

The Absurdity of Christianity

Part 2: You Don't Have to Stay Dead

1 Cor 15:12-34

INTRO: If you knew you couldn't die, what would you be afraid of?

Would you live any differently if you had no fear of death?

At the core of Xianity is the absurd belief that a man actually died and came back to life.

But if it's true... Then something even more absurd is true... We also can and will be resurrected from the dead.

Too good or absurd to be true? Great... let's talk about together.

WE: Every living thing has a survival instinct... we do everything we can to live.

But reality is we are only delaying the obviously inevitable... **We all die.**

Most fear death... don't even want to think/talk about it... But amazingly, the first JF's weren't afraid to die.

Historical accounts tell us that at different points when Xians were executed for their beliefs... their composure/peace/lack of fear impressed even those killing them.

Why? What made these people so different?... The absurd belief that Jesus rose from the dead.

They truly believed... **If Jesus has conquered death... what is there to be afraid of?**

GOD: Around 55AD Apostle Paul wrote a letter that explained this idea to JF's in Corinth.

Some of the Corithians said that the belief of life after death was ludicrous.

Dead people are dead and that's what they are... maybe their soul will live on in some type of spiritual afterlife (very Greek) but that's about it.

So Paul (as saw in last episode) first reminds them of the Core/central/main truth of Xianity...

Jesus died and rose again and was seen by eyewitnesses who, at the time of Paul's writing, were still alive to testify to the truth.

And then he addresses their issue and assures them... **If Jesus rose from the dead then we will also rise from the dead.**

Get out bible/app... want you to see how this unfolds. **1 Cor 15:12-34**

V. 12-13

Corinthians- "Humans don't come back to life"

Paul- "If that's true... then Jesus (who was also human) is still dead"

Paraphrase 14-19 And if Jesus is still dead...

- Preaching useless... even worse they are **evil liars** (eyewitnesses)
- Faith is useless... still chained to sin / still guilty
- Those who have already died are gone forever... sin/death have won
- We are the most pitiful people in the world for having an empty hope in nothing.

V. 20 BUT... Jesus **DID** rise from the dead... and not only that he is the first of all who will be raised...

See, a JF's hope is not that we become one with the universe/part of the force/simply live on in memories, fertilize future life, or become floating spirits, angels with harps...

If Jesus rose from the dead physically (as the eyewitnesses testify to) then we too will rise physically

If the absurd truth of Jesus' resurrection is true then why would our own resurrection be too good to be true?

Then Paul goes more in depth... buckle up...

V. 21-22

Adam (whether believe actual or not.. Ok. J did)- Whether literal or metaphorical... Lost our true humanity through rebellion... choosing a cheap imitation of what we were created to be... worshiping self trying to be our own image instead of bearing God's image... the result is sin/death. Separation from God/ourselves/others

Chained to/imprisoned by/under the bondage of sin/evil/death... want to do right but something in us fights against it. Don't want to hurt others but cant help it.

But **Jesus**, God the Son- Fully God and Fully Human... Is first of new humanity.

Died and rose to give us new life to make us new creations through the one who made us in the first place... not just a new life now but forever by ultimately raising us from the dead

God himself came and restored our true humanity. Destroying the power of sin.

Death started with Adam... it ends with Jesus. True life ended with Adam it begins forever with Jesus

Then Paul reveals the big picture of what all of this means and how it will happen...

V. 23-28 Huge. A lot here we just don't have time for in this format. Here's the gist...

Jesus' death and resurrection set in motion God's ultimate redemption of everyone and everything.

He will return and raise everyone who belongs to him...

Jesus will destroy all enemies... Not people- evil powers (they exist... look around the world for proof)/sin/and ultimately death

Everything will be restored... God will reign fully and totally.

Since Jesus has defeated and continues to defeat sin/death, we can be assured that death doesn't win... we will be raised just as he was.

And God will once again, as in eternity past, be over everything and everything and everyone will belong to him.

God's will will be supreme in every place in every way... all things will be united in him.

Since Jesus has been raised from the dead those who belong to him will also be raised and death will ultimately be destroyed.

But it's so much better than just hoping for a distant future as we try to simply survive and not do naughty things as we cluster in holy circles, hiding from the world, waiting for the end to come... no it's so much better!

V. 29- We really aren't sure what the heck is going on here. Seems like some were baptizing themselves to represent the dead...

Probably reflects a misunderstanding of baptism. Thinking it was a way to get you saved... just don't know.

Main idea: Paul is saying "Whats the point if they are already dead forever?"

