

48a ACTS

Let's begin our study of the Word of God this evening with a moment of prayer. This is the 17th of September, 2004. We continue our study in Acts chapter 26.

We take a moment, as is our custom, to go before the Lord. It gives us a chance to put our thoughts into perspective and set aside distractions and the ephemera that accumulates in our brain during the day and take this opportunity to refresh our souls in God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you again for the privilege of gathering as believers who share an enthusiasm and a respect and a love for your Word.

We thank you for the power and the stability that it brings to our thinking and to our perspective on our lives. We thank you for the ministry of the Holy Spirit who makes it real. We ask your blessing on us as we study together that we can not only understand the story and the words that were said on this occasion but that the meaning and the purpose of it and its application in our life will be evident so that we can improve the quality of our service in this life and be thoroughly equipped for every good work both now and in the age that is to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. We looked last time at the importance, the central theme that Paul has stressed ever since he got to Jerusalem, realized what God had been trying to tell him for weeks and weeks and weeks that he was wasting his time going there and so he stood up between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and what did he say? It is for the hope of the resurrection that I am standing here on trial.

And ever since then, whenever he gets a chance to speak, what is the focal point of his remarks? Resurrection. It is the power of the resurrection. When you read the epistles of Paul, and we have gone to some of these passages recently such as Philippians where he talks about attaining to the resurrection, the power of the resurrection, coming to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

And there seems to be this great sort of excessive emphasis on resurrection. We say, well, yes, resurrection is great. Obviously, it is necessary to get to the next phase in the kingdom and so on, but everything in its place.

I mean, you have Jesus died, buried, rose again and ascended, and it is just one of this. And yet, the more you read Paul and the more you read Hebrews, the more it strikes us that resurrection is a big deal. It is a bigger deal than I can understand it being mentioned so often.

The mentions of it seem to exceed my appreciation of its importance and I ask myself, why is that? And as I have puzzled over that for my own edification here in the past couple of weeks, one of the things that has dawned on me, and I don't know if I knew it before and forgot it or if I never did know it, but the word for resurrection in Greek is a

compound word. The basic root of the word, the verb, is histemi, h-i-s-t-e-m-i. Histemi means to stand.

Take heed, if any man thinks he stands, lest he fall. Histemi means to stand. The word for resurrection means to stand again.

So you put the prefix on there, ana, a-n-a, which means again. So to stand again, or ana also has the idea of up. You have anabasis, katabasis, up, down.

So ana, sometimes it means again, sometimes it means up. I guess I'm not quite sure of the logical connection between those two concepts, but this has the idea of stand up, to erect something, to raise it, to elevate it, to bring it up. So to bring it up and bring it up again, the ana kind of incorporates both of those ideas.

It's a real nice, compact word for that. But lots of the uses in the New Testament do not refer to resurrection. We were talking after class last week, at least I was, about the programs where science is trying to freeze people and bring them back later.

This scientist was saying, with the process of human evolution going ever upward, as of course it will because we just get better and better as we go along, someday we will have these super computers that are so powerful that programs will run on them that will actually create reality. People will exist in this virtual reality and the computer will be running them and they will think that they are real and they will walk around in the material. You can program in people from the past and they will be resurrected.

He said this is going to be eternal life. Science will create eternal life. Science will create the resurrection.

Science will recreate history and all the people that have ever lived, conceivably, could be modeled in the computer and this model will be so detailed. Science has this principle, according to this small round toy, that a copy that is perfect is no longer a copy, it is the real thing. He says someday the super computer will model me and I will live again.

How can you even, where do you begin? The idea that occurs to me is, if someone is created that is an exact copy of me and they have my memories and a recollection of my experiences and so on and they get booted up, so to speak, and start running as a person, well they might think they are me and they might remember being me in this life but the me that is now talking to you and has a sense of self would be gone and I don't think my sense of self would reoccur because somebody made an exact copy of me somewhere else. So the promise of resurrection, I don't mean to get all metaphysical about it, but it's a meaningful promise when God says, I will raise you from the dead. Job says, I will see my Redeemer from my flesh.

