

## Raising the Dead

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- Death is something that we don't like to think about
  - I hate thinking about it
  - In fact, in large part – the only time I do think about it is when I happen to see in the news that someone close to my age died
  - And I'm just left in shock – wow, this guy was only 25 and was in a car wreck
  - How easily that could have been me, how easily that could be me tomorrow
- Philippians 1:21 – *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*
  - Christ has triumphed over the tomb
  - And God made a way for us to do so as well
  - For the Christian, death is but the greatest gain you will ever have – if you're living for Christ you can say that
  - But if you're not living for Christ listen to this
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – *“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.”*
  - If you aren't living for Christ, you have no hope and when your time on earth is done, your family's grief will not be eased because you have no hope
- Death is nothing for the Lord – He overcame it
- There are 11 instances of people being raised from the dead in the Bible
  - Widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17:17-24)
  - Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:18-37)
  - Man raised out of Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:20-21)
  - Widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11-17)
  - Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-56)
  - Various saints in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:50-53)
  - Lazarus (John 11:38-44)
  - Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43)
  - Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12)
  - Isaac (**Hebrews 11:17-19**)
    - A reference back to Genesis 22 of course
    - As we discussed in our lesson on faith, notice that it was by faith Abraham acted here – his faith was a working faith
    - And ours must be as well
    - When God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham just assumed that God would raise Isaac from the dead
    - So in a way, Isaac was already dead
    - When God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, in the same way – Abraham received Isaac back from the dead

- God is God and Abraham is but a mere man, but you can see the similarities here between Abraham and Isaac and compare that with God the Father and God the Son, Jesus
  - Jesus (Luke 24:1-12)
    - Death could not hold the king of kings
    - Why was the stone rolled away from the tomb? So that Jesus could get out? Of course not
    - It was so that others could see inside and find that Jesus was not there
    - Jesus didn't need that stone to be removed to get out – He created it
    - The angels approached the women in these verses and say *“Why seek the living with the dead.”*
    - Amazing words – Jesus lives and He is alive today
    - If Christ wasn't raised, our faith is useless (1 Corinthians 15:14)
    - This is what we imitate in our baptism – our old man of sin is raised from the dead spiritually through baptism and arises a new creature, just as Christ did (Romans 6:1-11)
    - The single most important set of events in human history – Christ's life, His death, burial, and resurrection
    - Praise God for this indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)
- In this sermon, I want to look at 3 examples from the life of Elisha
- 1 – the raising of the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:18-37)
  - We can all agree that the role women play in this lifetime is irreplaceable
  - And this Shunammite woman showed great hospitality to Elisha (vs 8-11)
  - This woman **urged** Elisha to stay for a meal – in other words, I get the sense that she was not going to take no for an answer
    - I've done random things from time to time for my elderly widowed neighbor and every time, she offers me something to eat and her tone is “you will not turn this down” – and of course, I never do
    - So I know Elisha's position here – as many of you likely do as well
  - But she doesn't stop there
  - She says to her husband “this is a man of God, let's not stop at just providing him a meal, let's give him a room to stay in when he is in this area”
  - And so she does
  - God gives her a son as a result
  - The next part of the story you will not believe
    - But this son has issues with his head and he dies from those issues not long after in his mother's arms – Scripture describes him as still being a child
    - You can imagine the distress this must have caused her
    - And she went to find Elisha
    - So Elisha sends Gehazi ahead of him and his attempts to raise the boy were unsuccessful
    - Finally, Elisha gets there and this time – what happens?

