

Life out of Death – Acts 17:1-3

I. Introduction:

- A. Our text reminds us that it was Paul's custom when he came to a community to go into the Jewish synagogue.
1. When given the opportunity, he would open up the Old Testament to specific scriptures and read.
 2. Then he would prove through prophesy that the Jewish Messiah – the Christ – would suffer and die.
 3. But he would always interject or conclude with scriptures which proved that Christ would rise from the grave
 4. Finally, he would point to **Jesus of Nazareth** – the Messiah – and that they had met outside the city of Damascus.
 5. Christ Jesus lives! He is the Messiah! He is the Saviour of sinners like Paul.
- B. Earlier this morning we heard part of the sermon Peter preached on the first Pentecost after Jesus' crucifixion.
1. That apostle reminded the people that through Jehovah's "*determinate counsel and foreknowledge,*" their Messiah had been handed over to the Romans to be crucified and slain.
 2. **BUT** – "*God hath raised (Him) up, have loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that the should be (held) by it.*"
- C. Before going back to those thoughts this **resurrection morning**, I'd like to digress just a bit.
1. Those of you who are sports fans know the name **Ted Williams**.
 - a. You who are social media fans probably know the name **Paris Hilton**.
 - b. And then you who are fans of 70s & 80s television might know the name of **Dick Jones**, the man who produced the **Mary Tyler Moore** and **Bob Newhart shows**.
 2. Now, does anyone know how these three people are **uniquely** related?
 - a. Sure, they have all been involved in the entertainment industry, but that is not what I have in mind.
 - b. The baseball player and the TV producer are both dead, but as far as I know Miss Hilton is still alive, so that is not the relationship.
 3. Here is the answer to my question:
 - a. The bodies of Ted Williams & Dick Jones have **not** been **buried** or **cremated** – they have been **frozen**.
 - b. And Paris Hilton, one of the heirs of the Hilton hotel fortune, has made plans to have her body frozen when she dies.
- D. **Cryogenics**, using liquid nitrogen, has been employed to freeze the bodies of more than 500 people.
1. And there are now more than 4,000 people awaiting to be frozen.
 2. Some of them have invested as much as \$200,000 for the privilege. **Why** would they do that?
 3. Generally speaking, they are looking forward to the day of their **physical** resurrection.
 4. They are not only hoping that technology will be able to restore their lives, but they are hoping that medical science will have been able to cure whatever ailments caused their deaths in the first place.
 5. Now, I am not very smart, but it seems to me that they could avoid the second problem, if while they were still alive they jumped into those vats of nitrogen.
- E. Mankind has been **LOOKING forever** for ways to **LIVE forever** without the intervention of deity – "*sans God.*"
1. Many of our neighbors don't want to consider Jehovah Elohim at either the **beginning** of life – or at its **end**.
 - a. If God is our Creator then that puts us in His debt and gives us responsibilities toward Him.
 - b. And if God is there at the end of our lives, what will He do with all our sins and wasted opportunities to bring Him glory?
 2. Most of our neighbors, even if they don't call themselves atheists or agnostics, still don't want the Lord in their lives.
 3. But those wishes aren't going to accomplish anything, because **THERE He is**. He **IS** the great "**I am.**"
 4. He is the **alpha** and the **omega**, the **beginning** and the **end**; the **Creator** and the **Judge** of the world.
 5. As both Solomon and Peter Seeger have said, "*God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; there is a time for every purpose and for every work*" – **Ecclesiastes 3:17**.

- F. I guarantee that **cryogenics** is an **expensive waste** of **time**.
1. I also guarantee **there will be a RESURRECTION** for all of us.
 2. Like Ted and Paris – who will be thoroughly disappointed in their nitrogen investments – so billions of others will be disappointed when the Lord restores **their** lives.
 3. But in an effort to avoid that disappointment for you, I'd like to share some more scripture with you.
- G. Just as Williams, Paris and Jones are **related** in their **misconceptions** of their future resurrections...
1. there is a **relationship** between **Christ's resurrection**, various **random Biblical resurrections** and **YOUR** future resurrection.
 2. But unlike those of Williams, Paris & Jones, these **Biblical resurrections** are in **no way misconceptions**.
 3. The Bible is true and absolutely trustworthy in every detail.

