

AM John 11:17-27 Looking for a New Life?

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[0 : 00] John chapter 11 verses 17 to 27 and then briefly we will also read verse 32. And that's page 1082 for anybody who's using the church Bibles.

So John chapter 11 reading from verse 17 to 27 and then verse 32. 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. 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.

[1 : 24] 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. In verse 32. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him. She fell at his feet saying to him.

Lord if you have been here my brother would not have died. Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. And to his name be the glory and praise forever. Amen.

Let's bow our heads again in prayer. Father we give you thanks that we can meet together to praise your name.

[2 : 36] To read your word. And may the words of my mouth. And the thoughts of our hearts and minds. Be acceptable in your sight.

These things we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen. So this morning to begin with a question. Are you looking for a new life? Are you looking for a new life? In these days of apparent endless bad news and sad stories.

Many of us would love to escape. We hear the stories nightly on the TV of the continuing war in Ukraine. We hear of shootings in America like in Uvalde.

In the schools. We hear of the financial hardships. Which many if not already facing will soon face.

[3 : 44] And many of us would like to pause the world. To get off. And to start a new life. In today's reading. Jesus' declaration of himself as a resurrection and a life.

Jesus exactly offers us that new life. He offers us a new and everlasting life in him. One that will bring peace and purpose to our existence.

We read about how he is a resurrection. And how life eternal is found only in him. In this morning's passage.

We read about the conversations between Martha and Jesus. And briefly the conversation between Mary and Jesus. Jesus.

All prior to the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. We hear of Jesus' offer of eternal life. To those who believe in him.

[4 : 47] Often when we look at these well-known passages. We concentrate very much on the main point. On the main event. And forget the important details.

In the lead up to that main event. So missing out an important part of the message. People focus on the event of Lazarus' resurrection.

But not on the significance of the preceding conversations. If you think about it. If we go to a movie. We pay attention to the build up to the big event to the end.

So that we understand the background. To the conclusion of the film. And have an understanding of how we got to that event. It gives the climax to the film.

A purpose and a context. Similarly the conversations with Martha and Mary. As they speak to Jesus.

[5 : 47] Help us set the context. Of the later story. And so they have a message for us. To set the context for us. When we read the familiar stories.

We miss important points. That are as relevant for us today. As they were to Martha and Mary. Remember. We remember the faith of Martha and Mary.

As they declare. How different the outcome. Would have been. If Jesus had been present. Yet. We miss the limitations. That Martha and Mary.

Set on their faith in Jesus Christ. We see. How they limit their expectation of God. And see resurrection. As something in the distant future.

So let's look at this morning's reading. John begins. The passage by outlining the plot. For us. Lazarus had been dead.

[6 : 48] For four days. And that Bethany. Lay approximately. Two miles. Outside of Jerusalem. And that many Jews. Had come to the family home.

To comfort Martha and Mary. The four days will become significant. As Jesus goes to perform the miracle. Of raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus had already demonstrated.

His power to heal. He had already healed the official son. In chapter four. Who was near to death. He healed the cripple. In chapter five.

And in Matthew. Mark and Luke. We read. The story of Jesus raising. Of Jairus' daughter. Shortly after her death. And you can imagine.

The possibility of the Pharisees. And the Jewish leaders. Questioning events. As an attempt to discredit Jesus. Jesus' power is growing. The Pharisees are becoming afraid of him.

[7 : 49] In Jerusalem. And they may be starting. To question some of the claims. The claims that have been made about him. They are trying to discredit him. But this time.

Lazarus would have been dead. Four days. There definitely was no sign of life. In fact. We read later. That Jesus is warned.

That decomposition. Would have already started. There would have been an order of death. From the decomposing corpse. This time. There would be no ability.

To discredit. The facts. That Christ. Would bring. Lazarus. Back to life. In verses 18 and 19.

John helps us understand. The events around the family home. The Jewish tradition. Was that people would gather. To support the family. And there would be a time of mourning.

[8 : 48] And of remembering. The dead person. So a bit like a wake. In some societies today. Some folk would come. Out of genuine feeling. For the family. They would share.

The family's grief. And they would sympathise. With the loss. Of a dear family member. Others. Would come out of necessity. Because they had to be seen.

To do the right thing. And there's no real difference. In our society today. Is there? Some people. Will do things. For the correct.

