

# More than Bruch: The Meaning of Easter

Bethany Assembly of God

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## **Introduction**

I recently came across a video from well-known astrophysicist, educator, and atheist apologist, Neil Degraesse Tyson, about death. He was reading an excerpt from his book *Starry Messenger* and the basic question that he asked was, “If you could live forever, would you?” He went on to describe why living forever might not be desirable at all. His reasoning was that death motivates us to create, accomplish feats, have new experiences, and share love while we have a chance. He reasons, “Mathematically, if death gives meaning to life, then to live forever is to live a life with no meaning at all.” This seems to be a clear shot at religion, particularly, Christianity, whose core claim is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead so that through faith in Him, you can have eternal life. His argument makes me wonder how many people don’t understand the significance of eternal life and the meaning of Easter. Since the message of Easter is that Jesus died for your sins and God raised Him from the dead so that by faith in Him you can have eternal life, let me point out a few ways this message is a much greater motivator for living a good life than death is.

### **1. The hope of the resurrection restores meaning and purpose.**

Contrary to Neil Degraesse Tyson who says that death provides motivation and meaning by assuring we stay focused and don’t eternally procrastinate, I think most people perceive death as robbing life of its meaning. The book of Ecclesiastes deals with the meaning of life from a natural perspective. Far from concluding that death adds great value and purpose to life, Ecclesiastes concludes that a life using only our desires and drives as a guide is unfulfilling and meaningless. Rather than removing meaning and motivation, the resurrection of Jesus restores it. See 1 Corinthians 15:58. The resurrection motivates good because it guarantees that it will not be wasted or simply pass out of existence.

### **2. The hope of the resurrection gives freedom from fear.**

A lot of our underlying motives come from a fear of dying and God calls this control by fear or anxiety, slavery. You were not designed for death. That was something introduced due to evil, sin, and rebellion against our Creator and now the devil uses it to keep you enslaved through fear. But God loves you so much that Jesus, the Son of God, lived as a human being so that He could die. He died for you, in your place. And for those who believe in Jesus, they die with Him to their old, sinful life, and God also promises that, just as He raised Jesus from the dead, He will also resurrect all who trust Jesus. That promise breaks the fear of death and sets the slave free.

### **3. The hope of the resurrection gives rest.**

There’s more to life and death than we talk about in our culture and I want to challenge the idea that death is rest. When God put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, what they did there was never described as work. They had responsibilities, but it was never described as labor or toil. Instead, we can understand that God made the Garden as a place where they could enjoy His rest. It was only after Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned that the curse of toiling labor was introduced. The resurrection of Jesus is an invitation to renewed life that is not characterized by toiling and striving, but by peace. See Matthew 11:28-30.

### **4. The hope of the resurrection restores us to relationship with God.**

One of the primary marks of death is that it steals presence; it takes away the people we love from where we can talk to them and hug them and be with them. This feeling of absence is an analogy for what sin does to

our relationship with God; it brings death to that by robbing us of His presence. If you rebel against the author of life, death is the result, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. See Romans 6:23.