

I Am The Resurrection And The Life

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[0:00] Now, I want everybody to look at their watch just for a minute so that you've taken care! of that obligation. I do want you to know it means nothing. I just tell you that ahead of time this morning. John and I conferred together. I want to say a word of thanks to the blessing of seeing what God has done here over the years. I remember when John was in junior high and I coached him. And where is John? Where did you go, John? He stepped out for a second. Well, John was a coaching opportunity. And it's been a joy to watch him grow. And he has a sensitivity to the supremacy of the Scriptures that I am blessed by. The reason that we conferred together here was to check on our lotto numbers. No. I, you know, sorry. Don't send me an email. I know better.

Okay. He asked me, Pastor, should we sing one song or two? And I said, two. That does not mean I will preach a shorter sermon. But it means that I join you together in the delight of singing the praises of Christ. And by the way, I love to listen to you guys when you're really into it. You know, I, you know, when, when, when the Word of God and the Spirit of God connects, listen carefully. People who love Jesus don't mind blowing it out. You know? And if, if you don't like to sing, it may be one of the reasons might be that you don't know who you're singing about.

Now, it can be we're not singing a song you know. I understand all that. But there are broad principles here. So that's a, that's a free sermon unrelated to the one I will preach. John chapter 11. And before we go into the Word together, I want to stop and pray for Pastor Andrew. He is preaching this morning. And I, you can, how many of you have already received texts from your children that are in Jamaica to let them, no texts, no Facebook messages or anything?

Oh, you don't have a phone. They don't have a phone. That's right. Okay. So we're going to pray for Pastor Andrew. I was going to tell you to text him. You can text Caleb and Charity and let them know that we're praying for Pastor Andrew as he preaches. And by the way, like I said, you're multitasking. You're praying for Pastor Andrew and you're going to pray for me as well. Let's pray together for both of us. Our Father God, for us this morning, praying in advance of preaching and praying during the preaching of the Word of God is not a habit, but it is an expression of our confidence in you who answer prayer and who choose to use frail vessels that the glory of God may be clearly seen to be of you and not of us. And so prayer pleads with you to do a work in the life of the one that you have chosen as an instrument to communicate the Word and also in the hearts of those who hear the Word. Pray for Pastor Andrew this morning that he might know the power of the Spirit of God and bringing the Word of God with clarity and passion and with simplicity.

[4:07] And that those things might be true of me as well as we open up this passage this morning and revel in the sweetness of the Lord Jesus Christ who we who know Jesus will someday see and be satisfied in.

Pray for those that are here today whose hearts are wounded and grieved by particular challenges in their life that in the flesh find no remedy.

That this morning the truth and the comfort of the gospel might be sufficient and that they would leave this morning with hearts that are lifted up and encouraged and strengthened by the reality that you who gained victory over death have not left them abandoned in this moment.

I have no doubt that there are those here also Lord Jesus today that do not know you. And it is my plea that today would be the day of salvation for them.

Lord we ask that we who know you would have our hearts warmed by the sweetness of your truth and your person and we would long for the day that we will see you face to face.

[5:23] We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Well about two Fridays ago Judith and I enjoyed a wonderful violin recital and one of the things that actually made that recital even more enjoyable was the fact that before each of the little musical pieces that Olivia played on the violin she gave just a little bit of explanation so that that as we were listening we could kind of track along.

I gotta admit to you that I am not a violin affectionado. It's not one of those things that I listen to on a normal basis. Beautiful as it is I just don't listen to music at all generally other than you singing. And having Olivia just explain each little piece it really helped. I could track the progress and she gave little hints of what was coming and it was a blessing to me and I want to do something similar to that in that I want to tell you ahead of time what the central focus of this morning's message is.

By the way that focus is one that John tells us clearly in John chapter 20 verse 31 he explains he says here's why I'm writing this book.

Does anybody know what it is? How many of you know? Just offhand by the way you've been here with me long enough that you know here's why John wrote his book that you might know that Jesus is the son of God and that believing on him you might have what?

[7:02] Eternal life everlasting life. And so I want you to keep that kind of in the back of your mind that as we're working our way through this account there in John chapter 11 I would encourage you to grab a Bible if you don't have one there in pew in front of you is a Bible and you can follow along there's something to be said by putting your eyes on the text.

So I want you to look at John chapter 11 we're going to pick up there in verse 17 and I'm going to read a little bit of this text and get started and then we'll work our way through the outline that I've established here. Look at 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. 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'd 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.

[8:39] 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.

