

I am the Resurrection and the Life

John 10:17-27; Mark 5:39-41; Ephesians 2:1-6

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

In our lifetime, we will blink over 620 million times,¹ take countless breaths of air, have our hearts beat more than 2.5 billion times,² take 216 million steps,³ and consume a whopping



35 tonnes of food.⁴ The average person will have over 170 million thoughts,⁵ both good and bad. Yet, while all these numbers are evidence of life, they don't fully capture what it means to truly live. For those who lack

passion or purpose, experience chronic fatigue, isolate themselves, go through routines without joy, and depend on substances to escape reality, an overwhelming sense of

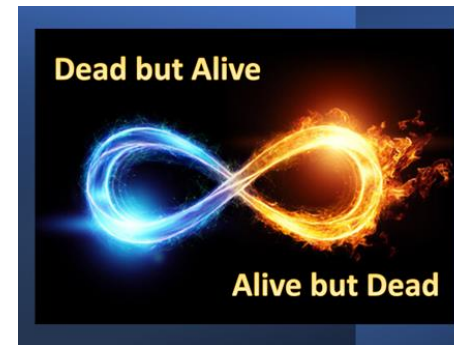
¹ Taken from the following website: [How Many Times Do We Blink in a Day? \(allaboutvision.com\)](http://allaboutvision.com)

² Taken from the following website: [NOVA Online | Cut to the Heart | Map of the Human Heart | Amazing Heart Facts \(pbs.org\)](http://pbs.org)

³ Taken from the following website: [How Far Does the Human Walk in a Lifetime? \(mrtreadmill.com.au\)](http://mrtreadmill.com.au)

helplessness has left them breathing but not truly living. One's brain and heart need not stop to be considered "dead." If you observe carefully, you'll find that even those who achieve their personal goals, enjoy a lifetime of hugs and kisses, take long walks on the beach, live in nice homes, have fat bank accounts, and maintain great health can struggle to find meaning in life. They too may find it difficult to define their daily activities as truly living.

Knowing that God knit us in our mother's womb, we, like King David, can joyfully declare, "I am fearfully and



wonderfully made" (Psalms 139:14). At the same time, we must humbly admit that we were created for an express purpose: to find our meaning in a relationship with our Creator. While we have the "right to do anything"

(1 Corinthians 6:12), the world's definition of living—debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry (1 Peter 4:3)—leaves one engulfed in sins and

⁴ Taken from the following website: [#FoodStories: How much food does the average person in the West consume in a lifetime? \(akispetretzikis.com\)](http://akispetretzikis.com)

⁵ Taken from the following website: [How Many Thoughts Do You Have Per Day? And Other FAQs \(healthline.com\)](http://healthline.com) based on 6,000 thoughts a day for 80 years.

transgressions, forever chasing temporal joy only to become ironically enslaved and destined for the eternal fires of hell. The very definition of being truly alive rests solely in walking by the still waters and being guided by the Good Shepherd as one of His own. Today's sermon will review Jesus' statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," and suggest that while we can be alive and yet dead, we can also be dead and yet live forever. Before we delve into the theology, let's review the background in which Christ spoke these words: the resurrection of Lazarus.

Resurrection of Lazarus

In the Bible, we learn about Lazarus, who fell ill in Bethany, a town near Jerusalem, where he lived with his sisters,



Mary and Martha (John 11:1).⁶ Jesus, who was very close to this family, often visited their home.⁷ When Lazarus became sick, the sisters sent a messenger to Jesus, saying, "The one you love is sick" (John 11:3). Despite the risk of hostility from the Jerusalem leaders who had already tried to stone Him (John 11:8), they hoped He would come to heal Lazarus. Upon

⁶ Taken from the "I AM" series on Sermon Central.

⁷ Gary M. Burge, "[Gospel of John](#)," in *John's Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 103.

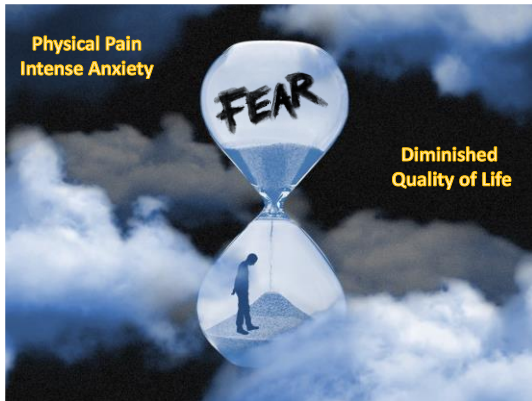
hearing the news, Jesus assured the messenger, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). However, He delayed for two days before traveling to Bethany (John 11:6). Despite knowing that Lazarus had already died shortly after the messenger was dispatched,⁸ Jesus told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up" (John 11:11). When He arrived, Martha lamented, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). Jesus responded, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). At the tomb, Jesus commanded the stone to be rolled away and called out, "Lazarus, come out!" Miraculously, Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, emerged from the grave, alive and well (John 11:43-44).

