

"I think we need to talk lots more about resurrection and how resurrection -- because that's -- that's the hope of the gospel, is resurrection. It's not just go to heaven when you die. It is, there's going to be an eventual resurrection, like the literal raising of bodies from graves and tombs and the transformation of God's people into beings that are immortal and that will live forever and that share the glory of the Christ."

Welcome to the Radically Christian Bible Study Podcast. I'm Travis Pauley. Here we have one goal: Learn to love like Jesus. Each week I visit with Wes McAdams, minister and author, and together we explore biblical passages and topics. I hope you enjoy this study.

WES: Well, this is the very first episode of the Radically Christian Bible Study Podcast, and I am incredibly excited about it. I'm here with my friend and our editor, Travis Pauley. Travis, how are you, brother?

TRAVIS: Doing great.

WES: Good. Awesome. Well, we got -- announced last week -- or last time we did a podcast I announced that we are going to be changing up the format, and if anybody had any questions, that they could e-mail that to me,

and I want to make the same request now, and I'll do it again at the end of the show. But if you have anything that you'd like for us to study and think about and talk through, then send me an e-mail, or you can call, leave a voicemail, and we may play your voicemail on the podcast. So the number is (707) 238-2216.

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We'll post that in the show notes, as well. But anyway, give me a call and -- give us a call and we may end up using your -- your voicemail on the podcast and try to answer or respond to your question.

So we got one question, and I'm excited about talking about this because this is something that I've written about quite a bit, and there's been some pushback on it, I think just because it's something that's so assumed to be true, and so I think that it needs to be examined. Anytime we think -- we assume that something is true, it doesn't hurt to step back from it and say, hmm, am I making that assumption because the text actually bears that out or am I --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- making that assumption just because that's the way it was explained to me when I was a kid or something?

So Jason, who has corresponded with me quite a bit, he sent a great e-mail and he said, "You mentioned that you're looking for topic ideas. I have several, but I'd like to learn more about the idea of spiritual death

contrasted or compared with being condemned to die," which is kind of how I would explain that idea. We'll get into that in a minute. He said, "What's the difference and how does it affect our theology and our lives? I realize that the term 'spiritual death' isn't in the scriptures, but the same can be said of words like the 'trinity,' yet we all agree that God is triune God. Not argumentative here; just trying to grow in my understanding."

Okay. So let's talk about this idea of spiritual death. That's one way that people have described or used to explain the use of the word "death" in the New Testament. So, Travis, let's -- I'm going to put you on the spot here.

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TRAVIS: Please.

WES: But tell me, when you hear that idea, spiritual death, what you think of or if you've ever heard it explained or used -- any terms like that that you've heard used when somebody is explaining the gospel or the New Testament.

TRAVIS: This is a fairly new one to me. As far as what I think of when I hear those words put together, I think of -- I think of the concept of -- maybe this has nothing to do with it, but I think of the afterlife and people not believing in hell and just -- and in a place of torment, but that it's actually spiritual death, that it will be over --

WES: Interesting.

TRAVIS: -- for those that aren't a part of the kingdom of God.

WES: Interesting. And that's a -- that's a great point, too, that sometimes people will say things like "spiritually dead" --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- and they assume you know even what they mean when they say that, and something that comes to your mind is totally different than what they mean.

TRAVIS: Totally different. How many things like that do we have?

WES: Oh, I know, yeah, for sure. Especially when we're using terms that aren't actually found in the scriptures --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- and then we just assume people know what we're talking about.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: He brings up the word "trinity," and that's a great point.

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TRAVIS: Great one.

WES: A lot of people have a lot of different ideas of what we mean when we use a word like "trinity."

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: What does it mean for God to be triune? We're not going to get in -- we're not going to open that can of worms, but we are going to talk about spiritual death.

So what most people mean when they say that someone is spiritually

dead, they're talking about passages like Ephesians 2. So let's -- I'm going to pull open in my Bible Ephesians 2. I'm reading from the English Standard.

Verse 1 says, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience."

So Paul says about people, before they became followers of Jesus, that they were dead in their trespasses and sins.

TRAVIS: Yes.

WES: And so the question becomes, well, in what sense were they dead, right?

