

“Living Is ForEver!”—Luke 20:37-38

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Living Is ForEver!”, is Luke 20:37-38 → *That the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

It has been said, many times in joking, that there are two things which are certain in life: Death and taxes. While people may make light of these dynamics in our lives it is interesting the amount of intrigue which people have about the “state” of a person at death. Since death appears so final there is still an uncertainty which lingers in the hearts of people which seems to cling to some form of “hope” for some kind of a wonderful life after death. This makes absolute sense in light of Ecclesiastes 3:11, which says that God *has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.* We were created for life and Life Is ForEver!

The struggle with man’s search for meaning in life after death has given rise to many opinions concerning the person at death. TV shows are dedicated to the experience of “ghosts”—people who have died and

have not “passed over” to the “other side.” There are no such things as ghosts according to Scripture. Even many Christians have embraced the idea that people die and become angels, many times alluding to Jesus’ words in our text about believers in the resurrection being “like the angels.” No, you don’t die and become an angel.

Many throughout the ages have turned to seances, clairvoyance, trans-channeling and a host of other methods to bring up the spirits of the dead in a effort to receive guidance from them for living. The LORD specifically warned against such practices in Deuteronomy 18:10-11 → *There shall not be found among you anyone who . . . practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead.* However, the fact that people look to the dead to define their lives once again reinforces that they were created for life and Life Is ForEver! Death is simply thought of as a different form of life.

The impact of death’s influence on life is seen in the popularity of near death or returning from death experiences which people encounter and share with others. In 1992 one lady published her experience of supposedly dying and talking with Jesus while in heaven. The book became so embraced by people of every religious bent that she was asked to speak at universities and public engagements as an authority on heaven and spirituality. Yet, those things which Jesus purportedly told

her in heaven contradict what Jesus teaches in the Bible. Sadly, many people will allow these “testimonies” to define their understanding of God, Jesus and faith and look at the revelation of the Holy Bible as second to them. People search for the meaning of life, even life in and through death. Why? Because we were created for life and Life Is ForEver!

You may ask: “So pastor, what does all this have to do with our text today?” **Everything!** The words of Jesus in verse 38 of our text reflect the revelation of that for which people are searching in the midst of life in death. *God is not God of the dead, but of the living, **for all live to Him.***

During what we have come to know as Holy Week Jesus was constantly being tested by the religious leaders of His day in their effort to catch Him speaking against God’s Law, thus making Him worthy of death. In our text a group called the Saducees placed before Him a question and scenario concerning marriage from the Old Testament law. The hypocritical nature of their actions was revealed when they ask Him a question about married life in the resurrection of the dead while they didn’t even believe in a bodily resurrection (cf. Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8).

Instead of allowing Himself to be pulled into the trap He simply answered their question in a manner which was in accord with God’s

Word and then focused on their false understanding of life after death. He too took them back to the very authority with which they were trying to trap Him in His words. Jesus alluded to how the LORD described Himself to Moses when He appeared to him from the midst of a burning bush in Exodus 3:6 → *I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

This way of the LORD revealing Himself to people connected them to relationship, not simply for genealogical purposes but, more importantly, to reveal His steadfast love and faithfulness in connection with His covenant of grace with us. Jesus' use of this incident was to reinforce that this covenant of grace is all about life and that Life Is ForEver—from beginning to end.

Actually, death is totally foreign to our human natures. God created Adam & Eve according to His will and His will was that they live forever. Unfortunately when they disobeyed His will their relationship with Him died along with their eternal status before Him. The consequence of such spiritual death also involved physical death with His pronouncement that we will *return to the ground, for out of it we were taken; for we are dust, and to dust we shall return.* (cf. Genesis 3:19) The eternal nature of our lives changed in an instant. But for God it's still all about life and that Life Is ForEver! Even in death, as Jesus says in our text, *all live to Him.*

The struggle is that from this point on, humans could no longer view life without seeing death at every turn. For example: People usually go to the doctor in order to receive help for a better quality of life. How many of you are hesitant to go to the doctor in the fear that s/he will find something wrong with you—another reminder of your mortality and maybe even your fear of death? Many people will avoid hospitals and nursing facilities, visiting only when absolutely necessary. Why? Could it be because they too remind them of the frailty of their own life and the possibility of death? Some even expect doctors to have the power to help them avoid death.

Yet, in the midst of such an intense awareness of death we still have the desire to live, both now and in some way after death. It's not an issue of life after death since Life Is ForEver. The question Jesus places before you today is: "Where will you live forever?" In the presence of God eternally in heaven or in eternal suffering away from His presence in hell?

Since God's will for you has never changed in His desire for you to live forever with Him in His presence, Jesus came to deal with your death, once and for all. His whole purpose for living was to die . . . and rise from death. Hebrews 2:14-15 says that He took on your human flesh so that *through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death*

were subject to lifelong slavery.

However, even such a death purpose for Jesus was all about life and Life Is ForEver in God's presence through faith in His Person & Work. His resurrection from the dead restored the life which God originally intended for all people, now received through faith in Jesus alone. Jesus said in John 11:25-26 → *I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.* His next question to Martha is also spoken to us: *Do you believe this?*

The living, death and life of Jesus for you is also based on the fact that your God is *the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.* He is your faithful God Whose will in the midst of His promises never changes. He is your faithful God Whose desire for your life even in the midst of death never changes. Even though you do not want to go through the death process, there is no need for you to fear death on any level—in this life or eternity.

Questions about the person at death find their meaning in God's perspective of life in Jesus Christ. It gives us an opportunity to engage these questions with the confession that Life Is ForEver because of what Jesus Christ has done. It gives us an opportunity to share what Jesus did to forgive all those sinful actions in our lives by His suffering, death and resurrection for us. It gives us an opportunity to proclaim the

confidence we have in Christ, in life and in death! Jesus has revealed what God has done for life from beginning to end. Life Is ForEver in Him!
Amen.

It is God Who has made us for eternity and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

(2 Corinthians 5:5 NIV)

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