- Elisha prays to God (vs 33)
    - And he stretched his body over the boy's dead body twice (much like what Elijah did in 1 Kings 17:17-24)
    - And the boy sneezes 7 times and then opens his eyes
  - Question: what did Elisha stretching himself over the boy have to do with him being raised from the dead?
    - Absolutely nothing
    - If you go stretch yourself on a dead body in hopes to raise them from the dead, people will think you are crazy
  - So who had the power to heal? Elisha or God? Man or the Lord?
- 2 – The cleansing of the water (2 Kings 2:19-22)
  - At the beginning of chapter 2, Elijah and Elisha go through several different schools of prophets: Gilgal, Bethel, and now Jericho
  - And the men of the city approach Elisha and say “the water in our town is bad”
  - Vs 21 suggests that this water was causing death and making the land unproductive
  - We had a train derailment in ~2015 at WVU Tech in Montgomery
    - Didn't have water for 2 weeks
    - You know what we did? We got out of there
    - The college sent us home
    - We couldn't stay there like that
  - A good friend and brother in Christ and I went on a 15 mile hike recently
    - Hiked 13 miles in the first day
    - We both ran out of water, we had planned for that though – you don't want to take too much as you want to minimize the weight when you're backpacking
    - So we stopped for the night at guess where? Near a water source
    - The Dismal Falls and we stocked up on water for the next day
    - Guess what we had to do with that water before it was usable? We cleaned it
  - The folks of Jericho had bad water and apparently no way to clean it
  - It was causing death
  - So they approach Elisha
  - And Elisha says “bring me a bowl of salt” which he then throws in the water
  - The water was healed (vs 21 & 22)
  - Again, I ask: what did salt have to do with cleaning this water? Absolutely nothing
  - God did this healing through Elisha and He demonstrates yet again that He is going to heal despite man's inability to do so
- 3 – The pot of stew (2 Kings 4:38-41)
  - Elisha is back in Gilgal
  - Remember this was one of the locations of the school of the prophets
  - And there was a famine in the land
    - Famines were pretty common at this time
    - Why? Because of the Jews unfaithfulness – have you ever read the book of Judges

- It is no coincidence that when we turn our back to the Lord, bad things are going to happen to us
    - If not in this life, than the next
  - So these prophets in training were hungry – likely very hungry
  - And Elisha requests that a stew be made for them
  - And one of the sons of the prophets thought “I’d like to add some flavor to this stew”
  - And this son of the prophets gathers some wild gourds – a lapful
    - Perhaps he folded his shirt up to carry them
    - And he puts the gourds in the stew
  - Vs 40 – there is death in this pot
  - They couldn’t eat it – there’s a famine in the land and these folks finally have food, and they can’t eat it
    - But I guarantee nobody was going to waste this food by throwing it out
    - There was a famine
    - There’s a famine in the world today
    - And we need the bread of life – the words of Jesus
    - Give them something to eat
    - So man adds something to this pot and ruins it – sound familiar, like Adam and Eve in the garden perhaps?
    - They have one rule and they break it – and death came as a result
    - What about the plan of salvation? “I’m just going to subtract baptism and replace it with the sinner’s prayer – now it’s good”
    - Folks – you just broke God’s perfect plan of salvation
    - Don’t do that and expect God to save you (Matthew 15:8-9, Revelation 22:18-19)
    - God did not break it – you did
  - So Elisha gets some flour, puts it in the stew and makes it edible again
  - The third time I ask you: what did this flour have to do with healing deadly stew? Absolutely nothing
  - Who healed this stew? Elisha or God
- **Ephesians 2:1-10**
  - For those who have not obeyed the gospel – you are dead (vs 1)
  - Whether you realize it or not, you are subject to the devil (vs 2)
  - Bear with me here, I’ve been getting this verse confused a lot recently
  - Vs 4 – “But because I’m so great, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ...” – No
  - “But because I’ve got a great earthly job, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ...” – No that’s not right
  - “But because I have many friends in the world and I’m very popular, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ...” – No, that’s not right either
- **Vs 4-5**

- Brethren, what did you do to receive God's grace? The answer once again is absolutely nothing
- In fact, your actions did the exact opposite
- **Colossians 1:9-14**
  - Very humbly brethren – what did you do?
  - Because according to Colossians, it was God who qualified you
  - Who rescued you, redeemed us, forgave us
- What do you and I have to do with eternal life with God? Absolutely nothing
  - When we sin once, we have no business being associated with God (James 2:10)
- It is He who heals us
- And we're only going to be healed in the way that God has provided for us to be healed
- And that is His perfect plan of salvation of course
  - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
    - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
  - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
  - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
  - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
    - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
  - **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
    - Baptism: immerse or submerge
  - **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*