

*Ressurrection Outreach Dinner 2019*

*"A Matter of Life and Death" John 11:25*

Reginald Peterson ordered a spicy Italian Sub sandwich at a Subway store in Jacksonville, Florida. To quote Reginald accurately he ordered the sandwich with "the works!" As far as he was concerned, it did not come with "the works."

"He tasted the sandwich, and it didn't have mayonnaise or mustard on it, so he became very upset," according to the manager of the Subway.

Witnesses inside the store said Peterson started screaming. He went outside to call 9-1-1 on his cell phone...asking for help in having the sandwich made to his satisfaction. When the call taker dismissed his request summarily, as a 'non-emergency,' ...he called again a short time later to complain that the police, quote..."**Still hadn't shown up!**" (pause)...So they did....and arrested Peterson on charges of making false 9-1-1 calls.

“It’s unbelievable what people get upset about these days!” ...the store manager told NBC News.

The purpose of the universal call number in the United States... 9-1-1... established in November of 1967 with the coordination of the FCC and AT&T, was to, **“address quickly a matter of life and death.”** For the most part, notwithstanding frivolous calls, the system has worked very well. Any citizen, on any phone with connecting service, can quickly punch in the now famous three digits, 9-1-1 and the emergency has been declared...a human life is at stake! First responders will be deployed by public services with immediate dispatch...police officers, fire fighters, or para-medics as requested, race to the scene! We will spare no expense...no response is considered too quick...nor is any effort too great... when a person is about to die! After all... it’s a matter of life and death! Could anything be more important?!

But is that really the end of the matter? Let’s consider the ‘rest of the story.’ After all, everybody dies...sooner or later. No one will cheat death. Shouldn’t we be asking a more

important question? Is this life *really* all there is?

If God's Word is true... according to Hebrews 9:27, "**...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**" You see, because of the curse of sin, every human being faces death ultimately. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "**The soul who sins shall die!**"

Here's a question we should ask: Is it right to punish someone if they do something bad...something truly wrong or evil? I think we would all agree that it is! Then let's ask another question...Have any of us... you or me... ever done anything bad?... committed a sin in the eyes of a holy God? (pause) There is not a soul in this room who doesn't know that the answer is yes! We have all sinned against God!

Dear friends, we have a much bigger problem than whether, or not our sub sandwich has mayonnaise and mustard on it! In fact, we have a much bigger problem than 'a matter of life or death' in *this* world! We have to consider the next world... and it too, is a matter of life and death... ***eternal life or death!***

We're here tonight to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ! We sang about it with great joy and we can read about it with great hope and certainty in our Bibles. Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the grave with a bodily resurrection! It is the very foundation of which all of Christianity is based! It is also a fact of history that cannot be refuted! But often forgotten in all of this... is that the Bible records that *every* soul will be resurrected after the first death... in Revelation chapter 20... and each one will be judged according to their works in this life.

Some will have had their names written in the book of life, because Jesus has paid for their sins. They will be resurrected unto eternal life with God... described this way in Revelation 21, "**...and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, the former things have passed away!**"

And some will suffer a second death... "**and anyone not found written in the book of life is cast into the lake of fire.**" (pause) It's a matter of life and death.

You see there *is* a much greater question than if we live or die physically... we are created in the image of God and **“God is spirit.”** John 4:24 tells us. We will all go on forever... the question is whether, or not we will spiritually live or be spiritually dead forever.

We’re asked to believe, tonight, if Jesus really died and rose again from the grave. We read together John 11:25 **“I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live...”**

How can we know if our name is written in the book of life? That we too, may *live* forever... and not exist forever in eternal punishment... resurrected unto a *second death!*

We have to ask ourselves a few more questions. Did Jesus *really* come from heaven? He said He did, in John chapters 6 and 7. Is He *really* God? He said He is, in John chapter 8. Did He *really* come to live a perfect life and offer Himself a perfect sacrifice for our sins? He said He did, in John chapter 10. Don’t take my word for it... read it for yourself!

Now listen carefully, as I plead with you. If our sins are not paid for by Jesus Christ...

then we will pay for them ourselves. And because our lives here are not perfect but full of sin, our debt will never pay the debt we owe... and our death will be *eternal*.

But II Corinthians 5:21 says, “**For He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**” Call it the miracle of the great exchange. God has treated Jesus on the cross as if He had lived our sinful lives, and He will treat us as if we had lived His perfect sinless life!” You say, is that fair? Dear ones, don’t ask for fairness! Fairness condemns us all! Ask for mercy... and God is merciful!

If you will repent of your sin and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ... God’s only solution to the problem of sin... than your name is written in the book of life!

But if you haven’t... and you are convinced that you can live a life, good enough to be acceptable to God... without Jesus... than you are destined to die twice.... Both physically, and spiritually, now and forever.

Jesus put it clearly in John 11:26, “**And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?**”

The next time you hear a siren... or see those bright flashing lights racing to the scene of an emergency... just remember... it is a matter of life and death! But not this life only... but life and death for all eternity! And now you know, the rest of the story.

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