

The Resurrection and the Life

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would pour the Holy Spirit deep within us as we open your Word. Father, you know which ones of us here this morning, even at this time, are struggling with disappointment with you, who are just wondering where you are, why you don't seem to show up in their lives. Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would gently but powerfully work in our midst as we open your Word. Father, draw us to Jesus, draw us to yourself. Write your Word on the command centers of our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Please be seated. So Jesus let Lazarus die. That's what happens in the story. Jesus let Lazarus die. He let his friends, Mary and Martha, down, whose brother it was, who died. Obviously, he let Lazarus down, didn't he? So they, and we're going to see in a moment, they get upset with Jesus. Jesus could have done something, and he didn't. So what's up with this? Why is it that, I don't know if you notice in the text, it says very particularly that Jesus loves them, so he doesn't go? Like, what's up with that? How does that make any sense whatsoever? So it'd be a great help if let's open the Bible together, and let's look and see what it is that the Bible says about Jesus and him letting these people down, how they respond to Jesus. In fact, it's one of the things which is interesting in this story is three times in this story, Jesus is told off for not acting. So it's a very, very powerful story, and let's look at it ourselves and see what's up. Why did Jesus let this man die, and why did he disappoint Mary and Martha as well as Lazarus? So it's John chapter 11, if you're trying to find it in your Bibles, and it's, John is one of the four ancient biographies of Jesus that are either written by or a direct product of eyewitness testimony of the life of Jesus and the words of Jesus. This is one of the four ancient biographies written within the lifetime of many eyewitnesses to Jesus, and the story here, if you go and you read the book from the beginning to the end, and you sort of notice the different Jewish feasts, the story takes place somewhere between Hanukkah and Passover. So somewhere between the end of December and the beginning of April, this story takes place. We don't know exactly when, but it happens somewhere in between that time period, and it also happens somewhere between the time period. It's going to be the, well, we now, it's going to be the final Passover for Jesus as well. It's going to be the time when he is betrayed and when he dies. And here's how the story goes. Verse 1 of chapter 11. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Just pause here for a second. One of the things which is really interesting about this miracle is that they keep, John writes it with lots and lots of detail, very important detail, historic detail, geographic detail. And one of the things which is also very important in this is, I think there's about 20 times in the text it mentions that Lazarus is either ill, over 20 times that he's either ill or that he's dead. So it really, it isn't like, it really emphasizes this particular fact. And Bethany, as we're going to see in a moment, it's a known place about two miles just outside of what, of the boundaries of Jerusalem in the day.

So verse 2, it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. Just pause here for a second again. I don't know if there's anybody here who's a seeker, but for many Christian, non-Christians, one of the worries they have about becoming a Christian is that if they become a Christian, they're going to have to do weird stuff. And like wiping people's feet with their hair, like that's weird. We're actually going to look at this in, I think, either a week or two. So I'm not going to talk about it now other than don't worry. If you become a Christian, you won't have to do unreasonable weird stuff. I just let you know that up front. You might do reasonable weird stuff, but that's a whole other topic of conversation.

[4 : 35] But at least we'll be reasonable. Verse 3, so the sisters sent to Jesus saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill. But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death.

It is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. And just sort of pause here for a second. So some of you might say to yourself, well, what's up with this? Does Jesus get it

wrong? Like, doesn't the story say that Lazarus dies? So here Jesus seems to say one thing that doesn't lead to death, and yet later on we find out that Lazarus dies. So what's up with this? Did Jesus make a mistake? Well, if I don't talk about this by the end of the sermon, like if I say, you know, the ending prayer, and I haven't dealt with it, I want one of you to wave at me, and I'll go back to it and talk about it, okay? Like, I'll either know you're having a charismatic moment, or I forgot to talk about it, or both. So please wave. But, you know, what's up?

Why is it that Jesus says this and it doesn't seem to come true? Well, let's keep reading as the story sort of unfolds. We'll make it clear what Jesus meant and what he didn't mean. Verse 5.