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: In what sense were they dead? And most people would look at that and say, well, obviously, they weren't physically dead.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And so they would say the opposite of physically dead, or a contrast or another sense in which a person could be dead would be spiritually dead.

Well, even that -- man, and, again, that's a whole can of worms, but we have this -- this dualistic way of thinking about being human, and it really -- a lot of our dualistic thinking comes from Platonism, it comes from Plato, who was a Greek philosopher, rather than from scripture. And so we

tend to pit or contrast or make a dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. And so the Greek philosophers would think -- and, eventually, this worked its way into Christian gnosticism, and I would argue that it still is very prevalent today in Christian thinking, is that, you know, you are both physical and spiritual, and that the physical is sort of just an illusion. The physical isn't what's really real. What's really real is your spirit, and what's really important is that your spirit goes to a better place and that, really, the goal is to shed ourselves of all of the physical entrapments.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Well, there's two ways that that can go in the way that people live. One, it can lead to hedonism, where you just fulfill every pleasure because you think, what difference does it make? My body's --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: You know, it's not the real me anyway, and so there's a bit of that. And it could also lead to asceticism, where you say, well, I need to -- I need to distance myself from all of the physical entrapments and I need to free my mind, and it's about what I know and what I believe in my mind or my spirit and I need to free myself from these entrapments. And we've really incorporated a lot of that dualistic thinking.

In the Hebrew/Jewish mind-set, the biblical mind-set -- the apostles and Jesus were Jewish men, and so we have to learn to think of the world

and a human being in the same sense and with the same eyes and mind that Jesus and the apostles did. And, really, in the Hebrew mind-set, it's very much that a human being is a whole person, and yes, there is an element of us that is unseen --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- spiritual. There is a spirit to us. There is an unseen part of us that moves the seen part of us. We are thinking people and we are feeling people, so there's a -- there's aspects of us that are mind and heart, and there is -- but the whole person is a soul. Again, we tend to think very dualistically, and so we think a soul is disembodied.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: That soul is a part of you. There's your body, and then the separate part of you is your soul. But when you read through the creation account, it would say that God formed -- and, really, it uses the same word, "nephesh," to talk about both humans and animals -- that's a whole 'nother subject, but "soul" just means living being, a living creature.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: It actually referred to the throat or the neck. And then -- but, really, when we read "soul" in the Bible, we should really think life, or being, or individual. And so when the Bible talks about a soul, it's similar to how we talk about in an airplane crash, maybe, or in a boat crash, we say there were 300 souls onboard.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And so we don't mean there were 300 disembodied spirits. We mean

there are 300 individuals --

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TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- people, living beings, and that's what the Bible means when it talks about a soul. And so a human soul, a human creature, a human being is -- has different aspects. We think and we feel. We are animated. We move, we do things. Our spirit is that invisible part of us. It is our breath, or our wind, that moves us and animates us, and when the spirit is gone, there's no more animation. We're dead, you know.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And so our life is finished until, in the biblical picture, we're resurrected, until God brings us back to life with a brand-new body.

But, again, that plays into the way that we tend to think about things. If you look at the world very dualistically and you say there are physical things and then there are spiritual things, and the spiritual things are the things that really matter, and the physical things really don't matter as much, that's beginning to shape your thinking. And, again, I would argue that's not a very biblical way to think about things. Yes, there are spirits. There is our spirit who animates us. There is the spirit of God who animates the world, that -- who brings about the will of God on the earth, that God is in the unseen realm and that he operates with his wind, or breath, or spirit.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: But when we start to use the word "spiritual," as opposed to "physical," again, that's a dichotomy that we're saying something is either spiritual or it's physical. And then we talk about -- okay, well, here in Ephesians 2, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins." Well, obviously, these people, before they became Christians, weren't dead

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physically.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: So our mind automatically jumps to, well, they must have been dead spiritually. Well, what do we even mean by that? You know, Calvinistic thinking would say you weren't even capable of making good decisions because dead people don't make any good -- don't make any decisions at all, right --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- if that person is dead? And so they carry that out to an extent that says a non-Christian isn't capable of doing anything good or right because their spirit is dead. Well --

TRAVIS: And that's pretty popular.

