

I AM the Resurrection and the Life

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[0 : 00] So one of the things that has become more interesting for me is to think about and to try to analyze our culture. And so do you ever notice things in our culture and wonder, you know, why is that so appealing?

Or what does this event or this reality say about the culture we live in? What do our presidential candidates say about us as a culture? Or this video that's gone viral on the internet, what does that say about our culture?

And as I've been asking these questions, one of the places that keeps coming to mind is the box office. So what do our movies tell us about the culture that we live in?

Well, recently I was invited by a friend to go see Batman vs. Superman. And one of the things that stuck out to me as I was watching the previews and thinking about other movies is there seems to be this growing amount of superhero video or movies that have been coming out.

So why do you think these movies, these superhero movies, why do you think they're so appealing? You know, part of the reason is probably the incredible graphics, the cinematography of these kind of amazing movies that our technology can provide.

[1 : 05] And part of the reason is the stories. We love good stories, right? And the age-old story of good vs. evil always sparks something in us. There's something resonating about seeing humanity in crisis and then watching someone come in and save the day and be a hero.

Well, along with this, I think these movies are captivating. And this isn't just with superhero movies, but movies in general is that they help us to wrestle with the fundamental questions that we all face as human beings.

So there's a scene in the Batman vs. Superman movie where one of the characters, Lex Luthor, he asks or implies one of the fundamental questions that we all have to answer.

He asks, if there is a God, he implies, then what is he like? Now this is a question that everyone answers, and there's basically two answers that most people will give.

Other people will say, God doesn't exist at all. You know, everything that we see is all by chance, some random explosion of atoms. Or they will say, yes, God does exist, but he exists with flaws.

[2 : 11] He has some kind of limit or imperfections. In the movie, Lex Luthor answers the question like this. After seeing a world that is broken and evil, he concludes, either God must be all-loving or all-powerful, but he cannot be both.

And the logic is this. If God is all-loving, then why does he allow the suffering that this world experiences? If he has the power to stop evil and he doesn't, he must not be powerful enough to stop it.

However, if he is all-powerful, then the brokenness that we see proves that he can't be all-loving. To have the power to stop evil and suffering and not means that he could not possibly be all-loving.

Have you ever felt this tension before? The tension of trying to reconcile your experiences in a broken world, whether you're a Christian or not, with what you're experiencing and what you believe to be true about God.

For many people, an atheistic view of God or a view that he is deficient in some way are the only possible explanations. But this morning, I'd like to suggest that the Bible offers a third possibility.

[3 : 21] Now, the Bible speaks to this fundamental question in different places, but one of the clearest examples is found in John chapter 11. And I'm going to ask you to turn there with me to the Gospel of John chapter 11.

In this passage, we see a story of Jesus and his interactions with a family that is very dear to him. And this family's experiences, in many ways, similar to our own.

As we'll see, they experience the intense pain and sorrow of living in a broken world. And yet, as the story unfolds, their experience of suffering and pain is actually the very thing God uses to reveal himself, to reveal who he is and what he's like.

So as we kind of go forward now this morning, we're going to make three moves. First, we're going to look at this story and see what it says. Second, we're going to look at a few points that emerge from this story. And then third, we'll try to apply it to our lives.

So story, points, application. And before we go any further, would you pray with me? God, thank you that you are not silent, but that you have spoken to us.

[4 : 33] Lord, you have revealed yourself in creation. You have revealed yourself in your word, and you have revealed yourself in Jesus. So God, would you speak now to us a word of encouragement?

God, would your word refresh us? God, would your word strengthen us this morning and build us up? Lord, would your word give us faith to trust you?

In Jesus' name, amen. All right, well, we're going to read John 11, 1 through 46, which is a long passage. I'm going to do my best to read well. You guys do your best to follow along.

So starting in verse 1. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

So the sisters sent to him, 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.

[5 : 36] Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this, he said to the disciples, Let us go to Judea again.

The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you. Are you going there again? And Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in a 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. 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 his death, but they thought he meant he was taking rest and sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, So Thomas called the twins, said to his fellow disciples, Let us go, that we may die with him.

Verse 17, Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

[6 : 45] So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him. But Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 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. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and 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? She said to him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, The teacher is here and is calling for you. And when she 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 Martha had met him.