Now, Jesus loved Martha, and these two verses are really important for everyone here who struggles with disappointment with God. This story is really, these two verses are really important. In fact, it shows why the story as a whole is a profound story to meditate upon if you are wrestling with disappointment with God. Now, Jesus, verse 5, loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

[6 : 22] So, in other words, that's a causal thing, or therefore, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Isn't that odd?

Like, what's up with that? Wouldn't most of us normally expect that if we hear that somebody's ill and we have the power to heal them, we'd say, gosh, I better go right away and try to help them. But he hears that they're ill, and it says so. And the so is that he stays two extra days. Two extra days. What's up with that?

Verse 7. Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jewish leaders were just now, just a month or two ago, seeking to stone you. And are you going there again?

Jesus answered, are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him.

[7 : 29] Basically, he's, you can preach a whole sermon just on that. But basically, he said, I know what I'm doing. Verse 11. After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.

The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. Now, Jesus had spoken of Lazarus' death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died. And for your sake, I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

But let us go to him. So Thomas called the twins, said to his fellow disciples, let us go, also go, that we may die with Jesus. So some people might wonder, is the reason that Jesus didn't go right away, is that because he had some type of divine knowledge, and he knew that if he had gone right away, he would have been captured and stoned, but he knew that there was a bit of a window of opportunity for him to go now.

I mean, many of us would understand why it would be that if, I mean, I don't know, most of the people wouldn't view somebody as blameworthy if you could heal somebody, but you didn't go because it was too dangerous and you were going to get killed.

[8 : 43] And we'd say, okay, well, that makes sense. I mean, it's really sad, it's really tragic, but that makes sense. Is that sort of what's going on here? Well, actually, as we see, that's not what's going on here at all, actually.

In fact, as we're going to see later on in the story, the story happens in such a way that enemies of Jesus are actually present when he shows up in Bethany.

And we're not going to read about it, but the end of the story, if later on you read the next few verses, you'll see that some people were so mad at Jesus for what he'd done that it, in fact, begins the process which will culminate in Jesus dying, that it accelerates the plot to have Jesus killed. And so, in fact, that's not what's going on. We're still puzzled about what's going on. Why on earth is it if Jesus loved, did he wait? And it's all of these aspects which is going to lead to three separate rebukes of Jesus, two of them by his friends and one of them by his enemies.

And we're going to see how it is that Jesus responds. So let's see verse 17. Now, when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

[9 : 59] Back in those days, they would have buried him almost immediately. So he's dead four days. But the importance is that, as we're going to see, that by saying that he's in the tomb, it means he really is dead.

Like, they touch the dead body, they wrap the dead body, all of the embalming things. I don't know how many of you here have touched a dead body, but dead bodies feel different.

And I know the first time I touched a dead body, it was a shock to me how different it felt. So this talk about it being in the tomb is emphasizing the deadness of Lazarus.

So verse 18. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jewish people and Jewish leaders had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Like, right to his face.

[11:06] Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Like, why not? Why are you not here? We don't know exactly where Jesus was when he got the message.

And he was somewhere between a one to a one and a half day, two day walk, they estimate from the other parts of the story. But he definitely waited too long.

And for readers of the gospel, and as you're going to see in another moment, one of the things about this is that Jesus was able to perform miracles from a distance. He didn't even have to be there. I mean, Martha doesn't sort of nail Jesus on this, but we know from the story, if you go back and read the story from the beginning to now, we'll see that there's one famous incident where Jesus just says to a guy, You want me to heal your servant?

Just go. And Jesus was like 20 clicks away, and the servants healed. Jesus doesn't even have to be in the room. And Jesus already shows supernatural knowledge of Lazarus' death.

So Jesus has supernatural knowledge. He has the power to heal from a distance. He also had the power to potentially get there in time. And Martha nails Jesus on it, doesn't she?

[12:18] Verse 20. So when Martha, or back 21 again, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Now just sort of pause here for a second before I read 23.