II. Let me remind you that both testaments describe the resurrections of various dead people.

- A. **Elijah** is the first person recorded to have raised a dead body – the **son** of the **widow of Zaraphath**.
1. I am not going to say there were not other earlier resurrections, but this is the first of which we are told.
 2. Then Elijah's successor, **Elisha** raised the **son** of the **Shunammite woman** in **II King 4**.
 3. And in an interesting miracle, a dead body accidentally touched the bones of Elisha and was restored to life.
- B. In the **New Testament** we have the accounts of **Jesus'** raising the dead.
1. The first was the **son** of the **widow of Nain**, and then there was the **daughter of Jairus**.
 2. **John 11** provides us with great detail about the resurrection of **Lazarus**.
 3. And as **Matthew** describes **the crucifixion**, he says, *“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*
 - a. *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept **AROSE**,*
 - b. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”*
 4. Then the **Book of Acts** tells us about the resurrections of **Tabitha** and **Eutychus**, in **chapters 9** and **20**.
- C. What do all these life-from-death miracles have in common? It should be obvious.
1. Elijah, Elisha, Peter and Paul were all servants of the God who created life in the first place.
 2. Christ Jesus could restore life to Lazarus and the others, because it was He who said, *“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”*
 3. **And furthermore** – *“In (Christ Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*
 - a. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*
 - b. *For by him were all things created...”*
- D. Those three verses from **Colossians 1:14-17** are at the crux of my message this morning.
1. They tie together in one Person two essential Christian doctrines: creation and redemption.
 2. It was the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, who gave His life on Golgotha's cross.
 3. And prior to His crucifixion He restored life to several individuals just as easily as He created life in the first place.
 4. It is this Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, that I am presenting to you this morning.

III. And with that we come to **EPICENTER** of **ETERNITY** – the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God.

- A. Jesus was betrayed into the hands of a mob which was held together by the auspices of the Jewish high priest.
1. He was presented to the past high priest, who then passed him on to the reigning high priest, his son-in-law
 2. They both condemned Jesus, but they had to wait unto the morning to make their judgment legally official.
 3. Then our Lord was led to the Roman governor, who was manipulated into condemning Him to death.
 4. Jesus was **slapped** and **pummeled**, **scourged** nearly to death, **crowned** with thorns and **humiliated**.

5. His face was **so beaten** and **ripped** open it was hardly recognizable.
6. Then *“he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha; Where they crucified him, and two other with on either side, one and Jesus in the midst.”*
7. And there, just before sunset on Wednesday evening – just before the high sabbath of the Passover week began, Jesus relinquished His Spirit to God the Father.
8. He cried, *“It is finished, and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”*

- B. It is very, very sad, but there are a lot of Americans who cannot complete the story – the Biblical history.
1. Two men, Joseph and Nicodemus, begged for the body of the Lord Jesus.
 2. They quickly had it wrapped in the common way and prepared the body for burial – which took place in a nearby in tomb.
 3. The Jews, fearing that Jesus’ disciples might steal the body, secured a cadre of soldiers to guard that tomb.
 - a. They rotated their watch throughout Wednesday night and Thursday; Thursday night and Friday; Friday night and throughout the day on Saturday – three days and three nights in all.
 4. Then at the close of the regular weekly sabbath, as the sun sank over the hills in the west, the stone door of that tomb was rolled back and Christ emerged – alive – resurrected.
 5. The guards who were on duty at the time were terrified, running panic-stricken to the priests for an explanation. All they got was a bribe to keep them quiet.
 6. There was no explanation – except the obvious – which the Jewish leadership simply denied.
 7. Then on Sunday morning, when some of Jesus’ disciples arrived, they found the tomb abandoned.
 8. **Christ had arisen!**

- C. That resurrection became the lynch-pin of the early preaching of the gospel.
1. The Apostles couldn’t present the death of Christ as the sacrifice for sin, without also saying: *“He arose.”*
 2. That resurrection has been preached millions of times over the years and in a multitude of ways.
 3. I have dozens of outlines in my files which I have preached, but I’m not going to repeat any of them today.
 4. But I will add one comment made by Paul – **Romans 1**: *“The gospel of God (concerns) His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to BE the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.”*
 5. Christ’s resurrection is all the evidence we should need to prove He is the eternal & omnipotent Son of God.
 6. Then forty days after His resurrection... forty days spent with His disciples and revealing Himself to others...
 - a. *“Showing himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs”* – **Acts 1:3**.
 - b. After forty days Christ Jesus ascended into Heaven, where He now sits on His holy throne, preparing for the next few events on the divine calendar.