And caring reason. And some. Because it's. They've got to be seen. Some act out of feeling. Compassion. Some out of etiquette.

And duty. Martha. Mary. And Lazarus. Were disciples. They were followers. Of Jesus. So you can imagine. That many. Who have come out.

[9 : 45] From Jerusalem. Would not have shared. Their views. They were not there. To share. In the celebration. Of Lazarus life. And their future hope.

In Christ. In verse 20. Martha hears. Of Jesus approaching. The village. And she leaves the home. And goes to meet with him.

Martha then declares. In verse 21. To Jesus. Lord. If you had been here. My brother would not have died. Martha. Declares her faith.

In Jesus. And his healing. And saving power. But we also. See. Martha. Setting limits. On Jesus healing power.

For Martha. Jesus had to be present. He had to. He had to physically. Be there. She says. If you had been here. My brother would not have died.

[10:45] And this is mirrored. In Mary's conversation. With Jesus. In verse 32. John writes. 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. Martha. And Mary. Martha.

And Mary. Declare. Their belief. In Jesus's ability. To save. But they had forgotten. That Jesus did not need.

To be there in person. He didn't need to physically. Be with them. To save their brother. From death. They had forgotten.

What Jesus had done. For the centurion servant. In Luke 7 verses 1 to 10. Here. The centurion. Sends the. Jewish leaders.

[11:38] To invite. Or to ask. Jesus. To come to their home. To serve his servant. To save his servant. To be valued. But when he was far.

From the house. When Jesus was still. Far from their house. Jesus sent his friends. Saying to him. Lord. Do not trouble yourselves.

For I am not worthy. To have you come under my roof. Therefore. Do not presume to come. To you. But say the word. And let my servant be healed.

For I too am a man. Set under authority. With soldiers under me. And they say to one. Go. And he goes. And to another. Come. And he comes. And to my servant.

Do this. And he does it. When Jesus heard. These words. He marveled at him. And turning to the crowd. That followed him. Said.

[12:33] I tell you. Not even in Israel. Have I found such faith. And when those who had been sent. Returned to the house. They found the servant well.

What faith. Was displayed by the centurion. He knew. That Jesus could save. Just by his very word. He did not need.

The physical presence. Of Jesus. Under his roof. The centurion. Knew. Jesus' power. Of life. Yet. Do we share. The faith. Of the centurion. Or the limited faith. Of Martha and Mary. How often. Do we think to ourselves. If only this had happened.

If only God. Had done this or that. Yet not really expecting. A positive outcome. Martha continues.

[13:28] This limitation of belief. In verse 22. When she says to Jesus. That. Even now. I know that. Whatever you ask. From God. God will give you.

Martha. Martha dares not bring herself. To ask. Even now. What she really wants. Her brother is in his tomb.

But she hints. At Jesus' power. And that God. Will withhold nothing. From him. Again. How often. Are we like Martha. Wishing.

Or seeking. Something of God. But couching it. In uncertainty. I know you have the power. Lord. We pray. If you wish to.

You could. It would be good. Lord. If you could. Instead of being. Direct. And bold.

[14:25] And asking outright. What we desire. Of God. When Jesus taught. His disciples. To pray. He didn't encourage them. To be. Mealy mouthed.

Not to sit. On the fence. About what they ask for. They were to be direct. And to ask. With a believing heart. With an expectation. Of God's power.

To deliver. Our God. Is the creator. Of the universe. Nothing. Is beyond him. All. Is in his power. And if it is. The Lord's plan. Then he will deliver it. If not. He will show us. The path. That he desires. Of us. Is a hymn.

What a friend. We have. And Jesus announces. Oh what peace. We often forfeit. Oh what needless pain. We bear. All because. We do not carry.

[15:20] Everything. To God. In prayer. We need. To take everything. To God. In prayer. No matter. How small. No matter. How large. Nothing.

Is too trivial. For God. Our heavenly father. He wishes to be involved. In the entirety. Of our lives. The exciting. The chaotic. And the humdrum.

And boredom. Of everyday life. In fact. Let Christ. Into. All of your life. And there will be anything. But boring. I can certainly say that.

Over the last three years. And he will transform. Your lives. With. So let us.

Not carry on like. Martha and Mary. Let us. Have a fullness of faith. That acknowledges. Jesus Christ's power. In all the universe. Not just.