How many of us have confronted a powerful person about not doing the right thing? How's that gone for you? Did you end up finding out that you didn't get a promotion later on because you confronted the powerful person?

Did they just humbly repent? Did they get mad? How many of you have confronted a close friend before about when they've done something which is just wrong? How's that gone for you? Did they stay your friend?

Well, some of us they did, and some of us they didn't. Martha is overwhelmed with grief, and she just, I mean, she goes at Jesus. She tries to soften the blow a little bit, you know, but she goes right at Jesus.

So here's a really interesting thing. We all know what it's like to confront a powerful person and see how they react. And we all know what it's like to confront a friend and see how they react.

[13:24] How does Jesus react? Like one of the things that's going to be very, very interesting here is that what happens with Jesus is that Jesus listens, but he doesn't react.

Jesus listens and acts, but he doesn't react. By that I mean, you know, what happens is when you get confronted or something, we react, right? We get angry.

We maybe get guilty. We get red in the face and want to try to excuse away, and then we attack or whatever it is. But Jesus doesn't react in terms of it, wow, he acts, but he doesn't react.

If you get the distinction, it's going to be true of all three of the different rebukes. He acts, he speaks, he listens. He speaks, he acts, but he doesn't react. Just as a complete aside, this is really important for those of us who are Christians.

One of the things, it's the most important thing you can do, prayer. I say in the blog today, prayer is an honest conversation with God. Not a make-believe conversation with God.

[14:29] Not a Stepford Wives conversation with God, but an honest conversation with God. If you're disappointed with God and you try to pretend that you're not, listen, God knows you're disappointed with them.

It's probably better for you spiritually just to say to him, Jesus, I'm really disappointed. I don't know why it is. It just, you don't seem, it just, like, you know what, you're thinking it. You might as well say it.

And you know what? Jesus can handle it. He'll listen and he'll act. He won't react. He'll listen and he'll act. That's what we see modeled here very powerfully in the story.

So where was I? Verse 23, I think, wasn't I? So verse 22, but even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Verse 23, Jesus said to her, here we hear Jesus' response, your brother will rise again.

Martha said to him, and Martha answers like a good, observant Jew. I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. And then Jesus says something really shocking.

[15:33] We're going to look at this a little bit more. This is, in many ways, the key to the whole text right here. It's our memory verse for the week. It's a verse which is really precious that every single Christian should memorize.

And he says, I am the resurrection, the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Do you believe this? And throughout the centuries, Jesus speaks to us right here this morning. Do you believe this? Now, we're going to come back and talk about this and unpack it.

But the main thing is this. You look at it again. We're going to unpack it a little bit later on. But notice it's an unbelievable claim. I shouldn't say an unbelievable claim. This is a big, big, big, big, big claim.

Right? I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever, whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

[16:36] And everyone, that's people in Kenya. It's people in Taiwan. It's people in Russia. It's people in North Korea. It's people in Ottawa. It's people who are struggling with gender dysphoria.

It's those who are same-sex attracted. It's heterosexuals. That's what everyone means. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? It's an unbelievable claim.

What on earth could possibly warrant or justify a human being making such a claim? Well, let's see what happens.

Verse 26. So at verse 27, she said to him, here's how Mary responds, Martha responds. She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.

It's very important you notice. She doesn't say that I believe that Lazarus will rise. But she makes some pretty good claims about Jesus. Verse 28.

[17:35] When she had said this, when she gives a pretty high type of belief about Jesus, but nothing at all about whether Lazarus will rise. When she had said this, verse 28, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, the teacher is here and is calling you.

And when she, that's Mary, heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Mary, where Martha had met him. When the Jewish leaders and Jewish people who were with her, Mary, in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now, when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Rebuke number two, right to his face. Now, apart from the rebuke, one of the things which is very interesting here is, remember I said to you that if you thought that what was going on with the story was that if Jesus had gone right away, he was going to get in front of all the authorities and they'd know and maybe he, no, no.