Now with that passage in mind let's kind of step into the first little piece of it and recognize that what takes place in the early part of our text is that faith frames challenges with past blessings.

We find here in the account that Jesus arrives at Bethany and when he arrives there as it says there in verse 17 he is told that Lazarus has already been dead for four days.

Now the time frame may be a little confusing to us because you know you think of the circumstances surrounding this and we may forget that for the man to travel as a messenger from where he was in Bethany to where Jesus was across the Jordan took about a day roughly and you'll remember that that travel brought him into Jesus' presence and he told Jesus that hey listen I want you to know that Lazarus is sick.

The reality of the fact is that perhaps somewhere in the near time around when this man left Bethany at Mary and Martha's encouragement to travel to Jesus Lazarus actually died.

[10:03] The man did not know that he's trucking along on his journey and he arrives in Jesus' presence and you remember what Jesus did instead of going immediately to help he waited two more days.

Then he left. Jesus arrives in town and here he discovers or he is told that Lazarus has been dead for four days already. Now we find also in the passage that it tells us in verse 18 that 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.

Just a little side note here can you imagine in our culture when someone passes away the average consolation or the time that we put into that is what? I mean you'll go to calling hours isn't that right? How many of you have taken a three day break from your job just to kind of sit around in the home of someone who lost a loved one? That doesn't happen. In the ancient culture events were not run by a clock on the wrist or a watch on the wrist that you kept track of.

Things happened in days. And here friends had gathered to spend time with Mary and Martha and just to be in their presence. Not to kind of blather on but just to let them know we care about you and we're here because we love you.

[11:23] In the middle of that we find that Jesus arrives and I want you to recognize here that when Jesus does arrive it is Martha not Mary that goes out to meet him.

I want you to look at the passage here just for a moment and mark what it says here. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went and met him but Mary remained seated in the house.

Now if you have worked your way through the synoptic gospels you will remember that Mary and Martha have more than one incident of record in the scriptures. Isn't that right? And I wonder whether or not you can kind of refresh your memory just for a moment and think about the circumstances when Jesus came and visited in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus and they're kind of doing the dinner deal and what is Mary doing?

She's just sitting there listening to Jesus and what is Martha doing? She is all about being the perfect hostess in the moment I mean the food is coming to the table and you know it's just and she's kind of really wrapped up in the details of it and actually she gets a little frustrated with her sister and she goes to Jesus and says hey do something about her.

What does Jesus say to Martha at that moment? How many of you know? We have this encouragement from Jesus to Martha hey you're kind of wound up over details back up Mary is the one that is choosing the better things in the moment and so we may find ourselves having this mindset that of the Mary Martha grouping the more spiritual one is who?

[13:11] Mary she's the one who's got it all together she's the good sister who has this discerning spirit and really is on top of things spiritually we find here that when you read the text you discover that it's Martha not Mary that goes out to meet Jesus there's no indication that Jesus called her and it would seem that on the basis of her desire to be around the Lord Jesus that she went now we're going to get into this a little later next lesson when we look at the further part where Mary actually responds but I'm going to tell you ahead of time that both Martha and Mary say essentially the same thing to Jesus in their first moment of meeting him which is you know what if you'd been here my brother wouldn't have died there is a difference and we're going to look at that in greater detail next pass there's a difference between the way in which

Martha fleshes out that statement and the statement that Mary made Mary seems to be a little more terse and a little more challenged by what had taken place here's Martha she comes she says Lord if you had been here verse 21 my brother would not have died now look at verse 22 but even now I know that whatever you ask from God God will give you so I want to take just a moment and encourage you to recognize that when you read this account of Martha you understand that Martha evidently had made spiritual strides between the account that we find in Luke chapter 10 yes and this moment in John where many months later there is another incident where Jesus comes in contact with these two sisters and it is evident that the admonition and the counsel of Christ at that earlier moment had a spiritual impact and framed the life and thinking of Martha so I want you to recognize that one of the characteristics of a person who is a child of God is that in the face of the counsel and encouragement of Christ there is what there is good chance of spiritual growth isn't that right and so

