

“The Two Resurrections – Part 1”
John 5:25-29
(Preached at Trinity, November 28, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Jesus entered Jerusalem and healed a man by the Pool of Bethesda who had been infirm for 38 years. Because it was the Sabbath it infuriated the Jews. They became even more angry when Jesus replied to their criticism.
John 5:16-18 NAU - "For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." ¹⁸ For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."
2. Jesus was indeed making Himself equal with God – because He *was* equal with God. God is one, undivided. Yet, He exists in three distinct persons. The three persons made up the one being of God. The persons of the Trinity share all of the attributes of God and are carrying out the single purpose of God. Jesus and the Father were one in being, one in purpose.
3. Although there is one God who exists in three unified persons, each person of the Godhead has a unique function as He carries out God's unified purpose.
 - A. In **Verse 22** John tells us that the Father has given all judgment over to the Son.
John 5:22 NAU - "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,"
 - B. Judgment belongs to the Divine essence of God. It is God's action upon sin. But in the economy of the Godhead, judgment is given into the jurisdiction of the Son.
4. **Verse 24** serves as a transition. All judgment is given to Jesus Christ. All will stand before His judgment seat—and all will stand condemned. But there is hope in Christ. This verse speaks of hearing and believing, of passing out of death into eternal life.
John 5:24 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."
5. Jesus is talking about passing from death to life. But God's redemptive purpose actually involves two deaths and two resurrections. One is spiritual the other is physical. Jesus wants us to understand the significance of both resurrections. We'll look at the first resurrection tonight and next time we'll look at the second resurrection.
6. Jesus begins by describing the first resurrection. He uses the expression, ἀμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν. The KJV translates it, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” It is an expression that precedes something of great importance. This is important. We must be raised from death.

- I. The first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection
We are born spiritually dead
- A. God created human beings as amazing creatures
1. We were created in the image of God
 - a. We had the ability to reflect Him – to reflect His holy character. He gave us dominion over the earth and the wisdom to manage it.
 - b. We had the ability to commune with Him, to know Him, to enjoy Him.
 2. God entered into covenant with Adam
Genesis 2:16-17 NAU - "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
 3. But Adam did not keep the covenant; he sinned and he died. But this death had a multiple dimension. He didn't die physically on the day he sinned but he became mortal. He entered into all of the miseries of mortality – sickness, pain, sorrow.
Adam's mortality meant he would die, but not immediately.
Adam experienced another death that was immediate - he died spiritually.
- B. Every human being since Adam has been born spiritually dead
1. The entertainment industry today has an infatuation with Zombies—zombie movies, TV shows, video games, and on and on. A zombie is the sick creation of a horror movie; a person who has died but is walking around—gruesome and decaying.
 2. This actually describes the reality of humanity. We are born as walking corpses. Although alive physically, we are spiritually dead.
 3. The moment Adam sinned he died spiritually, and all his posterity after him are born in this state of spiritual death.
What was the result of this spiritual death?
- C. Adam became alienated from God, the source of true life.
Ephesians 4:18 NAU - "being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart"
1. He lost the ability to know God. He no longer recognized the goodness of God or His glory. He no longer saw God as worthy of worship.
 2. He lost the ability to commune with God. He now feared God and saw Him as an obstacle to his well-being.
 3. And he had no way of restoring what he had lost. He was dead to God and to the spiritual life he once enjoyed. He wasn't merely sick or weak where he might limp back to God. He was dead, a corpse in full decay
 4. *1689 London Confession* – Chapter 9 – *Of Free Will*
"Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."
 5. Martin Luther referred to this as the "bondage of the will."

