

Is There Life After Death

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon explores the Christian hope of life after death through the teachings of Jesus and the experiences of biblical figures.

Duration: 34:02

Scripture: Job 14:14, John 11:17-29

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book of Job and the questions that Job asked when he was stripped of everything. Job's questions revolve around the basic issues of life, such as whether a man lives again after death. The preacher then transitions to the Gospel of John, specifically chapter 11, where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. This story serves as a powerful example of Jesus being the resurrection and the life, offering hope and eternal life to believers. The sermon concludes with a prayer, expressing gratitude for the truth of resurrection and asking for assurance of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to the Gospel according to John chapter 11. Our scripture reading will begin with verse 17. We will read to verse 29.

So shall we stand as we read the Word of God? John 11 beginning with verse 17. Then when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had been lying in the grave for four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in And Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had only been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou will ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus said unto her, Your brother will rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the

Son of God, which should come into the world.

And when she had so said, she went her way and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she rose quickly and came unto him. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this glorious truth that was revealed in an hour of sorrow and grief. That you are the resurrection and the life. And if we will believe in you, though we are dead, yet shall we live.

And those that live and believe in you will never die. Lord, we thank you for this hope that we have of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And so we ask, Lord, that today, as we study this passage, you will speak to our hearts and assure us, Lord, of that wonderful hope of every believer of that eternal life that we have in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

We ask it in his name, Father. Amen. You may be seated.

This week we're studying the book of Job, chapters 11 through 20. So if you haven't read it yet, we encourage you to read it today and join with us tonight as we continue this interesting book of Job. The questions that Job asked, because he was stripped of everything but his bare existence.

And that was a very painful existence and stripped. He began to ask the basic questions of life, questions that we don't really think about every day or ask every day. But when we really come down to really the basics, these are the issues that people are thinking about.

When we come to the place where a friend of ours has died, then we begin to ask those questions. If a man dies, does he live again? Do we go on living? Job was a man who was stripped. And we are looking at Job chapter 14 this morning.

And beginning with verse 14, where Job said, if a man die, will he live again? All of the days of my appointed time, I would wait till my change would come. Job stripped of everything. He once possessed his wealth, his health, his family, his friends.

One by one, he lost all of these things. Finally, even the loving, sympathetic care of his wife, as she suggests that Job should just curse God and die, get out of his misery. Things that we count important in life, things that we look to and we really use these as our criteria for a good life.

These are the things that Job was stripped out. And all he had was just bare existence, that painful existence. And from that being stripped of everything, down to the basics, if a man dies, does he live again? More literally, if a man dies, does he go on living? Does life continue after a person has died? Or as so many just think, that death is the end.

You live like a hog, you die like a dog, and it's all over. And there are those who do believe that. And it's tragic to have that kind of a belief.

But there is that question, if I die, do I go on living? Is there another dimension? Is there another sphere where life continues when life on this earth is over? In chapter 14 here, we find Job's assessment of life, beginning with verse 1, where Job declares, man that is born of a woman lives but a few days, and he is full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, but then he is cut down. He flees also as a shadow, and it continues not.

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months that he shall live are with God, and God has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. His desires was that God would turn from him and that he might rest till he should accomplish as a hireling his day. Lord, just leave me alone until the day is over.

But the question is, is there something for man beyond the grave? When my days are over, is there something left? It is a question that has haunted man from the beginning of his consciousness, but a question that really wasn't resolved for Job, nor was it resolved in the Old Testament. There are hints, there are indications, but there is no really solid kind of assurance. It is a question that is born out of the awareness that somehow life is too short to accomplish all that I desire to accomplish.

Solomon, speaking of it, says that it's sort of like a pitcher that is broken at the fountain. It hasn't really fulfilled its purpose. You've gone to the well to get your water in this pitcher, and as you put the jug on your shoulder, you drop it, it breaks, the water spills out, and thus the pitcher has not fulfilled its purpose of carrying the water to your house.

And so it seems like death is like that. Life is not yet fulfilled or completed, and death cuts us off before we can complete the projects that we're on. And Job says, if a tree is chopped down, a lot of times out of the trunk will come new little branches or shoots that will bring forth.

