

## 64 - Resurrection & Life

John 11:17-27

You aren't your body. You express yourself through your body; you are influenced by your body; you even have to take care of your body, but your existence is rooted in another dimension altogether. That's because God made you in His image, and He doesn't have a body. He is spirit (Jn 4:24). When He created Adam and Eve, He created rational, volitional, conscious beings who can know Him, obey Him, love Him and communicate with Him, person to person. He gave us a body, and said it was "good," and intends us to have one forever. But you are not your body. No human is. Once conceived we are eternal spirits: rational, volitional, conscious beings.

I admit it can be difficult to remember this when someone dies. Their body looks dead, but that's because the person isn't there anymore. He or she has gone somewhere else. That body was just the "clothing" they once wore, and someday God will give them a new one.

Without this perspective, nothing in the Bible makes sense. The ideas we read there are based on the understanding that this season of time, on this planet, is only a testing ground, so people can decide for or against God. And based on those decisions they will spend the next season, which lasts forever, either with Him or separated from Him. And as we watch and listen to Jesus it is quite evident that He was constantly seeing both these dimensions: the physical and the spiritual. To Him the line between life and death was very thin. In no way did He think a human being ceased to exist when their body died. He spoke of people who died as simply stepping into another level of existence and knew that it was possible, given the right circumstances, for someone to return to their body. And what made that possible was Him. Wherever He was, that could happen because life radiated from Him like light shines from the sun. So in His presence, dead things could come back to life, and He could give that gift of life to whomever He chose.

Standing on the outskirts of a little village called Bethany Jesus tried to explain this truth to a grieving woman, but on that day the Father had given Him the assignment to do more than simply use words. His assignment was to demonstrate His power over death, to show her what He is going to do for her, and for all of us, someday. He not only told her that He is the resurrection and the life; He proved it.

Arriving at Bethany (Jn 11:17-27)

• DBS (Wed-Sat)

Verses 25-26

To the statement that He is the resurrection and the life He added, "And the one who believes in Me, even if he should die, he will live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will not die into the age" (literal). And then He asked her, "Do you believe this?" The first part of His statement is addressed to the person who believes in Him but then their body dies. That person is promised resurrection (standing again). Someday their spirit will be clothed with an incorruptible physical body. The second part of His statement is addressed to one who believes in Jesus and is still alive. He or she has no reason to fear death. Their spirit, the real person, never ceases to exist but simply steps into the presence of God.

Joined to the Source

This is what I believe Jesus was saying to Martha: When you put your faith in Me you are joined to Me spiritually so that the life that is in Me gives life to you. For those whose bodies have died their spirits remains fully awake, enjoying the presence of God. For those who are still physically alive He was assuring us that we will never be separated from God. Our body may "sleep" for a season, but at an assigned moment in the future we will be "re-clothed" with a body that will never die, or experience disease or suffer again. A simple way to say this is: to be joined to Jesus is to be alive. Our bodies will be raised at a future event, but that's not the beginning of life. Everlasting life begins the moment we believe, the moment we are joined to the Source of life.

Resuscitating Lazarus

And Lazarus had believed. So though his body was dead, he wasn't. He was fully alive in the presence of God. That's why he could hear Jesus' voice when He shouted his name (v43). At that moment he left where he was, returned to the body he had once lived in, struggled to stand up because it was still wrapped in strips of linen filled with myrrh and aloes, and then somehow he managed to stagger out through the opening of the cave into the midst of a gathered crowd.



# LIFE LESSONS

## WITH DR. STEVE SCHELL

Teaching the Bible  
practically & understandably  
and seeing lives changed by  
the truth of the Gospel

When Lazarus died he didn't go into a coma-like sleep; he didn't wait in a dark place somewhere deep in the earth. He never lost consciousness and was quickly drawn into heaven. He was with God and with his believing loved ones who had died before he did. He was given a spiritual body which was recognizable, and he remained in that wonderful place until he heard Jesus shout. It was probably a rather sad moment when he was informed that he needed to go back, that God still had work for him to do there. He would have to go through the process of physically dying one more time because this time his body was only being "resuscitated" (his old body came back to life), not "resurrected" (put on a new, incorruptible body).

### Resurrection

You might think that going to heaven and receiving a spiritual body is good enough. But our destiny as children of God is far greater than that. These old bodies of ours are going to be redeemed from the power of death as certainly as our spirits have been rescued from eternal separation from God. Remember when God created the first humans with physical bodies, He said it was "very good" (Ge 1:31). Sin entered in and damaged God's plan, but God always comes back to His original plan. Adam and Eve were supposed to eat from the "tree of life" and live forever (Ge 2:9). Yes that part of the plan was interrupted, but it was just an interruption. In the new heaven and earth, which God will prepare for us, the tree of life will be there (Rev 22:2) to remind us that God was able to rescue what we had lost and to announce that we will finally receive what He had always wanted to give us.

The apostle Paul spoke a great deal about the resurrection of our bodies. He teaches that God's plan for us is not complete until our bodies have been resurrected. Listen:

- Romans 8:22-23 "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for [our] adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-4 "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this [house] we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."

And then Paul adds, "While we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord" (2Co 5:6), meaning while we're here on earth, we're not in heaven seeing Jesus face to face. Then his confidence in what will happen after he dies shines through. He says, "We prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8).

To those who doubted the reality of the resurrection, Paul even described the kind of flesh God will give those bodies. He said, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one [flesh] of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the [glory] of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable [body], it is raised an imperishable [body]" (1Co 15:39-42).

And then in case anyone questioned that those human bodies of ours must be resurrected, Paul made this amazing statement, "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1Co 15:50). That means that the entire universe, the heavens and the earth, all people, both the evil and the righteous, will be raised to an entirely different dimension. Everything will be raised to a new level of reality that will be able to bear the unrestrained glory of God. Without that change, subjected to His intense glory, everything physical will evaporate in a moment (Rev 20:11). Why will He resurrect everything? Because death was never part of God's original plan, and He always comes back to His original plan. That doesn't mean that those who refuse to repent and trust the grace of God will enjoy His presence in their resurrected state; they won't. But they will be resurrected, which is why the choice we make here on earth is so important. In fact it's the most important decision we will ever make.

Do you believe this?

Standing on the outskirts of Bethany Jesus said this to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."



# LIFE LESSONS

## WITH DR. STEVE SCHELL

Teaching the Bible  
practically & understandably  
and seeing lives changed by  
the truth of the Gospel

And then He asked her this question, “Do you believe this?” She answered, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, [even] He who comes into the world” (v27). He asks us the same question. Shall we give Him the same answer?

### Questions

- 1) Let's suppose someone who believed in Jesus dies and you have to explain to a child where that person is right now. What would you say?
- 2) How do the truths that we talked about today change the way a person would grieve over the loss of a loved one? (1Th 4:13)
- 3) Describe, step by step, what you think will happen to you if you die. Can you point to any scriptures that support what you believe? How does that change the way you feel about death?