

Introduction:

One of the most powerful moments I experience in ministry happens, ironically, at funerals. After the viewing and service is concluded, and long after the final words are spoken, final respects paid, and final goodbyes expressed, the funeral attendants prepare the casket for internment. And then it happens: the lid of the coffin is closed and sealed shut. At this very moment the person resting in inside the casket will never again be seen on this side of eternity. All that we have ever known and experienced of that person is dramatically punctuated with the thudding of a heavy casket lid. The tense of that person has changed from an “is” to a “was.” On Friday, when the Roman guards rolled that massive rock in front of Jesus’ tomb and sealed it, I’m sure his followers felt the only thing left of Jesus were the memories.

On the True Deadness of Jesus:

Jesus was dead! He wasn’t feigning death, playing possum, swooning, or placed in Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb while in a drug induced coma. When they pulled Jesus down from that cross, he wasn’t breathing nor had he any heart or brain activity. His Roman executioners were efficient masters of death and for them not to finish the job of a publicly condemned criminal meant that they themselves, along with their families, would be hanging from crosses the next day. Jesus was dead! It was impossible for anyone to endure the long and horrendous torture he did.

The all-night trial, the full body whipping and scourging, the massive blood letting, the 960-yard march to the execution site carrying a crossbeam that weighed approximately 110 lbs., the mocking, beatings, the exhaustion, the dehydration, all as a prelude to crucifixion.

Jesus was dead! No ifs, ands, and buts. No this, that, and the other thing. He was dead in every single way we measure death, think of death, conceive of death, speak of death, define death, and imagine death. Jesus was dead on every level and in every sense. DEAD: fully, wholly, and totally, demonstrably, and emphatically. He was dead: medically, physically, physiologically, psychologically, emotionally, cerebrally, forensically, certifiably, and clinically. Jesus was dead on the day we label “Good Friday” and everyone knew it. His mother and his half-brothers knew it, his closest friends and followers knew it, his enemies and executioners knew it, the devil and his Father in heaven knew it. The most tragic, unjust, and famous death in history was just that—a real death. On the true deadness of Jesus, biblical commentator John Stott writes:

It’s hard enough for us to grasp, let alone to feel, how completely the verdict seemed to go against Jesus when he died. Jesus had been condemned in a Jewish court for blasphemy. He was then sentenced and executed for sedition by the Romans. Worse he had been hung on a tree and therefore cursed by God. After that, he was taken down from the cross and buried, which was the final act in disposing him. The public rejection of Jesus could not have been more thorough. In every dimension, he was finished: judicial, political, spiritual, and physical. Religion, Satan, law, humans, and death all conspired to wipe Jesus from the face of the earth. It was all over now. The verdict was as decisive as it could have possibly been.

Impossible

This world has a few immutable laws: What goes up, must... The sun rises from the... White men can't.... God's grace and your name are... Taxes are... Once dead, always...! BUT! Peter declares about Jesus in Acts 2:24:

**God raised him up, having freed him from death,
because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.**

“It was impossible for death to hold Jesus!” Do you know what “impossible” means here in the Greek language? It means, “No Way Hosea!” Until Jesus, the mortality rate was 100%. However, death never saw Jesus’ resurrection coming although it should have.

Nain

In a small town called Nain, a widowed mother loses her only son. Imagine her sorrow. Jesus shows up smack dab in the middle of the funeral procession. People are broken down with grief. Jesus goes to the grief-stricken mother and says, “You can stop crying now.” Luke tells us what he did next (7:14-15)

Touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise! The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Jarius' Daughter

A court official named Jairus sends word to Jesus that his daughter is deathly ill. Because of previous commitments however, Jesus can't get to his house until much later. By the time he arrives, Jesus encounters a wall of weeping and wailing—little Talitha has died. Everyone scolds Jesus for his lack of time management, but he...

Walks into Talitha's room, tenderly gathers her into his arms and whispers, “Little one, arise.” Immediately, the 12-year-old opens her eyes, gets up, and walks around.

Lazarus

Jesus is doing his preaching, teaching, healing thing. His closest friends Mary and Martha come to him in full-blown panic. “Our brother Lazarus is about to die. Come quickly and heal him.” Jesus replies, “I'll get there soon.” Again, he doesn't break free fast enough and Lazarus has bought the farm. By the time Jesus arrives Lazarus has been rotting in a sweltering and smelly tomb for over four days. Everyone is mad at Jesus. “Sometimes you have to be flexible in your scheduling” Martha teaches him. “If you were here sooner, our brother, and your best friend, would still be alive.” Jesus replies, “Your brother will rise again.” He then goes to the tomb and shouts, “Lazarus, come forth! Upon hearing the command (John 11:44)

Lazarus came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him and let him go."

Why Is It Impossible (5 Reasons)

Peter proclaims that "it was impossible for death to hold him." Lets' look at the top five reasons why he is right.

- (1) Because Father God promised his only begotten Son, that if he lovingly and sacrificially gave up his life for humanity that he would get it back.**
- (2) Because of who Jesus is. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Great "I Am," The way, the truth and the Life, the only way to the Father, and the Light of the World.**
- (3) Because Romans 6:23 tells us, "The payment of sin is death" but Jesus never sinned! Therefore, death would never be his permanent payment.**
- (4) Because on four different occasions prior to his crucifixion, Jesus he would rise again. As God he is never mistaken and can never lie!**
- (5) Because Jesus is the Author, Creator, and Sustainer of all life and life eternal (John 10:10).**

Conclusion:

For these reasons, and more, it was impossible for death to hold him. Jesus broke death and promised that if we take him as Lord/Savior – Leader/Forgiver that it would break it for us as well! Before he resurrected Lazarus, Jesus asked a mournful Mary and Martha a question that we, on this Resurrection Sunday, are compelled to answer for ourselves (John 11:25-26):

25 I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?