But with man, you know, when he dies, it seems like there's nothing that comes out of it. He wastes away, Job said. When man gives up the spirit, he asks, where is he? Job seems to say, if I could believe that there was life after death, that this was not the end, then I could bear up under the pressures and the pain and all that I've been going through.

Many people today have convinced themselves that death is the end of man's existence. It is true that there was no real answer for Job in his day, only just a remote hope. We do find Job saying in chapter 19, as he began to rise above his doubts and his fears, he said, oh, that my words were now written.

Oh, that they were printed in a book. I have news for you, Job. Your words were written.

They've been printed in a book, in the book called Job, that we've been studying. He said that they were graven with an iron pen and carved in a rock forever. For I know that my redeemer lives, and he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth.

And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. And for this, he said, my heart yearns within me. Long after Job died, the age of philosophy was born, and the questions that the philosophers were asking were basically the questions that Job had asked.

Why am I here? What is the purpose of my existence? Is there life after death? The age of philosophy was dying, and the philosophers had not come up with adequate answers for man, when in a little village called Bethany, which is on the backside of the Mount of Olives away from Jerusalem, there were two sisters whose brother had died. They had gathered with friends and were grieving over his death. They had sent a message to Jesus, who was down at the Jordan River, a two days journey from Bethany.

The message was very terse. It was very short and very graphic. It just said, come quickly, the one you love is dying.

But Jesus did not respond immediately. In fact, we read that he just stayed for a couple of days there at the Jordan River before he began his two day journey back to Jerusalem. And as he was there with his disciples, he said to them, we must go to Jerusalem that we might awake Lazarus out of his sleep.

They said, Lord, you don't want to go to Bethany. The last time you were there, they were attempting to kill you, and you don't want to go. And they said, if he's sleeping, he's probably getting better.

Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I'm glad for your sakes I was not there, but that God might be glorified, I must go and awake him out of his sleep. So as they were making their way to Bethany, when they were coming within the view of Bethany, because coming up from the Jordan River, coming up past and through Jericho, you can see a long ways down the path, and they could see Jesus coming to Bethany.

And Martha, when they heard that Jesus was coming with his disciples, she left the other mourners and went running down the road to meet Jesus. And when she caught up with Jesus and the disciples, she, with maybe a bit of disappointment, maybe even bitterness in her voice, said, Lord, if you would only have been here, my brother wouldn't have died. It was a polite kind of way of saying, Lord, what took you so long to get here? Didn't you get our message? It said, come quickly, Lazarus was dying.

Lord, you could have averted our grief and our sorrows that we are experiencing today, had you only come. Lord, why didn't you come sooner? And Jesus said, Lazarus will rise again. She said, oh yes, Lord, I know in the last day the great resurrection.

And that is when Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. And he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And if you live and believe in me, you will never die.

And then he said to her, do you believe this, Martha? The answer of Jesus to the question of Job, if a man dies, will he live again? Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. And he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And if you live and believe in me, you will never die.

Martha, do you believe this? Wait a minute, Lord, that's pretty radical. Let me think about that. Martha answered, I believe that you are the Messiah, the promised one from God.

But the question of Jesus, do you believe this? You see that it was a radical statement, probably more radical than anybody dared to make. If I should sit here this morning and say, friends, I've got some news for you. I am the resurrection and the life.

And if you believe in me, though you were dead, yet you will live. And if you live and believe in me, you'll never die. You go away and say, he's crazy.

And you'd be right. But because who Jesus is, it surely gives you reason to think and ponder the statement of Christ. It's a statement that is so radical, it divides all of us today in one of two categories.

Each of us here are in one of two categories, those who do believe it and those who don't believe it. Or to go one step further, those who today have a hope for eternal life and those today who have no hope for eternal life. The question is, in which category are you today? You may say, well, I'm not really sure, I haven't made up my mind yet.

But did you know that there's no middle ground? It's either yes or no, I believe or I don't believe. Jesus said, whosoever is not with me is against me. He doesn't give you any neutrality in this issue.

