sin, no matter how dead one’s spirituality, Jesus Christ will give life to all who will believe on Him.

You will not ask God to give you life, until you come to the conclusion and conviction that you are dead. If you think you can get or earn eternal life through yourself or through something you do - go to church, do good works, give amounts of money, be baptized in water, wear certain clothing, abstain from certain foods, you will not ever see yourself as spiritually dead because you will see yourself as one who is in the process of earning eternal life. But in order to get real eternal life, **you must recognize that you are spiritually dead and that your works are as filthy rags.**

We must also realize that this is the state of all those apart from Christ. You cannot possibly talk to a dead body and expect it to come back to life. It does not matter how strong or logical your argumentation, you cannot reason with a dead body and bring it to life, only God can do that. This is why we must remember when witnessing that the ability to save someone is not ours, it is God's. We cannot outsmart or outthink or reason one who is dead in sin to life. Only God can bring that person to life. Our job is to plant, water, sow the seed and let God do what He will do.

Once a person sees himself in this true state, then one will begin to see the need to ask Christ to grant life. A person is helplessly and hopelessly lost and dead. If a person does not personally ask Christ to be his Savior and ask Him to give him life, that person will face the wrath of God and condemnation of God.

Jesus Christ has the power right now to raise any out of their deadness of sin. He can and will give you life. He will authorize it for you if you will believe on Him.

TRUTH #2 – Jesus Christ has the power and authority to execute all judgment . 5:27

It is almost impossible for one man to judge another man honestly and fairly because of lack of evidence and various distorted prejudices. People's personalities, their pride, their self-righteousness, their envy and jealousy often colors judgment. Juries have a hard time judging what is true because of lack of evidence or a distortion of it. **But this is no problem for God .**

In the Scriptures, only God is in a position to execute judgment (Psalm 7:6, 8-9, 11; 9:7-8; Joel 3:12). Judgment is a prerogative of God and must be because only God knows everything about every person to be judged.

Now notice carefully what is said here - God the Father has turned all judgment over to God the Son. Every one will face Jesus Christ and if you have not come to terms with the fact that He is God and if you have not come to terms with the fact that only He can save you from your sins, you will be judged and condemned by Him. Jesus Christ knows everything about us and He will judge us - we had better acknowledge that we want Him to be our Savior. We want to let Him know we rely only on Him to save us and certainly never on ourselves. The first time Christ came to this earth, He came to be the Savior of the world (3:17). The next time Christ comes to this earth, He will come to be the judge of the world.

At the end of verse 27 we see that the Father has turned all judgment over to Him "because He is the Son of Man." The Son of God has been appointed judge because He is also the Son of Man. He has absolute right to judge all humanity because He became human.

He became the Son of Man so we could become sons of God. Those who reject Him will face Him as judge.

TRUTH #3 – Jesus Christ has the power and authority to cause resurrections. 5:28-29

Now there are two resurrections described in these verses - the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnatory judgment. These resurrections will take place at different times in the future.

The determining criteria for getting the resurrection of life is doing what is good according to Jesus Christ as opposed to what is evil according to Jesus Christ. The good thing for a sinner to do is to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and rely upon the Grace of God and not your own works (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 4:5). To believe that He and He alone can and will save you from your sins is the good thing to do.

The evil thing to do is to rely upon yourself and your own sinful works to save you, in which case you will be condemned. When it comes to salvation, evil works may actually appear to be good, moral, religious works. **But the real evil of this is that it rejects the Only One who can save from sin - Jesus Christ.**

Now there are **three phases to the resurrection of life and one phase to the resurrection of condemnation:**

(Resurrection of Life)

Phase #1 - The resurrection of all N.T. believers at the Rapture. I Thessalonians 4:16

Phase #2 - The resurrection of all Tribulation believers after the Tribulation. Revelation 20:4

Phase #3 - The resurrection of all O.T. believers after the Tribulation before the Millennium.

Daniel 12:2

(Resurrection of condemnation)

The resurrection of all unbelievers of all ages after the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation 20:5, 11-15

The judge that all will face will be none other than Jesus Christ. According to verse 30, Jesus Christ will hand out the perfect judgment of God at these resurrections. Judgment will be perfect and just and final.

Now is the time for people to believe on Jesus Christ. Don't delay, believe in Him today. You may have eternal life right now and the moment you have it the possibility of eternal condemnation and eternal death are gone.

According to Revelation 20:15, if a person's name is not found in the Book of Life, he will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. There is only one way to get into the Book of Life and that is to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. He is the only One who can give life.