

John 5:24-29

“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

²⁵ And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. ²⁶ The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Don’t be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God’s Son, ²⁹ and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.”

Background

Each Gospel presents a unique view of Jesus: Matthew shows Him as King, Mark as the Perfect Servant, Luke as the Son of Man, and John as the Son of God. The central theme of John’s Gospel is Jesus’ full deity. Through His miracles, teachings, and “I AM” statements, Jesus is shown to be more than a good man; He is fully God! In John 5, Jesus claims divine authority by declaring He gives life and judges all, a role only God holds. This message brings both good news and a serious challenge: *how we respond to Jesus determines everything*.

Teaching Points

1. The good news is that there is a resurrection of life.

Verse 29 says believers will “rise to experience eternal life.” This is a bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), where believers will live forever with glorified bodies (Philippians 3:21). Revelation 20:6 calls it the “first resurrection,” and those who take part will never face the “second death,” or eternal separation from God.

Jesus says in verse 24 that whoever hears His word and believes in the One who sent Him *has* eternal life now and will not face judgment. So eternal life isn’t just future; it’s a present reality for believers. In verse 29, “those who have done good” doesn’t refer to good deeds, but to believing in Jesus. As Jesus explained in John 6:29, the only “work” God requires is to believe in the One He sent.

2. The bad news is that there is a resurrection of condemnation.

Verse 29 says unbelievers who reject Jesus will “rise to experience judgment.” They will be raised to face final judgment at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11–15) where Jesus Christ, the appointed Judge (John 5:22, 26–27), will judge them according to their works. Those not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the “second death.”

In verse 27, Jesus calls Himself the “Son of Man,” emphasizing His full authority as God to give life and to execute judgment. One day, every knee will bow to Him—some in worship, others in judgment. There is a resurrection of life, but also a resurrection of condemnation.

Application

1. Remember that you were born dead.

You were born spiritually dead. In verse 25, Jesus said that now is the time for the spiritually dead to hear His voice and live. This applies to all of us. We’re all born without spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1). We must personally choose to trust Christ and receive eternal life. Have you made that decision?

2. Remember that you will exist forever.

The Bible clearly teaches that everyone will be raised, either to the resurrection of life or the resurrection of judgment. There are no other options. You will exist forever, either in heaven or in hell. Jesus emphasized this truth with great urgency, and Scripture never teaches that unbelievers will cease to exist or eventually reach heaven. Where will you spend eternity?