If it isn't a yes, it is a no. And there's no place in between. You can't say, well, I'm not certain.

No decision is a no decision. To say, well, I just don't know. That is a decision.

It is a no decision concerning Jesus. Not to accept is to reject. It seems like there is an interesting transition between life and death, where sometimes a person is conscious of both realms.

They are still living, but they suddenly become conscious of the eternal realm. Just before Stephen was stoned to death, we read that he looked steadfastly into heaven, and he saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And Stephen declared, I see heavens open, and the Son of Man is standing at the right hand of God.

In between that transition, he was still here on earth, but yet heaven opened, and he could see the glorious Christ there standing at the right hand of God. My mother's mother, my grandmother on my mother's side, a very godly woman, and she was in the hospital dying of cancer. And daily she was praying, oh Lord, please come and take me home.

Lord, I'm tired of living, and I just don't want to go on. Please come and take me, Lord. And one Sunday morning as she was there praying, Lord, please come and take me, she said, oh thank you Jesus, take care of my babies.

And that was it. She became conscious that the Lord had come for her. She was sort of in that transition between life and death, but one step, one you might say foot here on earth, and the other foot already in heaven, in that transitional state between the two.

Dwight Moody, that great evangelist of the past century, was dying in the hospital there in Chicago. His son Will was by his side, and he heard Dwight saying in a very slow measured words, earth is receding and heaven is opening before me. Will tried to arouse him thinking that he was having a dream, and Dwight Moody answered him and said, no Will, this is no dream.

It's beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death, it is sweet.

There's no valley here, and God is calling me, and I must go. And I see little Dwight, and there's Irene. They were two of his grandchildren that had also died the previous year.

In fact, Irene had died just a few days earlier, five days earlier, and they didn't tell him because they felt that it would upset him in his condition, and so he was saying, and there's little Irene. He said, I didn't know she was here. Both sides.

It's a beautiful thing, this transition, if you're a child of God, from this life into that eternal life. Paul the Apostle was in Lystra, and the mob was stoning him, and they thought he was dead, and they drug his limp body out of the city of Lystra, and his friends were standing around grieving over the death of Paul, when suddenly he began to move and opened up his eyes. He stood up, and he said, let's go back into Lystra.

I didn't finish my message, and you can't stop a guy like that. And writing about this, 14 years later, writing to the Corinthians, he said, I know a man in Christ 14 years ago, and whether he was actually in the body

or out of the body, I really don't know. But he was caught up into the third heaven, and there he heard things that were so glorious, so beautiful, it would be a crime to try to describe them with language.

In other words, there's no vocabulary that could express the beauty, the glory that Paul experienced. And he said, because of that, the Lord had to give me a thorn in the flesh, you know, because of the abundance of the revelation that was given unto me. There was given to me this thorn in the flesh, really to just sort of give him the reality, you're still alive, you're hurting, you're paining, you know.

But from that time on, Paul didn't fear death at all. You see how he faced the things of death with a very nonchalant kind of an attitude. In fact, he declared, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

And so he sort of was looking forward to that time when he would be with the Lord. And he said, I find I'm in a place of mixed emotions. I'm in a straight between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

And yet, I know that you still need me. I still have a ministry to you. And so I'm torn by this desire.

I would rather just depart and be with Christ, which is far better. So with Paul the apostle, as he looked at this, you know, life beyond the grave, that life beyond death, he was actually just looking forward to this transition when he would be there in the presence of the Lord. He had a taste of what was waiting for him on the other side.

And he said, I fought a good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith.

This is just before Nero had him beheaded. He said, henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, our righteous judge, shall give to me, but not to me only, but to all those who do love his appearing. And so if a man dies, is that the end? Not if he's a child of God.

It is just the transition into this glorious presence of the Lord. And so he said, I live that whether alive or present, you know, I'm with the Lord. I live in the consciousness of his presence, but looking forward to standing in the very presence of the Lord and receiving the crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous judge, he said, will give to me and to all those that love his appearing.

So with Job, questions. Unfortunately for Job, no concrete positive answers, just a hope. In the New Testament, same question, but now a positive answer, giving great hope.

