

Living to Die - Dying to Live
Resurrection Sunday April, 9th 2023
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Living to Die - Dying to Live. On Resurrection or Easter Sunday the talk of death or dying is not considered good form - I get that! Interestingly enough, Jesus, in whom this whole Resurrection celebration consists and has meaning, rarely talked about the possibilities of life, without including the realities of death - and He rarely talked about the realities of dying without talking about the hope and possibilities of life. But let's not just take my word for it - listen to the words of Jesus.

Matthew 22:31-32

“As for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”

Matthew 16:25

“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

John 5:24-25

“Listen closely to the truth I am speaking to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. ²⁵ “There is an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”

Mark 9:31.

“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to Martha (sister of Lazurus), “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet will he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

What is the context for what Jesus is saying?

Well, His context includes those who believe and those who do not. His context certainly includes those who are physically living and those who are physically dying - which of course includes us all.

Finally, the context for the the words of Jesus regarding Living to Die and Dying to Live, is directly for those who are living only for themselves and clearly not for Him.

What does all of this mean?

It means that in a spiritual way to live we have to die - we die to self and are given new life to live for Him. Subsequently, the person we used to be (dead in our trespasses and sin) must finally die.

Why?

So that we might truly live. For us to be given a new life and to become a new person in Christ Jesus. That is the essence God’s truth for life in Him, and it is that evidential conclusion to the paradoxical principles of living to die - dying to live.

Is this real?

Yes. Every word of Jesus that I shared to you should be taken literally and not figuratively. This not a metaphor it is a reality. You and I have a physical reality which relates directly to our temporal timeline (how long we are going to live until we die). We also have a spiritual reality which relates directly to our eternal timeline (how soon we are going to die before we live - forever). My strongest inclination is to take Jesus literally when it comes to living and dying, dying and living. He is a bit of an expert... right?

All of this takes us right back to Jesus when He says to the sister of His friend Lazarus, whom He is about to raise from the dead (literally).

'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'

Lets Finish with three literal claims Jesus makes of Himself in those two short verses John 11:25-26.

- 1) *Jesus himself is the resurrection and the life*, meaning God the Father has given to him the power of life itself and to give resurrection life to whomever He chooses.

John 5:25-26

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, 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 also to have life in himself.

- 2) *People who believe in him, even if they die (as Lazarus had done) will live*—Jesus proclaims He will raise them from death on the last day. What he would soon do for Lazarus would be a harbinger (sign of things to come) of not only His own resurrection (death to life) but the resurrection of the end-time or last-day for all those who have believed (this includes you and I).
- 3) *People who live by faith and believe in him will never die*. This will be not just a literal spiritual truth but a physical truth as well for the last generation of believers. Of all other believers it is literally true in the sense that not even death can break their relationship with God.

With these three claims, Jesus made himself central to not only the Jewish hope of the resurrection and eternal life, but all people of all places, all races, and all times. Do you believe this?

He lived to Die - He Died to live. This means when we die to ourselves we live in Him. We live because He lives.