- D. **What** is the **relationship** between **Jesus’ resurrection** that those earlier resurrections under **Elijah & Elisha**?
1. The power & authority belonged to the Christ who emerged from Joseph’s tomb 3 days after his own death.
 2. But there is more...
 3. **That relationship** between Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of those people earlier in history is **completed in you**.

IV. You and I will one day join Lazarus, Tabitha and Eutychus in the list of resurrected people.

- A. Everyone some day will be resurrected without any help from cryogenics.
- B. In **John 5**, we are told that the Lord Jesus had angered the Jews once again.
1. They *“sought the more the kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”* The next thirty verses give us Jesus’ reply.
 2. And among the things which were said was: *“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will... that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”*

3. Going on, the Lord talks about the **eternal life** which **He gives** to those **who put their faith in Him**.
 4. But then He adds in **verse 28** – *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **ALL** that are **in the graves shall hear (my) voice,***
 5. ***And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”***
 6. You are going to die some day. It is guaranteed.
 7. Then at some point after that, you will emerge from your crypt, your grave, your tomb, your cryogenic test tube, or from the bottom of the sea, and you will stand before this Christ who died but Who lives again.
- C. I won't read it because it is nearly sixty-verses long, but Paul spends **I Corinthians 15** teaching and defending the Biblical doctrine of the resurrection.
1. He is writing primarily about Christians, some of whom were confused on the subject.
 2. His **foremost argument** throughout the chapter is one of **relationships**.
 3. **Verse 12** – *“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among that there is no resurrection of the dead?”*
 4. **Verse 19** – for Christians, *“if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”*
 5. *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept,”* ie. that were dead.
 6. When Jesus said, *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear (my) voice, and shall come forth...”* that promise was predicated on Jesus' own upcoming resurrection.
- D. I can't say it more emphatically: You are going to die, because *“the wages of sin is death.”*
1. But based on the fact that Christ, the Creator of life, passed through death and promised that you and I will pass through it as well, then I am certain it shall be so, even as He said.
 2. **And yet**, very sadly, as he said in the rest of that quote: *“all that are in the graves shall hear (my) voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*
- E. In the face of this, there is **one more resurrection** to consider.

V. There is a resurrection of the spirit, which is once again through the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. I love using **synonyms** in the course of my sermons. I try to use more than one word to say the same thing.
1. I have two thesauruses on my desk, and I also use those that are available online.
 2. But I don't need to turn to those resources for a really good synonym for **“resurrection,”** because it is right here in our Bibles.
 3. I refer to the word **“quicken.”** It quite literally means, **“to make alive.”**
 4. We have already used that word in **John 5:21** – *“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and **quickeneth** them; even so the Son **quickeneth** whom he will.”*
- B. Using that word in the past tense, Paul told the Christians in **Ephesus** that they had already been spiritually resurrected.
1. *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*
 - a. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*
 - b. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*
 2. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
 - a. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
 - b. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*
 - c. *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

- C. There are multitudes of souls in this world who have already been resurrected, even before they have physically died.
1. They are people who realized, acknowledged and then confessed that they were *“dead men walking.”*
 2. They realized that they were spiritually dead in the sight of God, because they were sinners.
 3. But they also had heard what to do about it. A gospel preacher was sent to give them the good news.
 4. They turned to the Son of God who had Himself passed through death and back into life once again.
- D. But there is really a lot more involved than that.
1. As Christ died on that cross, He took upon Himself all the sins of those people He intended to save.
 2. On his heart were written the names of every saint of God who would ever live.
 3. And when His heart stopped beating and He died, they died in Him.
 4. **But**, when He arose from the grave, **they arose** with Him – *“quicken together with Christ.”*
- E. This is the gospel message: *“Christ DIED for our sins according to the scriptures; and he was buried and he ROSE again the third day according to the scriptures.”*
1. This is the message we preach week after week, Sunday after Sunday, not just on Easter, but every week.
 2. There is life – eternal life – in Christ, because Jesus died, was buried and rose again.
 3. In his death he paid the penalty for the sins of all those who repent and put their trust – their lives – their hopes in Him.
- F. Won't you, this Easter morning, rise to live with Christ, by putting your faith in Him?
1. You **will** someday **die**.
 2. You may, or may not, be buried, burned or turned to ice, but you will be raised to stand before Christ to be judged.
 3. Will you be able to point to the day in which you were born again? Was it March 31, 2024?
 4. Will you be able to say that you humbly put your faith for eternal life in the One who is the way the truth and life?
 5. Won't you come to Christ this morning, giving to Him everything you are, and what you ever will be?
 6. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*