You see, what's just happened now is there's a crowd. The Jewish leaders, the Jewish people, all the mourners, they follow Mary. Jesus is no longer just come in secret. Everybody sees him.

There's a big crowd of people all wailing and crying. He's drawn a crowd. Mary rebukes him. How does Jesus respond? Verse 33. Remember I said he listens and acts.

[19:08] He doesn't react. Verse 33. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And in the original language, it's a profound emotional response that he has. A deep inner groaning at the very center of who he is.

And verse 34. And Jesus said, where have you laid him? That is Lazarus. They said to him, Lord, come and see. They said to him. And then when they come, here's the shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus wept. And in the original language, the weeping, the word for weeping that's going on all around him is howling. Like just uninhibited.

Uninhibited. Roaring, yelling, crying. Zero inhibitions. The same word isn't used here of Jesus. It's, you know that he's deeply moved.

[20 : 16] And what you would have seen if you saw him, you wouldn't have seen him yelling or screaming. But you would have seen the tears pouring down his face. The tears pouring down his face without the yelling and screaming.

The uninhibited, the collapsing that goes on with uninhibited weeping and grief. But you would have just seen him standing and the tears just falling down his cheek.

Into his beard. Maybe dropping on the ground. So the Jewish people and the Jewish leaders said, see how he loved him.

But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying? Third rebuke. And this one in the original language, this is said by his enemies.

There's a bit of a different sense in the original language that there's a bit of scorn put there. It's the Mary and Martha, they're just being honest.

[21 : 19] They're just pouring out their heart. This is the dagger twisted. But still, how does Jesus react? He doesn't react.

He listens. He acts. He acts. Verse 38. And by the way, this is, just before I read the next verse, it's sort of really important to the story.

There's a thing in The Citizen a couple of weeks ago about a man who exercised his right under Canadian laws to ask a doctor to put him to death.

Which, of course, as you know, is part of the law here in the country. And one of the things in The Citizen feature that it said about him was that this man lived his life, he died as he lived his life, unbowed.

Now, that's a very interesting choice of words, and it's completely untrue. Because you know what? I mean, we can come to the moment of death screaming, yelling, being in defiance, but the fact of the matter is, is death makes everyone bow.

[22 : 32] Doesn't it? Death doesn't say, whoa, wow, George is mad at me. Death doesn't say, whoa, wow, George is filled with self-esteem.

Death takes us on its own terms. And when we die, we die. Death's foot on our neck. Everyone bows to death.

Everyone bows to death. And to think that you don't is just to be mistaken. So what happens here with Jesus? Is Jesus just sort of venting and raging and frustrated that there is nothing he can do? That he, like all, will have to bow to death and Lazarus has bowed to death? Well, let's see. Verse 38.

Then Jesus, deepening again, came to the tomb. It was a cave. And a stone lay against it. Okay?

[23 : 38] It's sort of tipped. It's a... There must have been a slight angle like this of the cave. And the stone is laying on top of it like this. That's how it's described in the original language, if you can sort of see my hand.

It's not a door like this. It's like this. The opening must be like this. And the stones laid across it. And Jesus said, verse 39, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor.

My brother will now stink, for he's been dead four days. Jesus turns to her and says, why on earth did you rebuke me? No, that's not what it says here.

Why do you have no faith? That's not what he says here. What does he say? Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone.

This is going to be really important. There's going to now be a nose evidence that Lazarus was dead. Nose evidence that Lazarus was dead.

[24 : 45] So they took away the stone. And Jesus, verse 41, lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you, I knew that you always hear me. But I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.

Notice that Jesus does not ask the father to raise Lazarus. What he does is he said, Father, you and I know that everything I do, we do as one. We are not in any type of conflict.

It isn't as if you're the God of judgment and wrath. I'm the God of life. It isn't as if you're the God of people to death. And I'm the one who I'm a different God who raises people to life.