It's not going to be a copy of me, it's not going to be something that looks a lot like Job.

Job says, I know that I will stand on the last day and he uses the Hebrew word for stand. So this idea of standing up, they talk about in time of war, they stand up the reserve.

What do they do? They activate them, they bring them out and it's the real reserve. It's not a copy of the reserve, it's the real thing. Well, on istami, when you cram the two words together, you lose the H and you lose the second A and it's A-N-I-S-T-E-M-I.

This is the word that is used to raise up. Now, there is a principle and you just have to bear with me, I'm actually getting to an important point here, but I have to lay one more piece of foundation. A word can have a certain amount of meaning that it carries with it.

Wherever you find a word, there's that meaning. And there are other words that if you use it, like let me say, let me pick something in English, like a stitch in time saves nine. In that phrase, we know that a stitch is a sewing loop of thread that's gone through cloth.

But we talk about running and you get a stitch in your side or they had me in stitches or there are other kinds of stitches. So the context tells you what kind of meaning to invest in that particular word. But if you take the word out by itself, whatever a stitch is, that word carries that much meaning by itself.

Well, you look at this word and it means to raise up. It is used in many contexts. I mean, how often do people get resurrected? I mean, it's not just like a thing.

Oh, well, you know, Fred, he got resurrected last week. I mean, it just doesn't happen that often, right? So most of the uses of onestimy to stand up do not have, I mean, think about it. If you're going to use this word 99 times out of 100, you're not going to be saying, oh, yeah, well, you know, Jehoshaphat got resurrected.

It just wasn't a real common topic of conversation. So most of the time this word means something else. Well, this is very important because you remember last time we went to the Gospel of John and we looked at chapter 6, and I'd like to return there because it's an important point to make.

The word onestimy is used by the Lord Jesus in this passage repeatedly, and it has been almost universally understood to refer to resurrection. And I want to submit for your consideration that it does not mean resurrection in this context. So turn back with me to John chapter 6, and this, of course, is related to Acts because Paul says, my defense, my crime, everything that's going on with me being arrested has to do with the resurrection.

So we need to understand what the Bible does and does not say about resurrection. John chapter 6, verse 35. Now, once you've gotten there, just flip back and look at the beginning of the chapter.

What does John chapter 6 start with? Feeding of the 5,000. The people have been there listening to Jesus. Jesus says to Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? He

already knew what he was going to do.

Philip says 200 denarii. Denarii is a day's wage. So say somebody makes 40 bucks in a day.

Multiply that times 200, and you have what? 8,000. So Philip says \$8,000 wouldn't buy enough bread to feed this crowd. Not sufficient for them that everyone may have a little.

And then you have make the people sit down. He takes the loaves and so on. Then Jesus walks on the sea, and now we're back to the subject of bread.

You get down to 35. They said, Lord, give us this bread always. This is great.

We don't have to plant. We don't have to plow. We don't have to sow.

We don't have to reap. Just give us this bread. Give us the soft life.

Jesus said to them, verse 35, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst.

I said to you, you have seen me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. What do you think the word raise it up is in Greek? Anistomi. Raise it up.

And you say, well, Sam, just a cursory reading of this, that is resurrection. It's what happens in the last day. People get raised.

This is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. You can go all the way through the rest of this chapter and say, well, of course, resurrection, resurrection. However, so far, so good.

You see me. You believe in me. I have you in my hand.

I don't lose you. I'm going to raise you up at the last day, resurrection. And that's great as far as it goes.

But just keep reading. Look at verse 43. Jesus answered and said, do not murmur among yourselves.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. We talked about that drawing last time. I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets, they shall all be taught by God. Now, let's just woe back a little bit here. I thought we were talking about salvation.