- a. This doesn't mean the sinner doesn't do what he *wants* to do – he has volitional freedom. In fact he *does* do what he wants to do. But what he wants to do most is satisfy the desires of his flesh.
 - b. Regarding the spiritual life that God demands, the sinner always makes the wrong choices or he makes them with the wrong motives. He doesn't have the ability not to sin.
 - c. He has no ability to please God, even by his best efforts.
- D. In his spiritual death Adam fell in love with his sin – In Ephesians 2 we read the lost man is "dead in trespasses and sins"
1. His entire will was now predisposed towards sin and predisposed away from God.
John 3:19 KJV - "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
 2. In **Ephesians 2** the lost man is described as being a part of a fallen race referred to as "the sons of disobedience." We are rebels by nature.
Ephesians 2:1-2 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."
 3. This doesn't mean that the lost man lacks the ability towards any moral good. Lost people can be very virtuous. They can show great acts of kindness. But the lost man's greatest desire is service to self. Although he is capable of outward good he has no ability towards spiritual good.
 4. The lost man has no desire for the spiritual things that point to God. His proud heart stops him from humbling himself and confessing his sins before God.
- E. This spiritual death is universal among all of humanity
1. Adam acquired a sinful nature and we were born with this same nature.
 2. There is universal guilt, universal condemnation – universal blindness and death. What can be done?
 - a. Pelagian doctrine denies that anything needs to be done. They deny this whole idea of spiritual death. Pelagius believed we have the ability to seek God and to live for God.
 - b. Arminian doctrine (which is semi-Pelagian) says yes, we have been affected by Adam's sin. We are on our death bed, sick and in need of God's grace. But they deny we are dead. Even if we are sick unto death, we are able to turn our head towards God. We are able to reach for the remedy.
 - c. Biblical theology (Calvinism) says we are dead. Dead men can do nothing. We cannot reach out, look upon, cry out. We are dead.
 3. We need is a new life. We need to be raised from the dead. This is the first resurrection Jesus is speaking of here.
John 5:25 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."

- II. Unless God does something supernatural all men will continue in this spiritual death
- A. Jesus said, "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God"
1. Jesus often used the statement - **Matthew 11:15 NAU** - "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
 2. How does a dead man hear?
Dead men don't hear. They don't see. They can't talk. They can't move. They are dead! There must be a supernatural resurrection from the dead.
 3. No man will ever come to Christ unless something supernatural is done. We'll see this in the next chapter:
John 6:44 NAU - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."
- B. The supernatural act of raising the spiritually dead man from death to life is called regeneration.
1. Regeneration is the beginning of spiritual understanding, of spiritual life
 2. Most people today will read **Verse 25** and have their minds directed to some point in the future, of souls being raised from the grave at the last day. But this isn't the resurrection spoken of here. Notice what it says:
John 5:25 NAU - "an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
 3. This isn't talking about some point in the future. It is describing the first resurrection, the raising of sinners from spiritual death to spiritual life—life from the dead.

Conclusion:

1. Lost humanity needs this new birth, this resurrection from the dead.
This new life must occur before faith and repentance will be possible.
2. What can we do? How can we command dead men to turn to Christ?
How can a dead man do anything?
3. This resurrection like the second resurrection is a supernatural work of God. It is by grace
The reason billions are not embracing the Gospel of Christ is because they can't. They can't because they are dead.
4. This means much to us as we consider our Gospel work.
 - A. First, it makes us absolutely dependent upon God. He has to make dead men hear.
John 5:25 NAU - "an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
God has to supernaturally bring to life those who are dead.
Colossians 2:13 NAU - "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,"
 - B. Second, it gives us great confidence in Christian conversion
The lost man hardened in sin would never desire Christ.
I didn't say they don't want heaven
I didn't say they don't want to get out of hell
I didn't even say they don't want religion
But they don't want Christ.
When we see dead sinners wanting Christ above all else it is nothing short than life from the dead.
 - C. Third, it gives us great confidence as awakened sinners. Why do you love Christ?
Why is He the focus of your life? Why do you have a hunger and thirst after righteousness?
5. What about those of you who have not received Christ? Do you desire Him?
Are you concerned about your sinful life, your guilt and condemnation? Then flee to Him.
John 6:37 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
This is great encouragement to those who will come.
6. If you don't have any desire for Him then God still demands of you to turn to Christ, to trust Him, to follow Him.
Pray that God would help you to believe.