V. 30-34 Paul's point is... **What we believe about our future determines how we live our lives now.**

The historical fact of Jesus' D&R proves the future fact that he will also raise us...

Death and sin will ultimately be defeated... meaning those who belong to him (JF's) are living in a different reality...now.

We still live in a world that is under the power of sin and death but we are free from its control...now.

We still are pulled to the sin around us... pulled to accept cheap imitations... but we are free now to live as we were meant to... as clearer and clearer image bearers of God.

We can live in a confidence that seems absurd to others.

As Pastor Andy Stanley says, **"When people don't fear death, they don't fear much."**

We can experience a confidence that we are loved, forgiven, accepted, free, empowered, and eternal... now.

Death doesn't have the final word. The separation we experience now will someday be removed.

Which means we are free and empowered to love without fear of consequences... to serve without fear of our efforts being wasted/ignored.

We are free and empowered to invite our neighbors to discover, enjoy, and share the life Jesus offers now and forever.

A life where sin and death will be erased and forgotten. *But you will never be.*

The hope of resurrection allows us to fully live now.

YOU: Let me ask you... What are you afraid of? What fear is keeping you from living the full life you were created for?

Fear of death / rejection / being found out / not measuring up or benign enough / not having enough?

So many of us may be alive but it's a half life... our fears make us half dead already... afraid to actually take the risk of truly living.

BUT... Something happened 2000 yrs ago... the eyewitnesses tell us that Jesus really did die and rise again.

And that he promised to give us eternal life... but not just some distant hope... its an eternal life that starts NOW and lasts forever.

He promised to give us a life worth living that carries into eternity... It sounds crazy but...

He was raised, and proved we will be raised. Death isn't final. Fear doesn't need to have any place in this life.

All evidence points to it being true... so what are you going to do?

Two options really...option 1, choose to not believe it... live the best life you can knowing you will someday die and everything you've done, everyone who know will be forgotten.

OR... option 2, Even though it at first glance seems absurd look at the facts...

Discover the hope of that Jesus D&R actually brings, Enjoy a life of purpose, meaning, courage, peace and joy **NOW**

And Share this absurd hope and life with those you love.

Read: Romans 8. Try to read it at least once in one sitting. Paul perfectly describes how our hope for the future gives us the courage, peace, joy to live a full life NOW.

How it starts- Romans 8:1-2

Ask: What is keeping me from living this life now?

WE: I know this can all sound absurdly crazy. I know I didn't answer all of the questions you probably have.

But the truth remains Jesus said he would die and come back to life.

He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die."

Then he died.

And people who watched him die tell us that three days later they talked to him, touched him, and watched him eat some fish.

And their lives were changed forever. Cowards became courageous. The fearful experienced a peace they couldn't explain. The lonely were accepted and included. Murderers became preachers of love. Enemies became family. And they had a confidence that awed their executioners.

All because they believed a man rose from the dead and that he would also raise them... and they experienced eternal life in the daily lives.

Jesus' resurrection gives us true life now and forever.

Summary:

At the core of Christianity is the absurd belief that a man actually died and came back to life. But if it's true, then something even more absurd is true... We also can and will be resurrected from the dead. If that's true, it can have a profound impact on how we view and live our lives now.

Episode Breakdown:

00:00 If you didn't fear death...

00:55 But we know it: we all die.

02:45 Will we rise from dead?!

05:10 Too good to be true?

08:17 Not just us, everyone & everything!

11:20 How we live our lives NOW

14:00 A life worth living

17:45 Qs, Updates & a... song?

Questions:

1. How have you seen God's love this week?
2. If fear were completely eliminated from your thinking, would your life be any different? If so, how and why? If not, why not?
3. Read Romans 8:10-11 and 35-37. What thoughts, feelings, questions do those passages elicit?
4. What are some thoughts, fears, worries, decisions that might need to be filtered through the promise of our future resurrection?
5. How can your group pray for you?

Main points

We all die.

If Jesus has conquered death... what is there to be afraid of?

If Jesus rose from the dead then we will also rise from the dead.

If the absurd truth of Jesus' resurrection is true then why would our own resurrection be too good to be true?

Jesus' death and resurrection set in motion God's ultimate redemption of everyone and everything.

What we believe about our future determines how we live our lives now.

Andy Stanley says, "When people don't fear death, they don't fear much."

The hope of resurrection allows us to fully live now.


Jesus' resurrection gives us true life now and forever.

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1 Corinthians 15, Romans 8

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