You see the Son. You believe in the Son. He has you, and he's going to raise you.

He's going to resurrect you at the last day. Why does he quote, of all of the possible Old Testament passages, why does he quote, they shall all be taught by God? Do you have to be taught to be saved? What do you mean, be taught by God? Why doesn't he quote something like, you know, trust in the Lord with all your heart, or some other thing that has to do with faith. Teaching, this is a process.

Learning is a process. Do you get saved by a process? Why does he say that should be taught by God? Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Ah, so we have to learn something.

So now, is there a process? We must be talking about the Gospel. This is our standard understanding. Well, you learn the Gospel.

What are the elements of the Gospel? Acts 16, 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. How long does it take to learn that? The Holy Spirit comes and convinces us of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

So we say, okay, there's this little lesson on those three subjects. Jesus is the Savior. That must be what they're going to be taught by God.

Okay, let's see if that will work. Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God. He has seen the Father.

Now, why are we talking about the Father? I thought this was all about the Son. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin, righteousness, judgment.

You've got a problem. He's the answer. What's all of this about the Father? Do I have to learn about the Father to be saved? Now, I'm not just being provocative here.

This is a serious question. Why does Jesus bring up the Father if salvation is all about the Son? Do you have to be taught by God about the Father to be saved? Not according to Acts 16.31. It doesn't say, believe in the Father, and thou shalt be saved. Jesus says in John 14, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father but through me. You accept Christ, and now you're on the path to the Father. But you do not come to the Father at the point of salvation.

Jesus says, the one who has my words and keeps them, the words of the Son, he's the one that loves me, the Son. And I and my Father will come to him, and we'll make our home with him, future. Not at the point of salvation.

The indwelling of the Father is not automatic and permanent at the point of salvation. It doesn't even happen at the point of salvation. It comes after this process of learning.

So, this seems to me to be mixing apples and oranges. We learn about the Father, and we grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior. He is the way to the Father.

Once you have seen me, Jesus says, you have seen the Father, come to me, learn of me. My yoke is easy, my burden is light. But this is all talking about process.

Now, this is an important question. Is our salvation a process that comes to us by learning, or is it an immediate transaction of new birth that takes place at the point of faith in Christ? It's got to be one or the other. It can't be both.

Look at what Jesus says here. Verse 46. Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God.

He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. Now, we know from long experience that the nation of Israel in the Old Testament is a model and a picture of the individual believer in the New Testament.

And Jesus says, Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, but they still died. You'll eat this bread from heaven and not die. Now, I thought the picture of salvation was the blood of the Passover lamb and the death passing by and the firstborn were not slain and then you have the baptism in the waters of the Red Sea and you have the promises of God and you have the destruction of the enemies and they're in the wilderness.

And the manna is not the means of God delivering them from bondage in Egypt. It is the sustaining and nurturing and growing supply for them in the wilderness, right? Now, Jesus is making this a very confusing lesson, if you ask me, to mix manna and the process of learning and being taught by God about the Father in the middle of what started out being a great evangelistic sermon on believing in Him. And I find it confusing.

I hope you find it confusing. I hope I have sufficiently confused it that you're curious to see how it turns out. This, verse 50, is the bread which comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my flesh which I shall give for the life of the world.

Well, understandably, the Jews quarreled among themselves saying, how can this man

give us his flesh to eat? Of course, they are way back at the starting gate. Cannibals, what kind of a thing is this? They had just, you know, had no clue. Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Now, the great thing about salvation is it is a once and for all transaction. It is pictured time and again as a birth. How many times were you born? I feel confident in believing that everyone here has been born exactly once in the physical sense.

I seriously doubt you'll ever meet anyone that was born twice. You just get born once. It's a great picture of salvation.

How many times have you eaten in your life? Untold thousands, right? If Jesus is talking about salvation, why does He use a picture that is repeated multiple times in a single day? It just does not follow. It does not compute. However, the thing that has corralled everybody back into the straight and narrow orthodox interpretation is, Well, but He's talking about resurrection.