Jesus said, yes, I am the resurrection and the light. And if a man believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And if you live and believe in me, you will never die.

You say, well, wait a minute, Chuck. It seems to me that there's a problem here. You talked about your grandmother who loved the Lord and how she lived and believed in Jesus and how she had this beautiful death and experiencing the presence of the Lord coming to her to take her home.

And many other Christians who have died. And if Jesus said, if you live and believe in me, you will never die. Isn't there something wrong here? Know this, the Bible has two definitions for death.

One is the separation of your consciousness from your body. If you are in the hospital, you're in a coma, and they've connected up the life support systems with the life support systems that help you to, you know, pumps the oxygen in your body and so forth, helps you to continue to just hang on by a thread. They connect also these little probes on the side of your head there, the EEG probes that monitor your

brain activity.

And as long as the little graph, as long as the little needle is bouncing on that graph, they say you're still alive. You haven't really yet gone past being alive. And so they count you as still alive.

And a lot of times people can be on these life support systems for several days before the needle quits bouncing and goes flat. When it goes flat, they call it the flat line, and they disconnect the life support systems, and they go out and notify your loved ones that they have done all that they can, and they're sorry, but you have died. The separation of your consciousness from your body, that is the definition for death from a medical standpoint.

From a biblical standpoint, the definition of death is the separation of your consciousness from God. If you live without an awareness of God, without the consciousness of God, no awareness of God, the Bible said you are dead while you are still alive. And you who were dead in your trespasses and sins has he made alive through believing in Jesus Christ.

And so death has two definitions. When Jesus said, if you live and believe in me, you will never die, he's using really the second definition, you will never be consciously separated from God. When you take your last breath here on earth, your eyes are closed, you quit breathing, the line goes flat.

You are at that moment rejoicing in the presence of the Lord, in the glory of his eternal kingdom. You don't die, but there is that transition. And thus, your last breath here will be your first breath there in his presence, in the glory of his eternal kingdom.

That's the hope that we have as Christians. That's the hope that is given to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As the Bible said, the living hope, it isn't a dead hope.

It's a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Today, Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. If you believe in me, though you were dead, yet shall you live.

If you live and believe in me, you'll never die. And then he asked, do you believe this? And that's the question today. Do you believe this? It divides us today into two companies.

There are those here today who believe that, that is their hope, that is their confidence and their assurance. There are those who question, they don't believe it, they doubt it, they challenge it, and there is no hope for life for them. Which company are you in? You might ask yourself that question today.

Father, we thank you for the hope that we have in and through Jesus Christ. He has conquered death. He rose from the dead and he has given to us that living hope because he conquered death.

And he said, you, because I live, you too shall live. And so Lord, I pray that for those today who it's still just sort of a question, they're not really assured. They really don't know.

May they settle that question today. May they come to a faith in Jesus Christ, believing in him as their savior and thus being assured this day with that glorious hope that everything is okay. No matter what may come, no matter what issues might befall them, that they are sealed forever in your love and will be with you forever in your kingdom.

So Lord, we pray that today might be a glorious day for many of the people that are here as they pass from death into life, that eternal life through Jesus. We ask it for his glory and in his name. Amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you today. If God has spoken to your heart and there is maybe the question in your own mind as to whether or not you have eternal life, that question can be answered today by you're receiving Jesus Christ. Because he that liveth and believeth in me, as he said, shall never die.

The hope that we have. And so when we're dismissed this morning, we would encourage you just come on forward. These fellows will be down here to pray for you that you might have that assurance today that no matter what may come, you have eternal life through him.

He will be there to see you in that transition from passing from death into life, that eternal life through him. May the Lord watch over you. May the Lord keep you in his love.

May he draw you close to himself. May you experience the joy of the Lord and his strength today. Helping you, Lord, helping you to face the situations that might come into your path during the day, knowing that he is with you and has prepared a place for you, as he said, that where I am, there ye may be also.

And thus, God bless you, keep you in his love, cause you to grow in your knowledge and relationship with him. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. God bless you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22107.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/is-there-life-after-death/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net