[16:17] Where he is. Physically present. In verse 23. Jesus tries to reassure. Mary. Sorry. Martha. That her brother. Will arise again.

But Martha's response. In verse 24. Is once more. To dilute the power of Christ. Yes. She declares. Her belief.

In Lazarus resurrection. In the last days. A teaching. The Hebrew scriptures. And a message of Christ. But Martha. Does not see.

The power. And presence. Of Jesus. Before her. Now. Instead of asserting. That Jesus. Could save Lazarus. From death. If he had been present. She now places.

His resurrection. To an undefined. Time in the future. To the time. When the last days. Will come. When Christ. Will return.

[17:13] But Martha. Does not stand alone here. Many. Complain. Of a lack of comfort. Or security. In their faith. They do not feel. The inward peace.

Which they desire. But how do we get. To that starting point. Goes back to the children's address. This morning. The starting point. Is the reading. And learning. Of scripture. And becoming familiar. With its promises. Such as Jesus declaration.

His response to Martha. In verse 25. I am the resurrection. And the life. Whoever believes in me. Though he die. Yet shall he live.

This enables us. To see more clearly. The hope. In which. Our faith. Rests. We can grasp. More firmly. Christ's love.

[18:07] And power. Towards us. In our lives. We are all human. We are frail. And weak. So we will. On occasions. Be like Martha.

With a partial knowledge. Of our saviour. So we must study. God's word. To grow. In faith. As Christians. As Paul guides us.

In Ephesians 3. 18-19. Have strength. To comprehend. With all the saints. What is the breadth. And length. And height. And depth. And to know the love of Christ.

That surpasses knowledge. That you may be filled. With all the fullness. Of God. By knowing. God's word. We will learn. Of God's saving plan.

For humanity. And know the full love. Of Christ. For us. Even to his death. At Calvary. Jesus.

[19:02] Now makes. The most direct. Emphatic. And positive. Statement. About himself. I am the resurrection. And the life. He then goes on.

In the second part. Of verses 25. And 26. Declare. The implications. Of that statement. Whoever believes in me. Though he die.

Yet shall he live. And everyone who lives. And believes in me. Shall never die. Jesus states. The power. Which he holds. Then goes on.

To explain. Each part. Of that statement. So let's look at Jesus. As a resurrection. For many. The story of Jesus. Ends on Good Friday. With his crucifixion. But that is to cut. The ending. From the film. It's to cut short.

[19:58] His earthly journey. And his death. Yes. Christ paid. The price of our sin. He paid the penalty. Which was deserved. Of us.

For our rebellion. Against God. Our individual sins. Which we. Each commit. Which has. Been part of man's nature.

Since man first. Chose to disobey God. Has plunged. All of humanity. Into death. Our sin. Separates us.

From a true. And proper relationship. With God. Christ. As a resurrection. Is the start. Of that new life. He's the only.

Means. To the new life. That we seek. It is not. In the material things. Of this world. It's not. In the fast cars. Designer. Clothings. Or the big house.

[20:52] It's not. Having a wife. Or husband. 2.5 kids. And a dog. It's not. Found. In some. Advertising.

Utopia. It is not. Gained. By our own efforts. As individuals. Or. As a group. In society. It is found. Only. In the risen Christ. By Christ's resurrection.

By his rising from the dead. Jesus paid the price. For. Our sins. He redeemed us. He had conquered the death. The penalty.

Of our sin. So. By his resurrection. He regenerates. All of humanity. As death came. By one man. By the sin of Adam.

So in Christ. By one man. We have a new life. As Paul writes. In 1 Corinthians 15. 21 to 22. For as by a man came death.

[21 : 50] By a man. Has come also. The resurrection. Of the dead. For as in Adam. All die. So also in Christ. Shall all be made alive. We were alienated.

From God. By the actions of Adam. But now in Christ. We stand in a right relationship. With God. We who believe in Christ. Who were lost.

Were dead. And far from God. Now live. We have a new life. And we have a life. In all its fullness. The starting point. Is Christ's resurrection. That we can. Come. To a new life. As Jesus states. At the end of verse 25.

Whoever believes in me. Though he die. Yet shall he live. We are raised from death. To eternal life. In Christ. Secondly.

[22 : 47] Jesus declares that. He is the life. A life. Everlasting. He is not offering. A continued. Earthly. Existence. Of three score and ten.