It's not as if there's any type of disagreement or disharmony. You and I are at one, Father. And I am taking this moment to speak to you so that everyone here knows that you and I are at one in everything that goes on.

And that you sent me and I willingly obeyed you sending me. That's Jesus speaks to the father and says that. And then in verse 43, when he said these things, he cried out with a loud voice.

[25 : 54] And why does he cry? Why? Not because Lazarus needs to hear him. But over the weeping and the wailing, I organized the crying in the background just for that point right now.

People can stop pinching the poor kid. No, sorry. But over the sound of the weeping and the wailing, that's why Jesus cries out with a loud voice. He doesn't call out to God to act.

He speaks directly to Lazarus. And he says to Lazarus, verse 43, Lazarus, come out. Verse 44, the man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips and his face wrapped with a cloth.

By the way, that alone would have suffocated him. If he had just been in a swoon. That would have killed him. And Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go.

They now have witness of the eyes, the ears, of touch and of nose that Lazarus had died.

[27 : 02] And that Jesus not only called Lazarus back, his soul back to his body, but that Jesus, by a mere act of command, gave Lazarus a healthy body for his soul to return to.

All still wrapped in the grave cloths. And he stumbles out like that. Wow.

So here's the first thing. Is it true? Like if this is, and is it true if it doesn't matter? Here's the first thing. This is the Christian claim that this is true.

That's why I began by saying all four of the, what we now call gospels, all four of these were written as biographies of Jesus with the claim that they were true. And John didn't die a martyr's death, although John did die in exile.

And every one of the writers of these texts died a death, going to their death. Even in the case of some of them, all of them of persecution and some of them of martyrdom, claiming that what they wrote was true.

[28 : 14] The claim of the Christian church, the claim throughout the centuries was that this actually happened in space and time. And that it's real. And does it matter? Sure. Well, first of all, it matters because at least partially vindicates Jesus' claim.

Andrew, could you put up the first point? We're going to, I'm going to unpack it in a moment. But it, and you'll notice that the version which is up here is a little bit different than the one I read. What I've done is I've, I've taken the ESV text, which is an essentially literal text.

But in four different places, I've made some tiny changes to the text to give it a literal translation because the grammar isn't as good. But it, it actually brings out the power of what's said.

And remember I said, who on earth, what human being could possibly make a claim like this? Well, this, he's partially vindicated this claim, hasn't he? By this spectacular miracle.

And it's a spectacular miracle, not just in a little hidden corner and only amongst his friends. It's a spectacular miracle after he's been rebuked three times, twice by his friends and once by his enemies.

[29 : 28] His friends and his enemies are present. And there's a large crowd and he performs this spectacular miracle and at least partially vindicates. If it actually happened, then only a man or a woman, in this case a man, who's made such a claim and done such a miracle, might we say that maybe in fact this claim is partially true.

But it becomes even more important when we consider why we are called Christians and not Lazarusians. If you think about it for a second, why do we worship Jesus rather than Lazarus? Jesus was only dead three days. Lazarus was dead four. Isn't that a greater miracle? It's a very, very good point. You know, here's the thing.

Jesus can only be the life if he is also the resurrection. Jesus can only be the life if he is also the resurrection.

See, why is it that Jesus is worshipped? Why is it that we trust and follow Jesus and not Lazarus? Well, because first of all, it was Jesus who raised Lazarus. And in a sense, it's Jesus who raises himself or the father raises himself.

[30 : 40] Lazarus was completely dependent upon Jesus to do the raising. But the other thing, which is far more significant, is that Lazarus came... In a sense, what happened with Lazarus is he enters into what we now know of as death.

And after he is in death for four days, he returns to this side of death, but he still has to die. And what we understand and believe about Jesus is that Jesus entered into death and tasted everything there is to taste of death.

But on the third day, he did not come back to this side of death, only have to die again. But tasting all there is to taste of death, he emerges on the far side of death, having defeated death.

And he defeats death by dealing with human sin and rebellion and alienation against God, which is what has caused death.

