

John 5:24–29

²⁴ “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

²⁷ and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

“How Dead People Live, Part 2”
John 5:24-29

INTRO:

The last time we studied together in **John 5** we waded into **verse 24** and discovered what salvation looks like from our perspective. This was the first part of discovering *“How Dead Men Live.”* We who were dead in trespasses and sin are made alive by hearing His word, the Bible, and believing in the Lord Jesus and the Father who sent Him into this world.

We discovered when we do this three things take place. First, we have eternal life. This is both a life that will never end, and a life of constant fellowship and relationship with the Living God Himself. Second, we do not come into condemnation. ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”*** Romans 8:1. Third, we discovered that we have passed from death unto life. We, who were once spiritually dead and thus totally unable to love God or respond to Him, now are made alive to Him.

But in this conversation, Jesus was not done describing how dead men live. In **verses 25-29** He told us the rest of the story. Let me give you a bird's eye view of this paragraph.

I. How Dead Men Live (v. 24-25)

II. Why Dead Men Live (v. 26-27)

III. How Dead Men Will Live Someday (v.28-29)

I. How Dead Men Live (v. 24-25)

"[Truly, truly], I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live." John 5:25

A. We said before that the Lord Jesus shows the Jewish authorities one side of the coin in **verse 24**. Now He turns that coin over in **verse 25** and shows us God's side of that same salvation experience. He started again with the familiar ***"truly truly"*** statement.

"Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live."

B. When someone truly hears, genuinely believes, and thus abundantly receives all of the blessings of salvation here on planet earth, it is because of something that took place beforehand.

1. Jesus said, ***"the hour is coming and now is."*** There is a tension in the New Testament that is presented in the Gospel of John. This is something that is future and yet is beginning right now. What is? The dead are hearing the voice of the Son of God.

2. Now this presents a problem. We are reading about dead people hearing. How can a dead person hear? If a person is not alive, by definition that person cannot hear. Yet, remember a scene that we find in **John 11**? Here we see the Son of God standing beside the tomb of a man named Lazarus. What did our Lord do there? We read in the text,

(vs 43-44) "Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'"

How could dead Lazarus hear? He heard because it was the Son of God who spoke. The Lord Jesus speaks and the powers of nature listen. He commands and life itself must respond.

C. This was precisely what happened when you and I were saved. We may not have heard His voice audibly, but we heard it. He stood outside the tomb of our lives and said, ***"come forth!"***, and immediately you and I became alive to the spiritual reality around us which we never realized existed before! For the first time, we began to

live! This, my friend, is the other side of the salvation equation. This is how dead men live! So, our preaching the Gospel is a lot like the scene in **Ezekiel 37:1-10**.

II. Why Dead Men Live (v. 26-27)

“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” John 5:26–27

A. We now understand from both sides of the coin how salvation happens and dead men live. Why does it happen this way? Why is the Son of Man able to do this work? Jesus answers this question in the next two verses.

B. Dead men are saved in this way because the Father has granted to the Son to have life in Himself. Does this statement imply at one time the Lord Jesus did not have this ability?

1. To answer this concern, think with me about an important passage of Scripture in **Exodus 3:14**. When Moses wanted the Lord God to tell Moses His name, God answered in this way.

“And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

2. Here God defined Himself. I am He whose existence is in Myself. I Am that I Am. Remember we all recognize our source of existence is outside of ourselves. I became because of someone or something else! In contrast, this is not true of God. God being God means that He is the self-existent One. So, coming back to **John 5:26**, Jesus cannot be saying here that at some time before creation Christ was not self-existent and therefore not God. Then, God, the Father gave the quality of being God to Him. This idea is a contradiction of what it means to be God. If God gave Him the ability to be self-existent, He couldn't be by definition self-existent. His existence would depend upon the Father.

3. Rather, Jesus is putting a reality we can't fully comprehend in language which has meaning to us. God the Father and God the Son are self-existent and able to give life to others. That is why we read in **John 1:4**,

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Why then do dead people live? They live because the self-existing Son gives life to them.

C. Not only does the Son have the ability to give life He also possesses the authority to judge all humankind (**v. 27**). The amazing thing here is not the statement that the Son has been given the authority to judge, it is the reason the Father entrusted this responsibility to the Son of God. It is because He is the Son of Man.

1. I remember an assembly given at the high school I attended. The man told a “parable” about a group of the world’s most disadvantaged people waiting in the anteroom of the throne room of God. They were preparing an argument to present to the Almighty God why they could not be properly judged by Him. They decided that whoever judged them had to be born in deep poverty, a member of an oppressed people. He had to live a life of rejection, being rejected not only by his people, but even members of his own family. Ultimately, he had to die a horrible, violent, and totally dehumanizing death. Only someone who had experienced this could judge them! When they presented their case before the One who sat on the throne, He told them, that is exactly what He did.

2. This is why the Lord Jesus is uniquely qualified to judge all humankind. Someday, He will.

III. How Dead Men Will Live Someday (v.28-29)

A. We have learned how dead men live. We have also seen why they live. They live because the Son, who is self-existent, gives them life. Now we go from the present perspective to the future reality.

B. One day, those who are physically dead and buried in the tombs will hear His voice. This is the very reality Jesus wanted Martha to understand in **John 11:25-26**. ***“Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”***

Martha thought the resurrection was a day on the calendar like the 4th of July. Jesus said to her, resurrection is not a date. Resurrection is a person. Where Jesus is there is resurrection and there is life.

C. Someday those who are dead will come forth from the grave.

1. Some who have believed and been transformed and whose lives evidence this transformation through the quality of righteousness in their lives, they will receive the resurrection to life. This is Grace.

2. Others who know not the Lord and evidence that fact in their lives will go into condemnation. This is Justice.

To which group do we belong? Are we in grace, or are we doomed to judgment? What will you do with Jesus?

Hymn #516 *He’s Everything to Me*