I want to encourage you that you allow the corrections that Christ brings into your life to move you along like it moved Martha along I want you also to recognize here that Martha understood that Jesus could have helped you look there in verse 21 if you've been here you could have done something and that recognition is based on the fact that she had seen Jesus do all kinds of miracles already this was the John 11 passage is substantially later in the public ministry of Christ that went on for three years how many of you know what a harmony of the gospels is raise your hands if you know what a harmony of the hello okay let's do it a different way I asked the question wrong how many of you would like to know what a harmony of the gospels is so you can use it profitably for your Bible study right I mean hey listen to me the more you know about Jesus the better off you are everybody said amen to that one right I mean you don't want to say it quietly because we're Baptists but it's like yeah the more you know about Jesus the better off you are okay so a harmony of the gospels is a thing that kind of puts things together so you can see how it happened and by this time Jesus had done all kinds of miracles and Martha knew about them and she had complete confidence that hey you know what he can do this and so we put it this way Martha had confidence in what she knew that Jesus had already done and so here she is in verse 22 even now I know that whatever you ask from God God will give you I want to recognize that by this time also Jesus had actually already raised two other individuals from the dead this wasn't his first pass and she must

have known about the widow of Nain she must have known about Jairus' daughter and she had every reason to believe that even though Jesus could have kept him from dying here was a moment and Jesus could respond to her request

I think it's impressive that in the face of the overwhelming heartache of having lost her brother that we find here is Martha trusting Jesus in the moment and we do well when we find ourselves in those moments when our life seems to just be overwhelmed and circumstances are leading us to the point of just absolute despair we remember this the things that Christ has already done for us give us great comfort and confidence that the moment he is in is not a moment of abandonment he won't leave us there let me tell you something this is off the notes if he's willing to die for you there is nothing else that he will set aside there is nothing that he will neglect in the moment of your greatest need he will care for you in absolute perfection and when you get to heaven you're going to say wow okay and so when you find yourself at this moment just kind of like overwhelmed by the heartache of the moment

[18:51] I want you to remember look at the cross he's done the biggest thing that needed to be done for you it's settled all the others are small details and trust him having taken care of the big one to take care of the other minor details and not disappoint you remember what Christ has done and trust him despite the moment you know we have no greater cause for hope in the face of trial other than the cross and the empty tomb I love the words of the song and I kind of just recite them here for a moment though Satan should buffet though trials should come let this blessed assurance control that Christ has regarded my helpless estate and has shed his own blood for my soul that satisfies the issue and I appreciate the fact that here is Martha her brother's dead they had sent off a messenger saying you need to come our brother's dying and he died and here's

Jesus and Martha says hey I'm glad you're here now listen I know that if you ask it'll get done that's faith isn't it nothing's wrong with asking nothing's wrong with asking and so here is Martha kind of putting it out to Jesus you know what if you just bring it up your father will take care of it right now I want you to recognize secondly that faith rests on God's promise look there at verse 23 Jesus said to her your brother will rise again now how many of you have recognized in the rearview mirror that what was going on in your life you didn't understand quite as well as you should have at the moment how many of you have been there before it's like what was he doing and here is Jesus waits four days Lazarus is dead stinking and Jesus shows up and Martha says hey listen if you want to do this you can lift him up and Jesus goes right into it in verse 23 your brother will rise again instead of grasping the sweetness of this truth here's

Martha who took comfort in what she knew from the Old Testament rather than what she knew about Jesus just kind of a moment here for you to recognize this here is Martha thinking accurately theologically about the fact that that the scriptures made it clear that the dead would rise again and I have to tell you that I think at the moment there in verse 24 Martha says to him I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day in the face of the heartache and the challenge of the death that she was kind of enduring and struggling with she kind of reminded herself of the promises in the Old Testament so Martha's faith rested in what she knew God had promised I don't know if you've done that most of us here have lost someone that we dearly love and that loss leaves a hole it leaves a deep abiding sense of loss and yet when we stand at the empty grave or when we go out alone and stand out there with a father or a mother or a husband or a wife one of the things that we take comfort in is we know the reality of the promises of

God to assure us of the reality of the resurrection and we take comfort in that I want you to think with me just for a moment of a couple different passages in the Old Testament where the issue of the resurrection is undeniably clear Job chapter 19 go ahead and turn to that one because I think there's benefit that Job was in a pretty difficult and burdensome place here's what it says in Job chapter 19 verse 25 and 26 for I know that my redeemer lives and at the last he will stand upon the earth and after my skin has been thus destroyed yet in my flesh I shall see God I'm going to see him myself in person in my flesh look at another passage if you will

Psalms 17 verse 15 Psalm 17 verse 15 as for me Psalm 17 verse 15 as for me I shall behold your face in righteousness when I awake I shall be satisfied in your likeness so is this the end of life every one of you here unless Jesus comes back can be assured of this you will die it's a fact is that the end of the story the Bible says categorically no what will happen is that you will rise again and for the believer we have the comfort and the encouragement that when we rise again we are going to be different than we were prior to our death and we are going to be different than