You can't say that your resurrection depends on learning about God. That you're being raised up at the last day depends on learning about the Father. That can't be.

But why do we have a picture of eating which is repeated multiple times a day, multiple times a week, multiple times in a month, in a year, in a lifetime, when salvation, as we know from innumerable other passages, it's a rock-solid doctrine of Scripture that you get saved once at the point of faith in Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, Nicodemus says, I've got to crawl up on my mother and be born again. Jesus says, No.

Whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. It's a one-time thing. Everything that is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Well, this is the bread which comes down from Heaven that one may eat of it and not die. Do you just eat once and you're good to go? If that's true, how come Adam and Eve are not lurking over in Palestine somewhere? They ate of the tree of life. How come they're not still around? God said we've got to drive them out of the tree area lest they partake and live forever.

You partake on a regular basis and it sustains your life. It's an ongoing, multiple occasion thing. Most assuredly I say to you, 53, unless you eat my flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, by the way, these are all suggesting ongoing action. There's nothing here that says once for all and that sort of thing. Eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Well, now there's this confusing resurrection reference again. For my flesh is food indeed

and my blood is drink indeed. My flesh is food indeed, my blood is drink indeed.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. Now, here's another thing that confuses me. This is a command of Jesus in this same book about eight chapters forward.

Does Jesus not tell the disciples in the upper room, abide in me and let my words abide in you and you shall bear much fruit? I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me, He tells them. It's a command.

Now, if believing in Jesus for salvation, if all of these are synonymous, eating His flesh, drinking His blood, abiding in Him, all of this is salvation, then is Jesus telling His disciples three and a half years after He called them in the upper room, get saved? It's too confusing. And God has not given us confusion. He is an orderly God.

He tells us to worship decently and in good order. He doesn't try to obfuscate and confuse. So, we have some sort of a wrong assumption as we go through this passage to arrive at this mishmash.

Here's what I would submit to you. Honesty is the key. What does it mean to be raised up? I told you before that a word has a certain amount of meaning that it can carry with it even when it's in isolation and there are other meanings that it picks up by attraction because it's in commonly used phrases and things like that.

How many times in the Bible do we see raised from the dead? Now, if honesty to me means raised from the dead, then we don't have to say from the dead because it would mean resurrection all by itself. When you say resurrection from the dead, it's a little bit of a redundancy because obviously if you're resurrected, the whole idea is there. You were dead and now you're alive.

And resurrection from the dead is like saying I murdered it to death. I destroyed it to oblivion. It's just repetitive.

Is there any other kind of raising up that might take place at the last day besides resurrection? Aha! We have plenty of passages where Jesus does not say in the kingdom, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. That there are elevations in terms of promotions, in terms of rewards, in terms of if you acknowledge me before men, I will acknowledge you before my Father. If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father.

And of course, people squash that into salvation also and it has nothing to do with salvation. Can you lose your salvation by denying Christ? Did every martyr who didn't want to get eaten by the lions lose their salvation when they said, okay, Caesar is God, let me go and they didn't become lion food? Are they now unsaved? If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father. That's what most people understand that

to say.

It is not a matter of salvation. It is a matter of where are you going to be assigned in the great millennial order. Some people are going to be raised up.

Other people are going to be pushed down and pushed out in the darkness which is outside. They will be cut in two, no power. Apportioned their lot with the hypocrites.

No inheritance. No possession. No privilege.

The gates of Jerusalem will slam every time they approach. Others who have been raised up will be granted that privilege. So let's reread this now thinking in those terms.

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me, this is verse 35, shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst.

Hunger and thirst are things that come and go in the course of life, don't they? I was powerfully thirsty today. I had to go a roundabout route and get to Sonic and get me a cherry limeade because I was just about to perish from thirst. And I couldn't figure out why, but now I know why.