Jesus does not have to die again. And that's why, if you look up again, you see, to say that if Jesus was just life, but still death was going to eventually defeat us.

[31 : 42] Well, that's nice, but death is still going to defeat us. And that's nice, but that which causes death is still present in our lives.

But Jesus makes a spectacular claim. He says, I am, which, as some of you know, is in fact a bit of a claim towards divinity. I am the resurrection and the life, both of them.

Whoever believes into me, that's actually what the original word means. We use in, it's a fine word, and it's more grammatical in English than into, but that's actually what the original word is.

We believe into Jesus. We believe into him. There's growth. There's development. We, in a sense, lean into him to begin.

And the whole, and part of the Christian life is this ever-deepening journey into Jesus with more faith and more belief. It means that we can start off with our faith and our trust.

[32 : 40] And Jesus is very confused and very imprecise and very tiny and maybe filled with doubts. Yes, we believe into Jesus.

And he says, whoever believes, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes into me, though he die, and I've used he, it could also put there she if you wanted. I wanted to make it singular.

Though he or she die, yet he or she will come to life. And that's what the text is saying in the original language. Jesus isn't saying that we don't die. He says that if you believe in me, because I am resurrection and life, you put your hand in mine.

You share in my victory over sin, my victory over death. And so you will come to death. But when you come to death, it's like a door that you go through. And you go through the door into resurrection and life.

And then he doubles down on it to make sure that we understand. He says, listen again, I am the resurrection and life.

[33 : 43] Whoever believes into me, though he or she die, yet he or she will come to life. And everyone who believes into me will never die forever.

And that means that that which deals, he's dealt with sin. It means that the second death, the judgment and wrath of God will not fall on you. Because even when you come to death and pass through death into resurrection and life, you enter into resurrection and life, there's no second death.

There's no judgment. The judgment and the doom that you and I deserve has fallen on him. And the resurrection and life that he deserves is given to us as a gift that we receive by faith.

That, my brothers and sisters, is the gospel. Now, just to really wrap it up, it's 34 minutes.

Just to wrap it up, a couple of final things. Remember I said, did Jesus get all that wrong at the beginning? And why is it that he waited two days and didn't come and acted and all of that?

[34 : 58] Well, if you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be very, very good. Life is different when the gift of resurrection and life is the final truth about you.

See, we're not used to thinking there's a Greek word called telos, which implies that there's an end. And it just tells us that sometimes the way things are, if you know what the end is, it makes everything in the process completely and utterly different. Two very simple and brief examples.

The first one would be, and I know some people here don't like surprise parties. But if you do like a well-done surprise party, not a surprise party where you end up showing up at the party and everybody's all, you know, dressed really nice and you're all sweaty and grubby and you needed a shower and you needed a shave and you needed all that stuff.

But a well-done surprise party. You know, and so what it would be is, you know, it's your birthday and none of your friends say happy birthday to you. And then you've sort of gotten roped into doing a favor for one of your friends and the favor just seems to drag on and on and on and it seems to be this and there's a difficulty and you're thinking to yourself, this just really sucks.

[36 : 10] Nobody remembers it's my birthday. I just want to go home. I just want to go home, have a couple of beers or a glass of wine and just have a pity party all by myself because nobody

remembers it. And finally, you go to one last thing.

Your friends just bug you and they say, there's one last spot. We stop and then we'll go and we promise it'll be good. And you go in and all of a sudden everybody else surprised. And in fact, all day they've thought about you and they wanted to honor you.

And your friends have gone to great bother to give you a wonderful surprise and a wonderful day. Better example. A couple of years ago, my wife and I, we moved from our house that we've lived in for 12 years and a bit into a different house.

Most of our nine kids, by the time we moved out of the house, when we moved into the house, our nine kids were with us. When we moved out, we only had three kids with us. We had lots of junk. We had enough hockey sticks and bicycles and stuff for nine kids and their friends. We had, you can just imagine the decades and decades of kids' art supply, artwork.

