

I. Introduction

Good morning! In **Ecclesiastes 3:11**, the author teaches us about the works of the Creator God saying, **“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”** This verse tells us that we cannot fully understand the work of God and it teaches us to trust that God will make all things beautiful at the right time. It also explains one of the mysteries of human culture: the question of why every culture honors the dead.

Worldwide, in every culture and place, people mark the passing of family, friends, and neighbors with rituals, ceremonies and carefully prepared gravesites. The style of funerals and graves varies widely, but every culture honors the dead at the time of death and often for many years afterwards. Why? Because God has, **“set eternity in the hearts of men.”** We have eternity in our hearts. God placed it there. And because of this, we cannot help but believe that there must be more to life than 70 or 80 years in this world. Deep down, we feel that the dead are still alive somewhere.

In Acts 26, the Apostle Paul spoke before King Agrippa and his court and asked, **(Acts 26:8), “Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?”** Paul is speaking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But Paul’s question can be applied broadly. If we all feel that there must be more to life than our short time on earth, then why should it seem incredible to believe that God raises the dead? The Creator of time and space is certainly capable of raising the dead. And He has placed that hope in our hearts. In fact, resurrection is more than a hope; it is a promise.

In **Isaiah 26:19**, it says, **“But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.”** This is direct and easy to understand. There is nothing vague about this prophecy. God has promised that there will be a resurrection. And, God always keeps His promises.

In today’s passage of Scripture, we will see how Paul points to the resurrection of Jesus as fulfilled prophecy to assure us that the gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life is real. Let’s remember where we are in our study. Paul is on his first missionary journey. And, in Acts 13, he is giving a message in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. This map shows the location, which is in the western part of modern Turkey. And, this painting can help us to imagine the scene. Let’s read Acts 13:32-39.



II. Scripture Reading (Acts 13:32-39, NIV 1984)

32 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ' 34 The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' 35 So it is stated elsewhere: "'You will not let your Holy One see decay.' 36 "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. 38 "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

III. Teaching

Paul boldly proclaims that Jesus Christ has risen and that the resurrection of Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecies given hundreds of years earlier. **Acts 13:32-33a**, “**We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.**”



Paul goes on to explain that the promises given to King David long ago are fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection. King David died and was buried and his body decayed. But Jesus, a descendent of David, did not stay in the grave; He rose to new life. In Psalm 16, David wrote (**Psalm 16:9-10**), “**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.**” But David was not speaking of himself; he was speaking prophetically from the perspective of the messiah to come.

Paul proclaims that the resurrection of Jesus is Good News. It is the fulfillment of God's promise and the prophecy of Scripture. And, it is the final proof that Jesus is the true Savior, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. By the way, it is important for us to realize that the resurrection of Jesus is not a mere resuscitation of Jesus' old body. It is something much more wonderful, it is a resurrection unto eternal life.

Lazarus had been dead for four days when Jesus called him to come out of the grave. But the command of Jesus could not be denied. Lazarus rose up and came out, still wrapped in the grave clothes. It was an amazing miracle which demonstrated Jesus' power and His love. But the resurrection of Lazarus was not a resurrection unto eternal life.



According to tradition, Lazarus lived thirty years after his resurrection and then died again and was buried. The Saint Lazarus Church in Larnaca on Cyprus is said to be built over the site of Lazarus' second grave. The resurrection of Lazarus was a resurrection unto a thirty-year extension of his natural life. But, on the last day, when Jesus has come again, Lazarus will be raised from the grave unto eternal life in heaven, along with all who have trusted in Jesus.



On that great day, Lazarus will be raised unto eternal life with a resurrection body. **1 Corinthians 15:42-43** describes it like this. “**So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;**”

On that day, Lazarus will have a resurrection body. But Jesus has already been raised unto eternal life and He already has a resurrection body. Jesus is alive forevermore. His resurrection is Good News because it means He is alive forever and able to watch over His church, including you and me, always and everywhere. And, Jesus offers an amazing free gift to all who trust in Him.

Jesus offers to us forgiveness of sins and eternal life; given by grace and received by faith. We don't receive our resurrection body immediately when we believe, but we do receive forgiveness of sins, peace with God and adoption into the family of God as sons and daughters at the moment when we say, “yes,” to Jesus and ask Him to come into our life. And we are promised that on that last day when Lazarus receives his resurrection body, that we will be there, and we will be given a resurrection body also. And, if we die before that great day, then we will still be alive with Jesus in spirit, enjoying heaven and His presence, just as Lazarus is doing now.



Paul continued in **Acts 13:38-39** saying, **“Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.”** All men and women sin. We all do wrong in the sight of God. We need forgiveness of sins. We need to be washed clean and restored to fellowship with God. The Law of Moses did not provide a means to receive complete forgiveness. Under the law, sacrifices were offered again and again as a covering for sin, but complete forgiveness was out of reach. But through faith in Jesus, we receive a complete and true forgiveness of all sin, because of His finished work on the cross for us. This is wonderful Good News.

IV. Conclusion

How will we respond to this Good News? I pray that each and every one of us, and also our families, friends, and neighbors, would all say, “yes,” to Jesus. Say, “yes,” to Jesus and give thanks to God for the forgiveness of sins and rejoice in the free gift of salvation. Through faith in Jesus we can all receive new life; an abundant life of fellowship with Him and the family of God forever. New life, eternal life, and the promise of a resurrection body – this is Good News.

Let’s close our message for today with the words of **1 Peter 1:3-4**, **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you.”**

Let’s pray.

V. Prayer