When the Jews who were with her 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 inside, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

[7 : 56] 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 he said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see.

And Jesus wept. So the Jews 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? And Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.

It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been in there for four days. Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 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.

When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. The man who died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, his face unwrapped with a cloth.

[9 : 04] Sorry, his face wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, Unbind him and let him go. Many Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So let's take a moment now to consider what's going on in this story. As we just read, this story takes place in a little village called Bethany, which was about two miles outside of Jerusalem.

And here in this village, there was a man named Lazarus, who we learned right from the start, was sick and ill. Now it doesn't give us the details of what he was sick with or how sudden or gradual this illness came, but we know that it went from good to bad to worse.

And now his sisters were scrambling to find a way to care for their brother. Now you can just imagine what's going on in Mary and Martha's mind. They've likely used up all of their options and all of their resources and up until then, nothing had happened for their brother.

And facing the unthinkable, you can picture their face when that thought of Jesus came into their minds. Have you ever been faced with an incredible challenge?

[10 : 17] And as you've racked your brain for a solution, something pops into your mind and you're like, that has to be the solution. Well, as I mentioned earlier, this family was very dear to Jesus.

They had spent time with him. He had been in their home. It's very likely they even saw him heal other people. And so when their brother was in need of a miracle, they did what any of us would have done and they called for the one who had the power to heal Lazarus.

Verse three says, You can hear in this request both an appeal to his love and an appeal to his power.

And yet, in verse four, we read that 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.

Now there's a lot we could say about this response, but for now, notice that when Jesus heard this news, it didn't take him by surprise. He didn't hear the news and then all of a sudden drop everything and rush to Lazarus.

[11 : 21] In fact, he actually did the exact opposite. Rather than leave it at once, we read in verse five, now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

This probably wasn't, or probably isn't the response that we would expect, right? And it's definitely not the response that Mary and Martha were hoping for. But after two days, Jesus gathered his disciples together and though there was some resistance because of a fear of what the Jews might do to them and harming them or stoning them, they nonetheless followed Jesus as he went to be with his family.

And when they got there, they must have arrived on a scene that just seemed totally and utterly hopeless. Verse 17 paints the picture of this bleak scene by saying, When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

And many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. By all outward appearances, Jesus had gotten there too late.

There was no chance, no hope, that he would heal him before he died. So what do you do when the one solution that was supposed to solve everything doesn't work out?

[12 : 47] What do you do when your hopes and dreams are dashed by a world that is broken and flawed? Well, it was here in the midst of this dark and gloomy scene that the hope-filled glory of God began to shine in.

Martha heard that Jesus had come and she went out to meet him. Her words are telling, but they also reflect a heart that is fighting for faith, that ultimately wants to trust in Jesus.

She says in a phrase that would be repeated, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Jesus tells her, Your brother will rise again. To which she responds, I know my brother will rise again on the last day in the resurrection.

Martha is in a state of distress and yet fighting for faith, fighting for understanding. And Jesus, fully aware of everything that's going on in her mind and in her heart, he speaks a word of powerful hope.

A word that reveals for John's readers a magnificent reality about who Jesus is. So Martha says, I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

[13:58] And Jesus responds, I am the resurrection and the life. Seven power-filled words that change everything.

I am the resurrection and 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?

Do you believe that I have power over life and death? Do you believe that salvation is found in me? Do you believe that I am the divine Son of God?

Well, Martha responds beautifully, doesn't she? In verse 27, she said to him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. And what we see in this passage is that it answers the first part of Lex Luthor's question.

If there is a God, then what is he like? The Gospel of John says without reservation, there is no if when it comes to God. There absolutely is a God and we need to look no further than Jesus, the second member of the Trinity, to see this reality.

[15:08] In fact, that is not only the main point of this passage, it's the main point of John's Gospel. From the very first verse all the way through to the end, John presents Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, the one the Father sent into the world to rescue it.

He starts off his book by saying this, In the beginning was the Word, speaking about Jesus, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

And towards the end of this book, we read this, Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written. What we read in John chapter 11, these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And so Jesus wrote, or sorry, John wrote this Gospel so that we would know who Jesus is, that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, who has come into this world. And the way this passage, our passage this morning, drives that purpose is by what Jesus says in verse 25 when he says, I am the resurrection and the life.