I just needed a way to illustrate for you. He who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst.

John is the king of the Greek present tense. He who keeps on believing. Remember 1 John 1.7? If we keep on walking in the light as he keeps on being in the light, we keep on having fellowship each with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

John writes almost everything in the present tense because he writes about principles of life, principles of application. This is how to please God in your life. That's what his epistles are about.

What does he say in the Gospel of John? These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing you may have life through His name. We're going to see the Apostle Paul make a very similar statement in front of Agrippa when we get back to Acts. I said to you, you have seen me and yet do not believe.

The nation of Israel is pictured in Scripture as a nation belonging to God, a nation of believers. You can be saved, and you can see the Word of God and not take it in. Over and over, God says, these people see, but seeing they do not perceive.

Hearing they hear and do not understand. The heart of this people has become calloused. It wasn't always calloused, but it's calloused now.

They no longer see. They have become blind. They have become deaf.

They have become insensate. They have become calcified. The Greek word has the same root that we get arteriosclerosis from.

They have got spiritual sclerosis. Hardening of the spiritual arteries. Cannot any longer take in.

But this is a health condition for somebody that already has life. This is a condition for a believer. So, our first point of application tonight is this is something that can happen to us.

We cannot take John 6 and shove it in a box and say, hand that to the next unbeliever you see. We need to open the box and look in it because it applies to us. We can look at Jesus and not see Him.

We can read the words of Jesus and not hear Him. He can be trying to give us an abundant life. He can be trying to raise us up in the last day, and we are, unlike Ezekiel, the Spirit reached down and grabbed him by the hair.

He moved. God reaches down and grabs us by the hair and it's like a toupee. It just comes off.

And we don't move. We are not capable of being raised up because we are not willing. Because we are not listening.

Because we have made up our minds. Because we have an agenda. You look at the Pharisees.

It's real easy to see in their case. It's not so easy to see in our own case. And it takes time.

It takes meditation. It takes a look at ourselves. Is God working on me? Is God convicting me? Is God showing me things from His Word? And yet, I am not willing.

I am not ready. I am not able to respond. I am not letting God the Holy Spirit teach me about God.

This is the will of the Father who sent me that all that He has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. We know the verse that says it is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And people say, the sovereignty crowd says, well, that all is only the all that God wants to repent.

And everybody God wants to repent, they're going to repent because God wants it and He's got the Midas touch mind. And when He wants something, it has to happen. It is not the will of God that any should perish.

Do people perish? Will there be untold millions who perish? Who are perishing? Yes. It is

not the will of God that any should perish, and yet people perish. It is not the will of God that any of us should be last in the kingdom.

It is not the will of God that any of us should be ignorant of the Lord Jesus Christ, or unable to learn and grow and abide in the vine and bear much fruit and be pruned to bear more fruit. It is the will of God that every branch that He grafts into the tree be prolific. It is the will of God that every seed-scattered field should produce a hundredfold.

But we don't. What does Jesus say here? That of all He has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. All that He has given is the will of God that all of us, as the bride of Christ, be without spot, without wrinkle, without blemish, any such thing, that we be holy, that we be perfect and complete.

Arrive, as Paul says in Ephesians 4, at the standard of a mature man. But it doesn't happen, does it? What is the problem? Is God a poor gardener? Is He a bad seed-sower? Is the seed not good? This is what happened when I tried to seed my side yard with grass seed. When you read the bag, have you ever bought grass seed? And you say, well, I want Bermuda, or I want St. Augustine, or whatever it is.

And when you read the bag, and they say, well, in this bag, this is like 86% St. Augustine, and then there's 4% of this kind of weed, and 2% of that kind of weed, and the seed is not pure. If it's sat for very long, sometimes the seed just doesn't germinate and doesn't do well. There's a problem with the seed.

The seed is the Word, and God has magnified His Word above His name. There's no problem with the seed, and there's no problem with the sower. The problem is with the soil.