Redefining Death and Life

From this incredible miracle, we are invited by our Creator to see both death and life through His perfect vision. For most people, death is deeply unsettling and outright frightening due to the physical pain, potential for diminished quality of life, and disruption of daily routines, creating intense anxiety. This fear is often compounded by concerns about leaving loved ones

⁸ Gary M. Burge, "[Gospel of John](#)," in *John's Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 104.

behind, unfinished business, and the unknown aspects of death itself. The thought of ceasing to exist or the uncertainty about what, if anything, lies beyond can evoke a fear that grips the heart and paralyzes the mind. For those who are not yet saved, this fear of death is justified. Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus that those who still “follow the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom



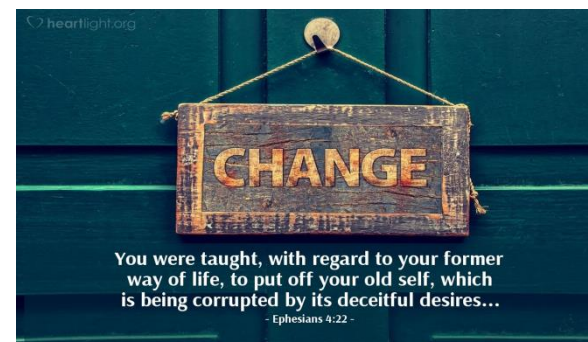
of the air,” though physically alive, remain “dead in their transgressions and sins” (Ephesians 2:1-2). “By nature, they deserve God’s wrath” (Ephesians 2:3), and the Day of the Lord is approaching when they will be separated from the sheep and, as goats, will perish in the fiery pits of hell, forever wailing and gnashing their teeth (Matthew 25:31-46, 13:36-43).

It is not just the unsaved, however, who can be alive yet spiritually dead. On the Island of Patmos, the Apostle John was commanded to write to the church of Sardis, “I know your deeds; you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God” (Revelation 3:1b-2). This call to “wake up” indicates that the church had become complacent and inactive in its faith, needing to revive its spiritual life and commitment. Jesus urges them to remember what they had received and heard, to obey it, and to repent.

Coveting and chasing after the ways of this world breaks God’s first command to “have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3), and spiritual complacency reflects a lack of zeal to seek God’s will and use one’s spiritual gifts to serve Him and build up one another in the faith. The warning Jesus gave the church of Sardis is relevant today: if they do not wake up, He will come like a thief, unexpectedly, to bring judgment (Revelation 3:3). Whom amongst us would be so foolish to not fear the discipline of God?



And yet hearing the words “Lazarus come out” one can’t help but feel a profound sense of peace, tranquility and security in knowing that the Good Shepherd is sovereign over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16), which includes even death itself!

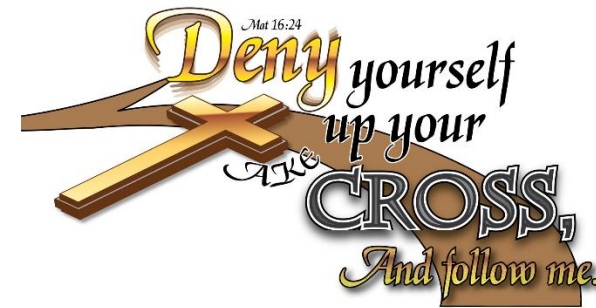


The key to being truly alive is to have a relationship with He who is indivisibly present. Thomas Merton states, “Life is

simple. We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time. This is not just a fable or a nice story. It is true. If we abandon ourselves to God and forget ourselves, we see it sometimes, and we see it maybe frequently. God shows Himself everywhere, in everything – in people and in things and in nature and in events. It becomes very obvious that God is everywhere and in everything and we cannot be without Him. It's impossible. The only thing is that we don't see it."⁹ When Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life" it was an invitation to "put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22). Those who believe in Christ's atoning sacrifice and confess Him as Lord are born again and truly alive for the first time (Romans 10:9; John 1:12-13)!

Being born again is the first step in obtaining a spiritual heartbeat, but as joyful babes in Christ, we are invited by Him to spend a lifetime growing closer to Him, deepening our relationship and fostering continuous spiritual growth and transformation. To stand upon the rock of our foundation with words and not deeds is not what the Good Shepherd desires; being faithful to the One who atoned for our sins requires more than mere platitudes and an hour of service each week. He has given us every spiritual blessing not to be admired indifferently but to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24-26). Though most of us were not wise, influential, or of noble birth (1 Corinthians 1:26-31), those born

again are more than mere dust creations (Genesis 2:7); we are children of the Most High God (Galatians 3:26-29) with His



Spirit dwelling within us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). As we cry out to Him "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"

(Ephesians

3:20), drawing nearer to Him, He draws nearer to us, enabling us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2) and perform miracles in His name beyond our human abilities (John 4:12). To be truly alive means embracing God's calling with unspeakable joy, recognizing that though we are lowly and sinful, we are masterpieces of His grace, enabled to do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13).

Conclusion

We have but one life to live, and by the grace of God, we, as fearfully and wonderfully made image-bearers, get to choose life or death. While personal achievements, enjoying a lifetime of hugs and kisses, taking long walks on the beach, living in nice homes, having fat bank accounts, and maintaining

⁹ Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, page 140.

great health provide immense pleasure, they do not fulfill the deep longing God has placed in our hearts for a relationship with Him. When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life," He invited us to transcend the physical life that leads to death and embrace true life through a relationship with Him. By believing that Jesus atoned for our sins on the cross and asking Him to be the Lord of our life, we become new creations, children of God, and temples of His Spirit. Amid the humdrum routines of life, where we often feel insignificant in the world's eyes, the Good Shepherd calls us not to carve out just an hour a week for Him but to spend a lifetime walking by still waters, having our souls refreshed and invigorated to do immeasurably more than we can ever ask or imagine. As Asaph beautifully summarizes in Psalms 73:25-26, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."