But we see after this conversation with Martha, then Jesus encounters Mary. Look again at verse 31. When the Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her.

[16:33] And 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, Lord, if you had been there, my brother would not have died.

Now you can just imagine Mary's grief and sorrow. And you wonder if implied in her statement is actually a question. Probably the question we all want to ask, right?

Lord, if you had been there, my brother would not have died, so why weren't you here? Jesus, where were you when all this was happening? Jesus, didn't you see what we were going through? What we are about to experience? How could you let this happen? Have you ever found yourself asking these questions? God, why are you letting this happen to me?

Do you really love us? Don't you see what's going on? A few years ago, our family went through a season where there was just a mounting set of challenges.

[17:32] Emergency room visits, a blown transmission in our old car, a deer that ran into our new car, sleepless nights while working third shift, sleepless nights with having a newborn, and on and on.

And as the months dragged on, I found myself asking this question. God, is this really your plan for us? Like, do you see what's going on right now? Lord, do you really care about me?

And you wonder if Mary, knowing that Jesus had the power to heal Lazarus, even from afar, was questioning his love for them. They knew the perfect solution for the worst scenario, and yet, it didn't seem to work out.

Notice also, the crowd who was with Mary also had questions about Jesus. They didn't wonder about his love. They wondered about what could have been. After seeing Jesus weep in verse 35, the Jews said, see how he loved him?

But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also kept this man from dying? You know, poor Jesus, a man full of compassion and love, and yet unable to get here in time, unable to save the day.

[18 : 48] You wonder if they saw Jesus as all loving, full of compassion, and yet, not all powerful. But whatever was going through their minds, no one expected Jesus to do what he did next.

Deeply moved by the pain and sorrow caused by living in a fallen world, Jesus came to the tomb where Lazarus was buried, and he asked them to take the stone away.

Martha protested at first, saying, there's going to be an odor. Lazarus has been in there for four days. But in response, Jesus told Martha to trust him, and then he publicly prayed this, what we've already read.

Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 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. And when he said these things, he cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out!

The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go. Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

[19 : 59] So this passage shows us that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He has power over death. He is the source of life.

As Martha confessed in verse 27, he is the Messiah and the Son of God sent by the Father to rescue the world. There is no if when it comes to God.

There absolutely is a God and his name is Jesus. Well, this raises the other part of our opening question and leads us to the second move.

The second part of the question is this, what is this God Jesus like? What is he like? Is he flawed or slowed down by some imperfection?

Sure, he exists, but is he hindered or lacking in some way? Well, in answer to that question, there are three truths or three characteristics that this passage shows us about Jesus.

[20 : 56] It teaches us something about his knowledge, his love, and his power. His knowledge, his love, his power. So let's look at each one of these briefly. First, his knowledge.

All throughout this passage, we see verses showing us that Jesus knew beforehand all that was going to take place. In verse 4, Jesus, knowing what would ultimately happen, said, this illness does not lead to death.

In verses 7 to 16, before they arrive in Bethany, Jesus already knows that Lazarus has died, and he knows what he's going to do. He says, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him. And then in verse 41, Jesus prays, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 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.

And so one of the beautiful truths that emerges from this passage is that the mind of Jesus knows all things. The mind of Jesus knows all things.

[21 : 58] Jesus didn't default to plan B because somehow plan A didn't work out. It's not like he's just incredibly smart, and even though he doesn't always know what exactly is going to happen, he's just really prepared for the next best option.

That's not our Jesus. No, he doesn't have plan B's. Jesus doesn't take risks. He doesn't wonder. He doesn't speculate. He doesn't make guesses. Jesus knows all things.

There's nothing in this story that happened, nothing in our lives that happens that takes Jesus by surprise. Brothers and sisters, one of the things this passage teaches us about God is that he is not unaware of our life situations.

He intimately knows the details of our lives, and whatever place you find yourself in, it is not God's plan B. The mind of Jesus knows all things.

Well, this leads to the second truth about Jesus, his love. Look again at verse 5. You've got to see what's here. Verse 5. This is what it says.

[23 : 07] Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. I don't know about you, but when I first read those verses, I was like, wait, what?

That doesn't seem to make sense. It actually seems to contradict itself. It says that Jesus loved them, but what he did didn't seem to be very loving, right?