WES: Absolutely, yeah. Absolutely. That's the way reformed Calvinistic thinking works, is that they would say that a human being is born totally depraved with a dead spirit.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And it's only through conversion that their spirit comes alive and that they are actually capable of making God-oriented choices --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- because their spirit is dead. Again, that's reading a whole lot into the text. A whole lot into the text.

But even if we don't carry it that far and we just say, well, you know, spiritually dead -- the way I always heard it growing up was that "spiritually dead" means that you're separated from God. And so, most people, when they -- I say "most people." The way I heard most people explain it when I

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was growing up was that "dead" means separated. And, again, that's an assumption that the text never spells out, that "dead" means separated. Yes, when you die, your spirit and your body are separated from one another, but to assume that that's the basic definition of "death" is separation --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- well, that's an assumption that the text never spells out. Most of the time, when the Bible talks about death, it's very literal. And we all know; it's very intuitive what that means. Everybody knows what the difference between dead is and alive is, and it's talking about a person being dead, like they're dead, their heart isn't beating. It's not in a theological or spiritual sense; it's in a very medical sense. It's the way a doctor would say, this person is dead. And that is the human condition --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- that we are dying people. And when the Bible talks about death, it's very much talking about the fact that we die. And when Jesus came and he solved our problem, he died for us, not, quote-unquote, spiritually. Jesus didn't spiritually die. He died physically. He died -- they drove nails through his hands; they drove nails through his feet; his heart stopped beating. He was dead. And he died so that we could live. And when we live, that doesn't just mean now we have a relationship with God, now we're reconnected with God. It means we're actually literally physically going to be raised up from the grave. We're going to live.

Sometimes we make the Bible far more complicated. There is lots that is complicated and challenging to understand, but there's some of it that's really not. It's just -- it's very intuitive. We know what the difference

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between death is and life is.

So I think one of the things that we do is we conflate these two ideas. We combine them. One is separation from God, and we are separated from God.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: We're exiled. Adam and Eve were exiled in the Garden, and the idea of being dead -- well, it's both. It's separation and -- separation from God relationally and death. And the separation from God and from the Tree of

Life actually leads to death. And I think the way Paul would mean it here when he says that you were dead in your trespasses and sins, is that when something is true inevitably, there's a sense in which it's true now. So there's a bit of a metaphor here.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: But what do you call somebody -- have you ever heard the term -- in fact, I think there's a movie made about it. When somebody's on death row and they're, like, walking to the electric chair, we say that's a --

TRAVIS: That's a dead man walking.

WES: -- dead man walking, right? Now, I mean, he's not --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- literally dead, right? I mean, otherwise, he wouldn't be walking.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: But we're saying his death is inevitable. That's where he's headed. He's headed to death. So we say, that's a dead man. I mean, every Western, you know, the bad guy would call out the good guy and say, "You're a dead man," you know.

TRAVIS: That's right.

WES: Well, he's saying, I'm going to make that true. That's going to come true. And that's how Paul means that.

And you say, well, how do you know Paul means it like that, that what's

true inevitably is true now, or that you're condemned to die versus you're actually dead right now? Well, I think you have to look at everything else he says. I mean, if you look at Romans 5, Romans 6, he talks about human beings are enslaved to death. And that's something that when -- as soon as a person becomes an adult, they begin to -- in any culture, you begin to reflect on your own mortality.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: Everybody does. And you begin to say, I'm a dead man, you know? And that's inevitable, and there's different things you can do about that. Like you can medicate that through pleasure or drugs or alcohol or education or distraction, or you can try to solve that problem by saying, well, if we can really advance medical technology, maybe -- you know, maybe I can -- you know, my head can be frozen when I die, you know, whatever. So we try to -- we try to either ignore that problem and sort of not deal with it or deal with it in our own strength and say, maybe I can keep myself from dying. Maybe I can find the cup of life, you know, the -- what do you call that?

TRAVIS: The holy grail.

