

## Dead Man Walking

So we are plodding along in the gospel of John looking at the theme of “Jesus is...” and last week, this week, and next week, Jesus himself is going to answer that question for us.

Because if you remember correctly, we saw Jesus was at the pool of Bethesda and there he healed a man who could not walk and the Pharisees didn’t like that. Right, Jesus goes up to this lame man, and asks him “Do you want to be healed?” The man replies well yes, but I can’t get into the pool because I am a cripple. And Jesus replies, it’s not about the water, it’s about me, take up your bed and walk. And the man gets up and walked over to a group of Jews and the Jews, instead of being flabbergast at the amazing healing that just took place, they look at him and say “It’s Sunday, you can’t do this on Sunday.”

And then chapter **5:18** happens and we see that these people are put off because Jesus Christ is claiming to be God.

So Jesus, knowing the thoughts of men, decides to take a little break from his healing and miracles and tell the people who he is. He says truly truly I say to you, all authority from the Father has been given to me, not only the ability to heal, but the ability to judge, I am the son of God, and He who comes through me does not pass into judgment, but passes from death to life.

See I call this Jesus, “Slow turn Jesus,” this is where Jesus says, “You talking to me?” And I love this Jesus, because he is the creator of words and language, so when Jesus uses words to prove a point, it is a beautiful thing to look at, and really what we are going to see in the next couple weeks a mini-sermon by the greatest preacher of all time, and he makes his point clear, he makes his point powerfully and he makes his point perfectly.

So we are going to dive into some rich theology, some beautiful language and a powerful truth as we look at the words of Jesus today, so **Pray** with me as we invite him to work his saving wonderful mercy in our midst today.

Turn with me to **John 5:25-29**

Alright, so here is another place where if anyone tells you the Bible is boring, they need to be slapped. Because we have in this passage Jesus telling us that there is coming a time where dead people will be popping up out of their graves like daisies all over the place. But before you start heading for the hills in fear of a zombie apocalypse, let’s slow down here start to break down what Jesus is telling us here.

In this text Jesus talks about death a lot, but the point of his message is not one of death, but one of life. And because we love life, and hate death, we as Christians tend to focus on the life part of this verse (which is good and glorious) but the result is that we ignore the death part of this verse.

This poses a problem for us, because if we as a church only focus on the life that flows from Christ, we have an incomplete view of ourselves, because we downplay the necessity and sacrifice of the cross. Yet if we focus only on the death aspect, we become increasingly bogged down by the weight of the law, and fail to see Jesus as the savior he really is. Yet when we focus on the state of humanity in context with the state of the God head, we see a balanced and worship induced picture of the wonder of salvation.

Now let me tell you a little story here. This is my extremely interesting testimony. When I was five years old, I came home from Awana and responded to the Lords calling on my life, admitted I was a sinner and pleaded in my own 1<sup>st</sup> grade way to be saved from Hell. And since then I have in my own fallen way tried to live a life worthy of the calling to which I have been called.

Now let me tell you another story. There once was this guy named Saul, whose job it was to round up and kill Christians, and he was very good at it too. One day Saul was traveling to a city to gather up more Christians so that he could bring them back to Jerusalem and kill them, and on his way, a bright light shone in the road, blinded Saul, spoke to him, said "Hey, I would appreciate it if you stopped killing my people, and from here on out you are going to be a chosen instrument for my glory." And then Saul, who later becomes Paul became the guy who wrote the majority of the new testament.

So I have a question for you. In whose life did God have a greater act of salvation in? In whose life did God work more grace in?

Now most of you in here are probably picking up that this is a trick question, because it would seem to easy to say that a greater salvation was displayed in Paul's life, than in my own 5 year old life. But when we look at the scripture, it doesn't matter if your greatest sin was killing Christians or sneaking in some contraband power rangers viewing on Saturday morning, the wonder of salvation is not due to the depth of surface sins, but rather from the rejuvenation of a dead heart.

See in both cases dead hearts existed. My heart was just as dead and as wicked as Saul's. See in the garden God told us, "Don't eat from that tree or you will surely die." Then we ate from it and he told Adam, "from dust you were made, to dust you will return." We see in Romans 6, the wages of sin is death." Col 2:13 says "you, who were dead in your trespasses." See the problem with humanity is that we are dead. And don't try to play with it, dead means dead, how dead, dead dead. No life, no pulse, no nothing, just death.

Now obviously I'm not talking about a physical death here, because we all testify that we are not physically dead, but what I am saying here is that all humanity from conception till God works a miracle, is dead. Whether you give all of your wealth to charity, or spend your nights raping and pillaging, without Christ, you are equally dead.

There is no level of death, there isn't kind of dead, dead, and super dead. There is dead, dead

dead. How dead are you, dead dead.

This is what we bring to the table. This is our side of the story, but fortunately for us, there is another side.

We see that again in John **5:25-26**

While we are dead, God is not, and Jesus, because he is God shares in the life of God. See in this passage Jesus isn't just making a claim about his divinity, but rather he is making a claim about a triune God whose simple existence is the sole source of life.