And if you are lucky. A few extra. He offers. A life eternal. Forever. With him. And with God. Our heavenly father.

In verse 26. He states. And everyone who lives. And believes in me. Shall never die. So yes. Our mortal bodies. Will become frail.

And will pass away. Our physical bodies. Will cease to be. But Calvin reminds us. That believers. Will never die. Because they are born.

Again in the spirit. Not of perishable seeds. In 1 Peter 1 to 23. We are reminded that. We have been born again.

[23 : 45] Not of perishable seed. But of imperishable. Through the living. And abiding word of God. If we think of the flowers.

Of the fields. Or the plants. Or gardens. The seed. They grow. The flower. And they die. But if we have life in Christ.

We have an imperishable seed. We will grow. We will flower. But we will know. We will not die. We will know eternal life.

Paul writes to encourage. In 2 Corinthians 4 and 16. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self. Is wasting away.

Our inner self. Is being renewed. Day by day. Our body ages. And dies. But our soul. Our inner self. Is renewed daily.

[24 : 42] It will never die. The Holy Spirit. Resides within each believer. Renewing them. And transforming them. Each day. God accepts us.

As we are. But he will transform us. By his Holy Spirit. Into an ever increasing. Christ likeness. A task.

That will continue. Either to the day. That we die. And go to glory with him. Or until Christ returns. No one. Is beyond God's grace.

No one. Is beyond redemption. No matter. No matter. How far. You may feel. You are from God. In his grace. He reaches out. To us.

Through the gift. Of his son. That whoever believes in him. As their saviour. Shall have new life. And have it. In abundance. There will be no limit.

[25 : 38] To that new life. We think of the characters. Of the Bible. We think of Abraham. Moses. David. All were sinners. Yet. We may regard them as saints.

Now I don't mean saints. As those canonised. By the Roman Catholic Church. But a person. Acknowledged as holy. Or virtuous. Virtuous. And regarding Christianity.

As being. In heaven. After death. At being. In glory with God. As J.C. Ryle wrote. Saints are not perfect angels.

But only converted sinners. They are sinners renewed. Changed. Sanctified. But they are yet sinners. If you wish.

That new life. That life. Unending with God. It is available. Through the acceptance of Christ. As your saviour. In closing his statement. Jesus asks Martha.

[26 : 40] If she believes. That he is a resurrection. And a life. And that whoever believes in him. Even though he dies. Will live. That they will. Not experience spiritual death.

But be with Christ. For eternity. Martha. The woman. Who had started the story. With a faith. Limiting. Christ's saving power. Acknowledges him.

In all his power. And all his glory. Martha declares. Yes Lord. I believe that you are the Christ. The son of God.

Who is coming into the world. What. An announcement. Her statement. Contains. Three great points. One. That Jesus was the Christ.

God's anointed. The Messiah. That the Jews. Had so long awaited. Two. That he was the son of God. That he was God incarnate.

[27 : 39] God in human form. 100% God. 100% man. And without sin. And three. That he was the promised redeemer.

Who would come. Into the world. He would bear the sins of the world. That the penalty. Of sin. Could be paid. For our sake.

God made him. To be sin. Who knew no sin. So that in him. We might become righteous. Before God. That through him.

He would once more. Once more. We can be in a right relationship. With God. That new life. Is a correct relationship. With God.

For eternity. Is still an offer. To each of us today. It's still an offer. For those looking for a new life. Christ is a resurrection.

[28 : 36] And he offers new life. Invite him into your life. And he assures you. Life with him forever more. Let's pray.

Amen. Father. Father. Father. We thank you. Father. We thank you. For the assurance. That you are the resurrection. And the life.

That you. Have risen from the dead. And conquered death. Death. That came into the world. Because of our disobedience.

Towards you. We give you thanks. That Jesus Christ. Is also the life of our lives. That through him. We can have life eternal. And once more. Be. In a proper standing with God. For those of us. That seek the new life.

[29 : 32] For those of us. Who are. Tired. Weary. Require renewal. We ask that you. Pour out your grace.

Upon them. That your Holy Spirit. Will soften. And move their hearts. That they may come to accept. Christ as their Savior.

And no renewal. In you. These things we ask. Through Christ our Lord and Savior. Your Son. Amen.