

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

You Don't Have to Fear Death

I Corinthians 15:16-23

1 You don't have to fear death. Our passage of scripture today from First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 16 through 23 explains why. 2

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 1 3

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 2

Our society today teaches us that God really doesn't exist. Mankind evolved from orangutans and life ends

¹ v16-19.

² v20-23.

at death. When you're dead, you're dead and that's it. Life is over. When you look around you at the daily affairs of life that appears to be the case.

But the Bible says that physical death does not mean life ceases to exist. The most significant single act in human history was that on Good Friday they placed a dead corpse in a garden tomb and on Easter Sunday morning that tomb was empty! ⁴

Because Lord Jesus came forth from that tomb alive, you can be resurrected too! ⁵ **For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.** ^{3 6}

I. How Did Physical Death Come About?

How did physical death come about? ⁷ Verse 22 tells us that **in Adam all die!** ⁸

God created a perfect world but Adam and Eve rebelled against God. So, physical death happened.

³ v22-23.

Genesis, chapter 2, verses 16 and 17 say, **And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”** ⁹ When they rebelled God had to curse them, the animals and the earth. ¹⁰

Because of this curse, the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics took effect: all things run down; complex systems become simple; everything eventually deteriorates; death happens! ¹¹

Social and moral barriers came into existence. ¹²

A barrier was created between man and woman. Adam blamed Eve for what happened. ⁴ You can imagine what Eve thought of him after that! ¹³

A barrier was created between cultures when people tried to build the Tower of Babel. ⁵ God had to step in and confuse their language. ¹⁴

⁴ Genesis 3:12 - The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

⁵ Genesis 11:1-9.

A barrier was even created between people and animals.⁶

That's how physical death came about.¹⁵ So . . .

II. How Do You Know There's a Life After Physical Death?

How do you know there's a life after physical death?¹⁶

In the Bible God resurrected people!¹⁷

In the Old Testament Elijah the prophet raised the Zarephath widow's son.⁷¹⁸ Later Elijah's successor, Elisha, resurrected the son of the Shunammite woman.⁸¹⁹

⁶ Genesis 9:2 - The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.

⁷ I Kings 17:20-22 - Then he cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!" The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived.

⁸ II Kings 4:32-37 - When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body

And then there's the story of Elisha's bones in Second Kings, chapter 13, verses 20 and 21, Elisha died and was buried. Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet. I wonder if the raid continued after they saw that!

Then there were the resurrections Lord Jesus performed. ²⁰ He walked into a funeral procession and raised the widow of Nain's son. ⁹ ²¹ He raised the leader of the synagogue, Jairus' daughter. ¹⁰ ²² The

grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

⁹ Luke 7:11-15 - Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out — the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her . . . Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁰ Mark 5:41-43 - He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum!*" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up

Lord then walked into a cemetery in Bethany to raise His friend, Lazarus, from the dead. ¹¹ He had been in a sealed tomb for four days! ²³

The Apostle Peter resurrected Dorcas in Joppa. ¹² ²⁴ Then, Acts, chapter 20, verses 9 through 11 record what happened with the Apostle Paul in Troas, **Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said.**

and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

¹¹ John 11:43-44 - When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

¹² Acts 9:40-41 - Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive.

“He’s alive!” Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. ²⁵

So in the Bible God did resurrected people, but all these people died again! ²⁶

Then, Lord Jesus resurrected Himself! How do we know? ²⁷

The Roman soldiers, experts in such matters, declared Jesus dead and drove a spear into His side to guarantee it! ¹³ ²⁸

Then, Joseph and Nicodemus performed a hasty embalming procedure. ¹⁴ ²⁹

This could not have been a “Near Death Experience” (NDE) because of the time element. Documented Near Death Experiences only last a half hour or so. This was one and a half full days in a sealed vault! ¹⁵ ³⁰

There was an unexplained empty tomb early Easter Sunday morning. ³¹

¹³ John 19:31-37.

¹⁴ John 19:38-42.

¹⁵ Friday evening through Sunday morning.

So what gives this resurrection credibility? ³² Lord Jesus, that evening, appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. ¹⁶ ³³ Later that evening He appeared to the disciples without Thomas in the upper room. ¹⁷

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Then in John, chapter 20, verses 26 through 28, He appears a week later in the upper room when Thomas is present. Listen to this, **A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ³⁵**

In John, chapter 21, Lord Jesus appears to them at the Sea of Galilee and fixes breakfast for them. ¹⁸ ³⁶

¹⁶ Luke 24:13-35.

¹⁷ John 20:19-23.

¹⁸ John 21:1-4.

Finally, First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 5 through 8, record, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. ³⁷

But, unlike the other biblical resurrections, Lord Jesus never died again!

In the message so far we answered the questions “How did physical death come about?” and “How do you know there’s a life after physical death?” But the most important question for us is . . . ³⁸

III. How Do You Know That You Will Have Eternal Life After Death?

How do you know that you will have eternal life after death? ³⁹

First, Lord Jesus proved that resurrection from the dead can happen by doing it Himself! ⁴⁰

Then, He made certain promises to you. ⁴¹ In John, chapter 14, verses 1 through 3, He said, **Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.** ⁴²

The second promise is in John, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send**

his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ⁴³

The Bible tells us what will happen to God's children.

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To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. ¹⁹ ⁴⁵ **Your body will be instantly changed into an immortal one.** ²⁰ ⁴⁶ **The Lord will come again and the dead will rise. His children will rise to meet Him in the air and you will be with Him forever!** ²¹ ⁴⁷

The cross gives you the opportunity to become God's child. You can live with God forever!

¹⁹ II Corinthians 5:6-8 - Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

²⁰ I Corinthians 15:51-52 - Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

²¹ I Thessalonians 4:16-17 - For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

It's the empty tomb and the resurrected Lord that gives that promise credibility! You can live forever!

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