WES: Yeah, the holy grail or the fountain of youth, or something like that.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And so there's all of these myths and legends around -- because we know that is -- that's the human condition. That's the human problem. In

fact, I love what the Hebrew writer says in Hebrews, Chapter 2. Let me see if I can pull it up. He says -- Hebrews, Chapter 2, he's talking about Jesus becoming -- the son of God becoming man, and he says, "Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood" -- and that's another idiom. That just means weakness and mortality. Flesh and blood, you know, we're mortal -- "he, himself," Jesus, "likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil..." Again, by "death" he doesn't mean some, you know, ambiguous idea, some theological idea that you can't understand. He means death very literally, very, you know, understandably, physically. "...the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

That's exactly what Paul was talking about in Hebrews -- or in Romans, Chapter 5, and Romans, Chapter 6, that we are in bondage to lifelong slavery because we have this fear of death. We know that our death is inevitable.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: We are the slaves of sin and death. And Paul would say, in Romans, that because Adam sinned and -- Adam sinned, and then he was condemned to die, separated from the Tree of Life, and that his life was going to come to an end. Of course, God said, "On the day you eat of it, you will die." Well, God was merciful and gracious and he didn't -- he didn't kill him on the day he ate of it. He allowed him to live. But there's also a sense in which the

day he ate it he was a -- as we said, a dead man walking. He was condemned to die.

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You're kind of making a face. So are you -- are we on the same page?

TRAVIS: Yeah, no, I was just thinking, well, a couple things. About that Adam comment, I've never heard anybody put it like that, that -- as if God had the intention of, no, you're going to -- I'm going to end you that day --

WES: Yeah, yeah.

TRAVIS: -- if you eat that, and then he was merciful in allowing him to just be banished from the Garden.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: I've never -- I've never even read it that way.

WES: That's interesting.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And -- yeah, and I think that that's an important part of this discussion because I think that a lot of people that hold this sort of spiritual-death idea would say, well, see, he was spiritually dead.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Even though he didn't physically die for hundreds of years, he was spiritually dead from that point on. Well, again, the text doesn't say that. I think the most natural reading of it would say, God said, you eat this, you die. But it's God's prerogative to be merciful and gracious and to atone for,

cover over, their sins, and that's exactly what he did. He covered them with garments of skin, and then he -- but he exiled them.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And I think that even plays into some of the themes in the conquest of Israel. So when they go in to conquer the land, the Canaanites are condemned to die, right? So God says, go in and kill everybody. Well, what

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ends up really happening is they drive them out. And the term that's really used more than "kill everybody," is "drive them out."

TRAVIS: Really?

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: That's interesting.

WES: So what is essentially a death sentence because of their sin ends up being carried out mercifully in the sense of exile. Now, of course, neither one of those ended up happening because Israel neither killed them nor drove them all out --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- and so, you know, you were left with that type of a situation. But, regardless, I think that we see that those two things going hand in hand, sort of this sentence of death, condemnation, but also exile. And they're not the same thing, but they're related.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And I think that that's where this idea is on the right track, that yes, there is -- there is a sense of separation and exile, departure from a relationship with God and being separated from the Tree of Life, but also a condemnation to death, mortality. And that's exactly what we're faced with and that's exactly our fear. And that's why, you know, when someone says, I'm going to kill you, or, if you do this you're going to die, we sort of have to obey them because we know, I'm stuck.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: I don't want to die, you know. And so this desire to hold on to our life, it keeps us in bondage.

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TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And Jesus addressed that time and time and time again. What if -- what if somebody could give you eternal life and eternal meaning for the age to come? That if he could give you life in resurrection, that he could bring you back to life and you would live forever, then through that gift you're no longer afraid of death because now you say, someone could kill my body, but they can't kill my soul, my life --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- my being, because I'm going to be resurrected and I'm going to live forever. And so if Jesus says, listen, Travis, I've taken away your sin. Your sins have been atoned for. You're no longer condemned so that when you

die, you will come back to life, you will be resurrected to a brand-new life --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- now you can say, now I don't have to be afraid anymore. Now I'm not in bondage anymore. I'm not a slave anymore. And that's exactly what Hebrews is saying. He's saying because you have a high priest who didn't just offer bulls and goats on your behalf, but he actually came and died for you so that now you are no longer subject -- the way he says it, "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

And that's exactly what Paul says in Romans 5 and 6. He says, listen, humanity is -- because of sin, because Adam sinned and then death -- their sin spread to all men because all men have sinned, we all joined Adam in his rebellion against God, then death spread to all men and we're all under this condemnation of death. But Jesus comes along and he dies for his people, and then he makes us his people. He justifies us, and then he sets us free.