And we decide how receptive and how nurturing we are going to be of the seed that the sower scatters, and that's what determines whether a field yields anything at all, and if it yields, how prolifically. This is what Jesus is talking about here. He says, look, unless you eat my flesh, unless you are partaking of my flesh, this is not a meal, this is a diet.

This is not an occasion, this is a lifestyle. Unless you are eating my flesh, unless you are drinking my blood, what does that mean in spiritual terms? Partaking of the Word of God, participating in the new covenant in the blood of Christ, the opportunity that is uniquely given to believers in the church age. Nobody has had this opportunity.

Nobody has had the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we have. Nobody has had the content of the Word of God that we have. No one has been given the place in history, the opportunity, as the body and bride of Christ that we have.

It's unique. Things that the Old Testament saints and angels long to see are ours for the taking. Jesus says, you need to eat my flesh and drink my blood.

Now you say, well Sam, just a minute. I have learned by listening, I have observed by watching, that you have to pay attention to whom Jesus is speaking. And this is not a church age crowd.

You're doing the very thing you say people should not do. What was Jesus offering Israel when he came? What was John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus trying to bring? The fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, in that day I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. I will take out your heart of stone.

I will give you a heart of flesh. We are assigned the task of living the life that Jesus was trying to give to the nation of Israel and they couldn't see. And they couldn't grasp.

And they missed. And God says, I will take that fruitless branch and snap it out of the tree. It has nothing to do with salvation.

It has everything to do with placing God's plan and fruitfulness in making a particular point about life in the Spirit by the Word. Snapped out the Israel branch, grafted in the Gentile branch, which is us. And everything that Jesus was trying to get his people to accept and live in, in John chapter 6 and throughout his ministry, they missed.

They rejected. Jesus says, You will see me no more until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And these things now are ours.

This is the proper way to take gospel teaching, the words of Christ in the gospels, and put them in the context of the Spirit-filled life. The Word-empowered life. My flesh, my blood.

Jesus was offering this to his own people and they missed it. What a tragedy if he offers it to us and we miss it. And we misunderstand it.

Or we misunderestimate it. As President Bush said, This is the will of the Father who sent me that of all he has given me, I should lose nothing. What was the original gift of the Father to the Son? Israel.

Israel opted out, sold their opportunity for a mess of pottage, like Esau, who was the firstborn. And so God says, Alright, I will give you an even greater gift instead of a people, I will give you a bride. And when he turns to the church, now we get to be in the place of the firstborn.

We are the first to enjoy the benefits of the Spirit. We are the first to live the Word-empowered life. I love that statement about the Scriptures that Paul gives to Timothy.

All Scripture is theonoustos. We talked about that the other day, that noustos, that's the same root from which pneuma comes from. Pneumahagyu, the Holy Spirit.

All Scripture is God-spirited. You can't separate the Word and the Spirit. They are

essential to one another.

All Scripture, I hear people say it's inspired or it's God-breathed. All Scripture is God-spirited. It's the Spirit of God.

You don't have the Word without the Spirit. It just won't work. And that's what Israel found out the hard way.

So, he says, The will of the Father who sent me is that all that he has given me, I should lose nothing. We know that the will of God, the perfect will of God does not always happen. Because Jesus, in this same book, a few chapters hence, is going to be praying to the Father and say, Father, you gave me these and I have lost none, which was his will, except the son of perdition.

He's talking about Judas. He says, I had him and I lost him. All you have given me, I have lost nothing, except the son of Apollia, in Greek, the son of destruction, the son of loss.

The will of the Father is to lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day. This is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life. Everlasting life, life that views the eternal, life that partakes of the eternal, life that is eternal in the sense of quality, not just duration.

Everybody has eternal life. Satan has eternal life. The demons have eternal life.

Hitler and every other unbeliever you can think of has eternal life. We don't want just duration, we want the quality. See the Son, believe in the Son.