[37 : 19] It was the most miserable move of my life. It seemed to go on unending and unending and unending.

And we had problems trying to sell our house on time. We had to drop the price of the house and all of that type of stuff. And it seemed like the move itself took like four days or five days and it was just such a bother.

But those of you, you know, my wife, if you haven't come to our house yet, we'd love to have you at our house someday. But by, you know, even a week after we'd moved in, all I could do is I kept pinching myself and saying, I can't believe I'm in this house.

I mean, there's no way, it's a whole other story. There's no way, it was a miracle that we got that house. There's no way we could afford that house. Like, literally, there was no way we could afford that house.

And it backs onto the green belt like it was a gift from God. And, you know, after you're in for a week, you sort of almost forget all the bother because of the end. And that's what Jesus is saying here.

[38 : 23] This is what's going on. Do you think Lazarus a day after, a week after? Was saying, Jesus, I'm still so mad at you for letting me die. No.

You see, if you live your life like most Canadians, and it's just one dang thing after another, and then you die, then when bad things happen, it sucks.

But if the final truth about you is resurrection and life given as a gift, it changes everything.

It begins to change everything. And some of you might say, George, I can't believe that. This is what's so wonderful about this story. If you could put up the final point, Andrew. This is what is so wonderful about the story.

I had a really hard time putting this point, so I've done it twice. It's one for one group of people and the other for a different group of people. Okay? It's the same point. And for those, if you think about the story, Mary and how many people, how many people, like, read the story.

[39 : 30] Martha and Mary did not believe that Lazarus would rise. How big was their faith? The space between my finger and my thumb. You know how hard it is to have kids laugh at the exact right time in a sermon illustration?

We are such a well-organized church. It's astounding. The space between the finger and the thumb. Their faith was minuscule. And it was all mixed up with the fact that they just blasted Jesus. Jesus, you let us down. Here's the thing. Their faith was minuscule and mixed. But you know what's so important?

The fact is their faith was in Jesus. So Lazarus rose. Or another way, if you're a bit more philosophically inclined, is the object of my faith matters more than my emotional strength, my emotional purity, my emotional consistency, or my intellectual ability to grasp and comprehend and be constant.

And the fact of the matter is, is that all of us at different times in our lives have put our faith and hope in something that's unworthy. And we've been really confident. I really believe in this stock. I really believe in the market.

[40 : 49] And then on one day, you lose 30% of all your assets. But you were really convinced. What matters isn't so much what's in us as what we put our faith and trust in.

And Jesus will take your flickering, mixed faith. He will take it that you want to put your hand in his and it's sort of like this.

And what matters isn't, what matters is who you put your faith in. That's what this story shows so wonderfully, doesn't it? Please stand.

I want to just encourage you if you're here and you haven't put your faith and trust in Jesus, there is no better time than right now, before I even say this prayer, just to say, Jesus, I'm all mixed up. My faith is minuscule, but I want to put my faith and trust in you as the resurrection, the life, the one who will take me and never let me go.

[41 : 50] There is no time better than now to call out to Jesus as your prayer. And let's just pray now. Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for his death upon the cross and his mighty resurrection.

Thank you for the miracles he did. Thank you, Father, for this powerful miracle of the raising of Lazarus. Thank you, Father, that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, who he is and what he's done, that Jesus will never let us go, that he will take anyone who puts their faith in him. He'll even take you and me when we put our faith and trust in him. And Father, thank you so much that our destiny does not depend upon the intellectual power or purity of our faith. or the emotional integrity or purity of our faith, that what matters is that our faith is in Jesus and who he is and what he's done. Father, thank you for this.

Help us, Father, to grow as followers of Jesus, gripped by who he is and what he's done for us. And the promise, the unshakable promise, that the final word about every person who puts their faith and trust in Jesus is resurrection and life.

[43 : 07] Father, thank you for this. Make us disciples of Jesus, gripped with this truth, learning to live day by day for your glory. And this we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.