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And he says, the way that I've been resurrected, you, too, will be resurrected. I'm the first fruits of the resurrection and now you're going to be resurrected and you're going to live forever, so now you don't have to fear those who kill the body. Now you're not a slave anymore. Now you're free.

TRAVIS: Yeah. I was thinking about something, kind of popped up earlier.

The idea of the Calvinistic view of original sin --

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: -- and -- well, not uniquely Calvinistic, but if something is going to be true -- inevitably true, then, you know, I think -- when I think of original sin, I think of that concept that's like -- I didn't grow up with the belief of original sin, but the more I've thought about it, the more it's like, well, no, I don't think that a child is necessarily accountable.

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: I think that's where they get it wrong.

WES: Right, right.

TRAVIS: But I do think that it's an interesting conundrum that it's like you could have the most perfect parents in the world and have all bad influences, as much as possible, shielded from a kid for years and years and years, they're still going to figure out how to lie. They're still going to figure out how to cheat and --

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: -- you know -- and mouth off and all the things that you do as a kid. And so it's like if something is going to be true, I get that -- I get a certain part of the original-sin concept.

WES: Yeah, yeah.

TRAVIS: And that -- you know, that's kind of scary. It's hard to know when the cutoff point -- I mean, that was so much of being a kid, was wondering, do I need to -- you know, I hear Jesus every week --

WES: Yeah, yeah.

TRAVIS: -- preached, and it was like, when do I need to make a decision about it? And I remember, from ages like 10 to 12, it was like I kept convincing myself I wasn't -- I wasn't responsible.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: It was more just because I didn't want to participate in worship, but -- but I knew -- it was like I heard about it so much that it was like, I think this is something I need to do. It just took two years to muster up the courage, I guess, and then it was more obvious because I was more tortured about it.

WES: Well, I think you're right. I think there is an inevitability --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- to sin, but I don't think it's because people are born, quote-unquote, spiritually dead.

TRAVIS: No.

WES: I think it's because -- because of what Paul would call "the flesh." And what he means by "flesh" is both moral weakness and what we might say spiritual weakness; the tendency of human beings to do what they don't really want to do. And that's what he says in Romans 7. You know, he's talking about, listen, this is the way that it was under the law. I wanted to do good and right and things that were the good thing to do and I knew what to do, but I just didn't do them. And then the things that were bad and I said I

don't want to do those things, I ended up doing those things, and it's because there's sin that dwells in my flesh. There's sin that dwells in my weakness, in my propensity towards sin. And human beings, babies, are born fleshly creatures.

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: And at some point they encounter that struggle, and they say, this is the good thing to do, but I'm not going to do it. I'm going to do the bad thing. And the bad thing that I don't want to do, I'm going to end up doing. And that's the human struggle. And as soon as you introduce the law to them and you say, hey, here's the right thing to do and the good thing to do, then, because of flesh, we choose the wrong thing. And the beauty of the gospel is that Jesus became flesh and he died so that he could atone for us and then set us free from that bondage, that even though we've chosen sin, now we choose Jesus and we're buried with him. That's sort of a metaphor and a symbol. But we're buried with Jesus --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- so that we can be raised up with him. And the way Paul talks about it in Romans 6 is now -- now you're set free and now you're no longer a slave to sin and death. Now you not only don't have to obey sin, now you're set free from that. Your heart has been changed. Now you've received -- and I think that's what breaks the inevitability of sin, is that now we have the spirit of God.

And that's the way Paul would talk about it, is now -- it doesn't mean

that once you have the spirit you won't sin, but it means that now that the spirit has come into your life, now -- now you're free to do what God would

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have you to do and now you have this bit of wisdom and animation from God. Now the breath and the wind of God is in you to carry you in the right direction. Now it's not just the flesh that's moving you, the weakness of your flesh that's moving you and controlling you. Now it's God. And now you're participating with God and now you're a part of the family of God and all moving -- trying to move in the right direction.

And so, in that sense, we can say now we are alive. Jesus would say things like -- he would say, "If you believe in me, though you die" -- John 11, "Though you die, yet shall you live." And so what does he mean? He means exactly -- the most simple way of reading it.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: Though you die -- your heart is going to stop beating and they're going to bury you in the ground -- yet shall you live. Your body is going to be raised in the way Paul talks about in I Corinthians 15. It will be transformed.