And yet, John is unavoidably clear that Jesus stayed because he loved them. That little word so, it means therefore or because. Because Jesus loved them, he stayed two more days.

Because he loved them, he allowed Lazarus to die. So the question becomes, how was that loving? How was letting Lazarus die and letting Mary and Martha experience grief and sorrow, how was that loving?

Well, the answer is actually in verse 4. Look back a verse there. It says, this illness, Jesus says, does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

[24 : 19] Friends, listen, our greatest good as human beings is to behold and experience the glory of God. And the reason is because when Jesus, when he reveals his glory, he gives us himself.

Jesus shares with us his magnificent beauty and infinite worth in the display of his glory. And so, so the greater display of his glory, the greater display of his love.

The reason allowing this grief and suffering was loving was because it led to the most wonderful display of his glory that they had yet to see. And in seeing his glory this way, hundreds of times greater than if Jesus would just have healed Lazarus, they were positioned to believe and treasure Christ in the deepest and most satisfying way.

you see, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the best thing this family received was not freedom from pain and suffering. It wasn't even Lazarus' physical life.

The greatest gift they received was Jesus himself. That's how this was loving. suffering. I love what John Piper says about this.

[25 : 34] Listen to this quote. He says, Jesus does not mainly love us in this life by sparing us suffering and death. He mainly loves us by showing us and giving us himself and his glory.

Listen, don't measure the love of God for you by how much wealth and health and comfort he brings to you in this life. Measure God's love for you by how much of himself he shows you.

How much of himself he gives you to know and enjoy. Earlier I mentioned that my family went through this season where we encountered trial after trial.

And after a few months I began to make a list of these trials in my mind. And so somebody would ask me how I'm doing and I was really quick to go to this list and just share with them all of these different trials that I was encountering.

And as the months dragged on and this list continued to grow I found myself becoming bitter and starting to question God. God is this really the plan you have for our life?

[26 : 41] How can you keep letting these things happen to us? And then finally a dream that had been in the works for years and was about to be realized was about to be grasped didn't work out.

It ended up being lost and for a while I just gave up I just didn't care. And what's worse is that I began to think as I began to think about this list again in my head not only did I want to put that dashed dream on this list I wanted to put God on that list this list of things that was happening to me but then God in his mercy stepped in and began to show me what I was doing I was measuring God's love for me based on this list of circumstances and in his kindness he said let me give you a new list to run through your mind a list with Hebrews 13 5 I will never leave you nor forsake you a list with Psalm 16 the Lord is my chosen portion and cup you hold my lot the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places indeed I have a beautiful inheritance a list with

John 11 5 and 6 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus so when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed two days longer in the place where he was and with new eyes to see my circumstances I began to start experiencing his glorious love a love that was personal and tender a love like we see in verse 35 where even though he knows he's about to raise Lazarus from the dead Jesus weeps with compassion for their experience of this broken world a love that helps us see his glory as our greatest good well this leads to the last truth his power in this gospel John records a series of miracles what he calls signs and they're meant to display his power and to establish Jesus' identity as the Messiah and the Son of God and so in the previous chapters leading

up to John 11 he's recorded six other signs

Jesus turning water into wine the feeding of the 5,000 the healing of three different individuals and the walking on water and all of these miracles put on display Jesus' glorious power and they lead up to this final and ultimate miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead you notice again in verses 17 and 39 it says that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days now this is significant not only because physically speaking his body would have begun to decompose and also in light of some early Jewish beliefs that may have been present so one writer notes some rabbis believe that the soul hovered over the body for three days intending to reenter it but as soon as decomposition started it would leave in other words at that point death was irreversible and so the length of four days in the tomb left no speculation to whether or not Lazarus was dead and it shows all the more how amazing this miracle truly was and so this family experienced the real and awful effects of living in a world marred by brokenness a world of suffering and pain and sorrow but the glory of God broken Jesus full of wisdom and love and power brought this man back to life in a loud voice which must have just given chills to everyone who heard it he said Lazarus come out and the man who was dead obeyed the voice of God and came out of the tomb now what's interesting about this resurrection miracle isn't only what we see in this passage but what it points to Lazarus is not the last person in this book who will die and then be raised from the dead there's another death and resurrection that John records it's the death and resurrection of Jesus this miracle in John 11 foreshadows the ultimate miracle we see in the gospel in the gospel we see I'm talking about the good news of Jesus we see the greatest display of God's glory his divine knowledge perfect love sovereign power all wonderfully intersect in the death and resurrection of Jesus and his divine foreknowledge before the foundation of the world