Vs. 26 says the father has life in himself. In the introduction to this book, we saw 1:4 where it says; "In him was life and the life was the light of men." We also see verses like Romans 8:10 where it says "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

See one hand we are the epitome of death, dead dead, but the God head is the epitome of life, The Father's life begets the son's life, the son's life begets the spirit's life, and the spirit's life begets the father's life, it is the circle of life. Our one God exists as three separate persons existing of 100 percent pure righteous life.

Now we have the stage set for redemption, a death producing dead man, and a life producing life source. What will happen when the two forces collide? Something miraculous.

The cross.

**5:26-27** see because Jesus is the son of God, fully God fully man, because all authority has been given to him, He now becomes the sole dispenser of salvation, because of the cross, because Jesus here knows what he was sent to this earth to do, he knows that it is through his blood and therefore the appeasement of God's wrath that dead people will be saved.

Eph 5:8 says "For by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not your doing, it is the gift of God."

So now let's go back to the first verse of our section today. **5:25**

So first of all, in this verse, now this changes a couple verses later, but in this verse, Jesus is not talking about a physical resurrection, but a spiritual one. And he makes the fantastic claim that it is not only going to happen, but it is happening. Meaning that right now, Jesus the Christ is interceding on our behalf and waking dead people from their death sleep and bringing them by grace through faith into a life that they neither were a.) aware of or b.) deserved.

This is the wonder of salvation. Where Christ looks at a dead man square in the eyes and says, breathe. And when Christ calls you to breathe, you have breath.

Now let me shatter your world here today. You are not Christ, nor will any other person you

meet be Christ, you need Christ. You walk down to Garden City funeral home and start calling dead people out of their graves and let me know how that works for you.

Now that is you as a living person, trying to save someone. Imagine how much more helpless you would feel as a dead man, trying to save himself, that is a horrible thought that we all know the result of.

Jesus is speaking to us the wonder of salvation here. He is calling us to get excited about the work he has done in your life. What a gracious gift that God has given us. Look here at a picture of what God does for us in salvation: **Rom 8:29-30**

That's God's role, here is our role: **Rom 8:29-30**, see salvation is in us a response to what God is doing in his act of salvation, not a decision made void of God's grace.

Meaning that your salvation is even more of a miracle, because it isn't something that you figured out, but rather it is an individual gift given specifically to you by the creator God, by the life giving trinity. Because while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Now I hope that you are starting to get excited about what God has done for you. Or if you are a person in here who is not yet saved, I hope you are getting excited for what God is beginning to do in you. But get this. Jesus isn't done amazing us yet.

He stands on his feet explaining to the Jews that yes he is God, and yes he does have authority to judge and yes he alone is the live giving life source and now he says, but you ain't seen nothing yet.

### **5:28-29**

Do not marvel at this. Now question, how many of you were in the midst of marveling at the glory of God's salvation? So why would Jesus say this to us? Why would he stop us from marveling at his salvation, was it only to steal our joy? Or was it because there is still something better?

Jesus is saying here, absolutely, I woke you from your death sleep to save you from death, I worked a miracle in your heart that you could have never dreamed of, and yet I didn't not simply save you from death, but I saved you to myself. This is our greater hope. We can and have experienced salvation here on earth, but salvation is not the end.

We have been saved from death, but that is not the end. We can rejoice in our salvation, but our faith only lasts until we need faith no more.

Hebrews says "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, certain of things we do not see." So faith is for the unseen. Therefore faith right now exists only because we have not yet seen. **1 Peter 1:3-5** puts it this way.

The thing you rejoice in right now, is an image you see in a mirror dimly. You can rejoice and rejoice greatly in your salvation, but the best is yet to come.

So many of us treat salvation as a one stop admission, like we just got into the gate of the amusement park and now we have the park to play in for the rest of our life. But salvation isn't the gate admission, salvation is the price you pay to get into the parking lot, heaven is the amusement park. Right now we are those pumped up 8 year olds running around like wild men in the parking lot telling everyone what they are going to ride first once they get in.

There will come a time where not only will you be saved from sin, but you and your physical resurrected body will be brought to a place where there is no sin because you know sit and see clearly the God of the universe as you worship at his feet.

See this is our end hope. You see there is no such thing as an afterlife. Because for an afterlife to happen after death implies that life exists prior to death, but as we see in the scripture our life doesn't even begin to hit its stride until after death.

Now I have heard this over a million times in my days in church, that we should be excited for heaven. And I know that there are some people in here right now that are really pumped and silently worshipping in their seats, hoping, longing and pleading for the day where they stand and worship God face to face. But I also know that there are others who are not excited, who value the joys of this world more than the promise of a coming new life in the eternal.

Hear me now, in order to fully marvel at your future glory before God, you must fully understand the wonder of your salvation. You must fully feel the need of a savior and rejoice in his judgment blood that was spilled for you. A proper view of self and God produces a proper view of salvation which creates a full spirit of marvel at the coming days, which allows us to worship and serve here on earth out of an overflow of our hope.