And the beauty of living as a Christian -- and that was part of Jason's question here. Let me see if I can go back to it real quick. Jason said, "What is the difference in how it affects our theology and our lives?" And I think we need to talk lots more about resurrection and how resurrection -- because

that's -- that's the hope of the gospel, is resurrection.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: It's not just go to heaven when you die. It is, there's going to be an eventual resurrection, like the literal raising of bodies from graves and tombs and the transformation of God's people into beings that are immortal and that will live forever and that share the glory of the Christ. There's a whole lot

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packed into there.

But it changes -- this whole way of thinking changes the way that we think about people, that people are truly important. Not just their mind, what they believe or what they think. Not just their spirit, the invisible part of them, but people are important. People are important; their bodies are important. Feeding them real food is important. Putting a real roof over their head is important. Putting real clothes on their back, that's important, because people are whole beings. You are a whole being. I am a whole being. We think of ourselves as whole beings.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: We often talk about things like thinking and feeling. Like, well, you should follow your thoughts and not your feelings. Like how do you know that, right? I mean, like in the moment, do you ever stop and say, now, do I think I'm hungry or do I just feel like I'm hungry? Is this my body or my spirit?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: You don't think like that. Nobody slices and dices their experiences that way.

TRAVIS: No.

WES: We're just whole beings, and that's the way the Bible talks about us. That's our experience, too, and it makes sense. It's intuitive. You are a whole being, and understanding the world that way and our neighbor that way and ourself that way, that Jesus cares about us in that he has very literally, through his death and resurrection, he has brought us alive so that in this moment, even though we know we will die, we know we will also

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live.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And so there's a sense in which you're already alive. You already have eternal life, and that gives you an incredible amount of hope and it takes away an incredible amount of fear. I've often said that nobody should hate death nor have more hate for death and less fear of death than Christians. Christians should hate death more and fear death less than anyone else.

TRAVIS: That's interesting.

WES: We hate death because I Corinthians 15 says it's an enemy of God. It's the last enemy that will be destroyed, death. Literal, physical death. I

hate it. I hate cancer. I hate every disease, and I hate every time I hear about a shooting, every time -- I mean, when we think dualistically, we say, oh, it's okay because their spirit has floated off, and that's really actually a good thing. No, it's not. It's not a good thing. It's a horrible thing. Death is an enemy of God. It's an enemy of God's people. But at the same time, we don't fear it. We're not afraid of it for ourselves or for any of God's people.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: We're not afraid of it because we know we will live forever. And so what would a people be like who loved life, who loved to extend people's life, who loved to give people life, who loved to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and put roofs over the heads of the homeless, but at the same time they weren't afraid to lay down their life and give their life or die for someone else? That would be an unstoppable group of people, and that's exactly who the church is supposed to be.

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So I think it does. It changes everything when you think it's not just about having these two, like, separate ideas in my head. Well, this is my spiritual self and my spiritual life, and this is my religious sort of church life, and this over here, well, this is my physical life. I eat and drink and I --

TRAVIS: It's so easy to do.

WES: It is. And don't you think that that's sort of how the typical American Christian -- I can't speak for any other culture because --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- I'm an American, but I think that's how we tend to think about life, is very dualistically like that.

TRAVIS: I think it's something I definitely take -- in a way, happily take for granted now, working at a church that's like God is a part of every day no matter what I do about it.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: But I know that that's something that has been hard in the past of like -- you know, even when I was going to a Christian school, it was like -- well, it's not like the Bible comes up in every class. It's not like you're always talking about things of the spirit --

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: -- or anything like that. In fact, rarely do you, outside of like a Bible class, but -- and I think it's something now that's -- again, I'm kind of happily taking for granted that it's like you get to have God be a part of every day, so then at lunch you're talking about God and at -- you know, during the work hours you're talking about God, and that's a really great thing because that's what makes it so easy to compartmentalize, I think, is that, well, if

you're around people that aren't interested in it, then, you know, you can't necessarily expect them to be a part of the conversation. You don't want to be that guy, you know, trying to bring your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

onto everybody.

WES: Yeah, yeah.