[31 : 50] God the Father planned to send the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit to rescue a world that he created a world that rebelled against him the cross the death and resurrection was not God's plan B and in his perfect love Jesus gave us himself Jesus experienced death so that we could experience life Jesus experienced despair so that we could experience hope Jesus experienced the Father's wrath so that we could experience his love brothers and sisters he took our sin on himself and died the death that we all deserved to die and in God's sovereign glorious power Jesus was raised from the dead not just providing eternal life for Jesus but eternal life for everyone who would believe in him Jesus is the resurrection and the life do you believe this you see what Jesus did for

Lazarus physically is what he does for us now spiritually Lazarus was completely helpless completely unable to bring himself back to life which is how the Bible describes us we were dead in our sin unable to save ourselves in other words salvation is not based on our works or our performance of doing more good things than bad things we are dead in our sins can you imagine someone going up to Lazarus and asking him how he did it how did you come back to life and Lazarus would be like I didn't do anything I was dead I was in a tomb next thing I know I'm outside the tomb I'm alive Jesus did that last week I was talking to this guy at my church and I was like hey tell me a little bit about how you became a Christian and when I said that he was like kind of like dude are you serious like and then he said God did it man and he starts he's like this really animated guy so he's like you know he's moving around he's like he starts sharing his story someone gave him a bible he started reading it and it came to some point where he said I don't know man all I know is that one month I'm addicted to cocaine

I'm an alcoholic and the next month I'm in church and I'm reading a bible I can't explain it other than God did it he just kept saying I don't know what to tell you man God did it and that's exactly right what Lazarus experienced physically we experience spiritually we are hopelessly dead in our sin and the only way we can be rescued is through the powerful word of Jesus spoken to us in the gospel Jesus is the resurrection and the life well as we close this morning let me say a couple things first the question it's the same question that Jesus asks Martha Jesus said to her I am the resurrection and 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 do you believe that Jesus will give you eternal life if you repent and follow him there are really only two answers to that question actually we see them in verses 45 and 46 this blows my mind look at verses 45 and 46 many many of the Jews therefore who had come with Mary and had seen what he did believed in him but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done again this blows my mind a lot of times today you'll hear people say if Jesus would just show me that he's real if he would just give

me a sign then I would believe but what we realize is that there were people here in this story who witnessed the most powerful miracle imaginable and yet they didn't believe it's not enough just to see with our eyes or to reason with our minds though there are reasons what we need is Jesus to make us alive and he makes us alive by giving us faith in him faith that all of our sins the worst things that we've ever done the worst things that we'll ever do are laid on Jesus at the cross and paid for by his death faith that leads to eternal life that starts today if you put your faith in him secondly one of the challenges of the

Christian life can be reconciling our experience in a broken world with what we know and believe about God reconciling our experience on this side but then also trying to bring it together with what we know to be true about God the place where our theology and our experience intersect can often be a difficult time a difficult place Lord you tell me that you love me and that you want my greatest good but what I'm experiencing right now it doesn't feel very loving and what this passage teaches us what it teaches us to do is not only trust Jesus for our salvation and eternal life in heaven but it teaches us to trust him for every moment of every day all the circumstances that we find ourselves in brothers and when we're tempted to question

[38 : 38] I bear witness I bear witness that the worst days I have ever had have turned out to be my best days and when God has been most cruel to me he has then been most kind if there is anything in this world for which I would bless him more than anything else it is for pain and affliction I am sure that in these the richest tenderest love has been manifest to me listen our father's our father's let's pray let's pray let's pray Jesus you are the resurrection let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray Jesus you are the resurrection you are the resurrection and the life we praise you this morning for this passage and what it tells us about you thank you thank you that nothing takes you by surprise thank you for your love to us thank you for your love to us in giving us yourself thank you for your power displayed in the gospel

God I ask that you would strengthen this church that you would build it up that they would be a body that brings glory to your name in Jesus name Amen