Hear the Word, understand the Word. Love the law of God, meditate in it day and night. Have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is the ideal that Jesus is giving his people for their opportunity in their day when they hear his words. To be onestimied, to be raised up. And resurrection is actually itself a picture, a physical picture of the spiritual truth of being raised from death, of being raised from fruitlessness and no activity and no service and no reflection of the glory of God.

To be raised up to a place of purpose and function and accomplishment. You can't accomplish anything in the grave. David says the dust can't praise you, there's no memory of you in the grave.

I need life, I need to be raised, I need to be operating. And so physical resurrection itself is not the most important thing. What is Paul talking about when he says that I may come to know Christ and the power of his raising up? I'm beginning to think there's a lot more in it than just the physical resurrection.

Paul says I do not count myself to have already attained. Now do you think the Apostle

Paul was secure in his salvation and knew that he would be raised on the last day? He knew an awful lot more than Job did and Job knew he would stand on the last day. But Paul says I pray that I may come to know Christ and the power of his raising up.

The power of his raising up. The opportunity of his raising up. The potential of his raising up.

All of the things that are the will of the Father for each of us as believers. And I think we have crammed resurrection down into just the standing up from the dead and have missed some of the great significance that both the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul put into this idea of resurrection, on is to me. And it's really a thought-provoking idea.

Paul says I do not count myself as already having attained, but I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus is what Jesus is talking about here. The will of the Father.

I lose nothing. It doesn't go into the loss column. It goes into the profit column.

When you do a balance sheet, it's all profit and loss. It's either a loss or it's a gain. And it's the will of the Father that nobody be in the loss column.

That everyone be in the gain column. And that's our opportunity. So when Paul stands before Agrippa, when he stands before Festus, and he is making this apologia, and he centers it on the raising up, he is talking about the physical resurrection, which the Pharisees and Sadducees differed on.

But he is looking to it and through it at everything that it represents. And hopefully this brief excursion back into John last time and this time has given us a little bit of appreciation for what being raised up really means. How much more will God be glorified rather than just speaking on the last day? Remember Daniel says, in the last day, many who sleep in the dust will awake.

Some to a resurrection of life. Others to a resurrection of shame. Well, I don't just want to be on istamid to be embarrassed and to have my rusty old halo and skinny white gown.

We want to be truly raised up. Raised up not only in the sense of receiving our resurrection body, but raised up as Jesus intends it. How do we accomplish that? If we understand that that is a possibility and that that's a goal and that's really what is being emphasized here, how is it done? Thankfully the Lord Jesus emphasizes that in the passage.

You have to eat his flesh. What does he tell us here? Verse 53, Jesus said to them, Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I

will raise him up in the last day.

Well, a lot of people had difficulty. Jesus says, does this offend you? Look at verse 63. It is the Spirit who gives life.

The flesh profits nothing. He says you've got to look beyond just even the physical resurrection. It's the Spirit who gives life.

The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit and are life. It is by valuing the Word of God, by finding its application and its direction in our day-to-day thoughts, our day-to-day actions, our day-to-day priorities, this is how we partake of the flesh of the Son of Man.

This is how we partake of the blood of the new covenant. This is how we put our feet on the path to being raised up in every sense of the word when the Lord Jesus returns. And we will not be ashamed at his coming.

We will not be in the loss column. And we can ask ourselves the same question that he asks in verse 67. Jesus said to the twelve, after many of the disciples went back and walked with him no more, do you also want to go away? And what does Peter say? Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Also, we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. We have come to know in the past, but we're not leaving because you continue to have the words of life. And where will we go to get those words? He doesn't say, I've got my ticket to the resurrection, so I guess we'll leave also.

He says, you have the words. We need the words. And Peter, bless his heart, grasped something of what the Lord Jesus was saying.

And hopefully we can as well. We'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll continue in Acts chapter 26.