TRAVIS: But at the same time, it's like you still feel that responsibility. There's a lot of competing forces that I think end up making you just kind of take the easy choice of like, okay, well, over here, I'm going to talk about this; I'm going to be this thing. And over here, you know, we'll tone that down a little bit. Super easy to do.

WES: And that's a great word, "compartmentalize," and I think that's exactly what that sort of dualistic thinking leads us to, is to compartmentalization. But the true gospel of Jesus sets us free from that --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- and so that we live as people that are holistic, and we look at ourselves, look at the world, look at salvation as a holistic thing, that it's body and spirit.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: It is the whole self and it incorporates everything. And, to me, it makes it so much easier to talk to somebody about the gospel because it's not just about where do you go when you die or about sort of abstract philosophical types of ideas and thoughts. It's about what if there is someone who is in charge of the world that promises to raise you to life?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And he's already been raised to life to prove to you that he can give

you that same resurrection. Now, I mean --

TRAVIS: That's a good way of putting that.

WES: It's like, well, if that's not true, then just forget about it. But if that is true, that changes everything.

TRAVIS: That's everything.

WES: And that's what Paul would say in I Corinthians 15, that if this resurrection thing is true, then everybody should be a follower of Jesus.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: If it's not true, we're to be pitied above all people. We're wasting our life and our time. If resurrection isn't true, forget it. But if it is true, it changes everything.

And that's why I think everything has to come back to literal death -- literal bodily death, bodily resurrection. That's what the Bible is talking about when it's talking about bodily death. It's talking about -- or when it talks about death, it's talking about bodily. Now, that's not to say that there aren't some times where death is used as a metaphor.

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: I think there are some times it's used as a metaphor. But to just talk dualistically, that our spirit is dead when we sin and then our body dies later, I just don't think -- I think condemned to die is a good way to think about it.

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: I think that the most biblical way to put it is that we're slaves of death

because we live -- as the Hebrew writer says --

TRAVIS: I like that.

WES: -- we live in a lifelong slavery of fear of death, that Jesus sets us free

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from that fear.

TRAVIS: Well, I think, too, to say that people are spiritually dead if they're not in Christ, as if they -- because something you mentioned earlier, it's like they can't do anything good, even.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: It's like, well, that's almost self-evidently not true --

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: -- because like you see people do great things all the time. I mean, there are people -- you know, there are Jewish people that are, you know, extremely charitable --

WES: Right. Sure.

TRAVIS: -- and there's people, you know --

WES: Muslims and atheists.

TRAVIS: -- Muslims and atheists that do amazing things for the world.

WES: Absolutely. And are they dead in their sins and trespasses?

Absolutely.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And it's self-evident, even to them, they're going to die.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And they know that about themselves. We're not saying, hey, you're a horrible, horrible person. We're saying, hey, you're afflicted with the same affliction that all humanity is.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Because you know you're not perfect; I know you're not perfect. I know I'm not perfect. None of us are perfect. All of us have rebelled against

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God. We're all part of the sin problem. We're all part of the rebellion problem, and we're all mortal and we're all going to die, and everybody knows that.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Everybody knows that. We're not saying, hey, we're spiritually alive and you're spiritually dead. That -- like you said, what a hard sell that is, even if it was true.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And I just don't think that's a biblical thing. I think it's more true to say, hey, do you know that you're going to die? What's your plan for that? You know, hey, well, I think I'm going to go to a better afterlife. Okay. Well, talk to me about that. How do you know that's true?

Well, here's how I know that I'm going to come back to life, that my body is going to be raised from the grave and I'm going to be given an

immortal body. Here's how I know that, because Jesus was. Well, let's talk about the evidences of that. Well, our entire faith hinges on the fact that these 11 apostles of Jesus, and hundreds of others for that matter, saw the resurrected Jesus, and their minds were totally changed. I mean --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- Paul went from being a persecutor of the church to being the -- the prominent apostle. Why? Because of the resurrected Jesus. And so you know you're going to die; I know you're going to die; I know I'm going to die. Here's the solution for death. Here's the solution for, in the moment, the fear of death, so that you can be free from the fear of death. It changes everything.

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TRAVIS: Well, tell me what you think of this because this made -- it made me think of the kind of attitude I've been working on and how to think about people outside of Christ --

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: -- is I assume, for lack of a better word, that at some point everybody in their life, if given the time to live it, they're going to look for truth. They're going to have a moment where something's not fulfilling, something's not -- that they don't have a purpose. Given how much I think about that day-to-day, having grown up in Christ -- because that's always been a part of me, that that is your purpose, to glorify God while you're here

on this earth.

I assume somebody -- everybody, at some point, is going to have a question, no matter their background, about truth. And, you know, if you're living a hedonistic lifestyle, at some point, that's not going to be fulfilling. You know, at some point, you're going to have questions about what's your purpose. So if they have that question, you know, the best thing I can do is -- you know, in terms of evangelizing, is if there's opportunities to talk really specific and people want to get into it with you, I think that's great. But I do find, especially living out in California for a while, as I did -- I wear this cross ring and people will see it.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: And I remember when I was -- when I had an internship, my boss asked me -- the casting director asked me about the ring. He said, oh, are you a Jesus freak? And I just said, yeah, yeah, I am. And he just started talking to me about growing up Catholic and just had a short conversation

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about it, and I just -- you know, he talked about some things that were really difficult about that growing up and why he's no longer a part of that, and I just -- I sympathized with him. I was like, you know, that's really tough. I know a lot of people have struggled with that.

And I remember walking away feeling so much better about that interaction than I did the times where I've kind of, you know, just really tried

to be the good Christian and evangelize and spread the word, because I thought, oh, I don't have to finish it.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: I don't have to -- I don't have to, you know, take the ball all the way to the end zone here. Let that interaction -- let that -- you know, they had a pleasant interaction with a Christian.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: And that's -- man, if I can just give him that, then that's -- you know, that's a seed planted, and it's like -- that was actually kind of a humbling thing to just be like, oh, the weight's lifted. You don't have to do the whole thing.

WES: Yeah, absolutely.

TRAVIS: But also, at the same time, like trusting that, you know, maybe right now they're not looking for truth.

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: At some point, they're gonna.

WES: Yeah, absolutely.

TRAVIS: And if they're in my prayers and if that interaction can be a starting point, then it's like -- I think people -- you know, I think back all the

time to Jesus saying, if you seek, you're going to find. If you ask, it'll be answered, and if you knock, the door will be opened. It's like I think if

you're genuinely seeking truth at any point, I think you're going to find it, and that gives me hope that it's like, I don't have to look at people who I vehemently disagree with, or people that -- of the world that I like, you know, I agree with on a lot of things, but they're just not a part of Christ's kingdom. I don't have to -- I'm not so much worried about them as much because it's like, at some point, they're going to seek truth, and the best thing I can be is a resource when they're ready and a resource now to just plant the seed and so that that can actually maybe have a chance to come to fruition when they're ready.

And I think a lot about Pharaoh's hardening of heart and how it's like, how many times has God done that to me? How often is he doing that to people in the world that's like, no, you're not ready right now. And that gives me a different perspective on, you know, that idea of looking at people as spiritually dead, that that's not healthy for me, you know? That's not healthy for me to think of people as just -- well, they're not in Christ, so... But they're gonna be. They're gonna be.

WES: To me, one of the ideas that I've been thinking about a lot lately is just making introductions.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: That that's my job, is to make an introduction to Jesus.

TRAVIS: I like that.

WES: And maybe it's just a short introduction and maybe it's just introducing them to Jesus through someone who is genuinely trying to

follow him. I don't believe that everyone will end up following Jesus.

TRAVIS: No.

WES: But I do believe that they're a whole lot more likely if we approach them with love and genuine respect for them as human beings --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- and that because we love them, we want them to know about Jesus who promises to give people life eternal and -- you know, and just as lovingly and respectfully as we can, making those introductions to people any opportunity we have. I think we're helping to move them closer to discipleship every time we treat them the way we would want to be treated.

I want to thank my church family, the church of Christ on McDermott Road, and our editor, Travis Pauley, for making this podcast possible. And thank you for listening. If you haven't already done so, please rate, review, and subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcast, or wherever you're listening. I also want to invite you to check out Logos Bible Software, who has partnered with us to give our listeners a great discount. Just go to [RadicallyChristian.com/logos](https://RadicallyChristian.com/logos). I think you'll love the software and you'll get a great discount by using that link.

As always, I love you, God loves you, and I hope you have a wonderful day.