[24:41] I awake I shall be satisfied with your likeness it brings to mind a passage in 1 John chapter 3 where it says this it does not yet appear what we shall be but when we see him we will be what what does it say we'll be like him now let me give you a little side note on that one of the blessings that we know from the scriptures particularly in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18 is that as we grow in knowing Christ through the scriptures we grow to be more like him as a result of seeing him knowing him and growing to love him now listen to me if you're here professing to be a believer and you cannot see any evidence of the progressive transformation of being who you used to be to being who you someday will be by grace you probably ought to double check your birth certificate because here's a characteristic of those who are the children of

Listen to what it says in Daniel chapter 12, verse 2. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life.

And so here we are looking at this passage in John chapter 11, and Jesus says to Martha, Hey, listen, your brother's going to rise again. She says, Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know it's going to happen at the end.

So here you are today, 21st century, and I've got to tell you that I join you in not always knowing exactly what God is doing in my life, but there's wisdom in holding on to the promises that are clear. Treasure truth that He's already given you and allow that to be the comfort that brings you through the moment and heartache that you're enduring. I love what follows now in verse 25.

Can you imagine her waiting for Jesus to arrive? We send off the messengers. He needs to get here. Get quick. Lazarus is going to die. And he dies.

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's going to happen in the resurrection. I got you. Jesus stops in this very emotional moment to state an unbelievably profound truth.

I want you to mark that and understand that. In a moment, Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. He was going to perform an undeniable miracle that was going to be the talk of Jerusalem.

[30:24] Against Martha's faith in the future of the resurrection, Jesus announced that, I am the resurrection and the life. Jesus had already proclaimed that He had the power of resurrection in His hand.

He'd done that a number of different times. We're not going to look at it this morning, but Mark, in John 5, verse 21, He made it clear. The Father has given me the power of the resurrection and judgment.

I have that right. In John 5, verse 25 through 29, again that thing comes out. In John 6, verse 39 and 40, the reality of Christ being the one who has the power of the resurrection had been made very clear.

And here is Jesus challenging Martha to move from faith in the abstract and to step into having a very real and personal relationship with Him.

Well, what Jesus made clear to Martha was that the truth of the resurrection that she was hoping in and the truth of life that she was actually hoping in was inseparable from Himself.

[31 : 29] There was no disconnect. There's this abstract theological truth that you kind of hang your head on. No, no, that's not the issue. It is actually apart from Jesus, there is no reality.

There is no hope. There is no certainty. There's nothing. Yes, it's true. Apart from Jesus, there's nothing.

Apart from Jesus, there's nothing. And here is Jesus standing in the face of death. And by the way, why is it that we die?

What's the answer? Death came because of sin. That's why. The reason that death came into the world is because men rebelled against the holy word and instruction of God and they chose to go their own rebellious way rather than to submit and worship God.

Death is the outcome. And here is Jesus in the face of all of that saying something stunningly true. He says, listen, I want you to understand that this business of the resurrection is not some kind of abstract theological truth that sits over here and, well, yeah, I believe in it someday.

[32 : 49] It's out there and it's okay. He says, no, no, no. I want you to understand all of truth is wrapped up in me. Me. All other religious systems that you can look at and consider offer a plan and some hope of self-improvement.

That's a fact. Regardless of what that system is, it proposes that at the end of the day, the thing that needs to be done is you need to go about this process of making some improvements and changes in your life and you listen to all that's going on in the world around us.

And I've got to tell you, this last week has been profoundly troubling. I'll tell you one of the reasons it's particularly troubling. It's troubling because in the face of the absolute chaos of our culture, instead of hearing leaders speak truth, I hear leaders who are just playing to their particular audience and are interested in continuing to magnify the turmoil in our culture for their own benefit. And here is Jesus who says, listen, step beyond the abstract of the fact that someday in the by and by there will be a resurrection when you die.

He says, I am the resurrection and the life. So let me put it this way for you looking there at verse 26. He says, everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

[34 : 28] Put your finger on the next little sentence, would you please? Put your finger on that. Do you believe this? What's going on?

Why is that there? I want you to understand that what happened in this passage is that having made this profound theological statement about the fact, listen, I am the resurrection.

I am the life. I am the solution for your heartache. I am the remedy for your brokenness. I am the only one who can heal the emptiness and the hardness in your life.

Nobody else can do it. I love what Jesus did. Looking in the eyes of Martha, he says, do you believe this? Do you believe this?

And I got to tell you that to apply it in our own day in life, I got to have you understand this, Jesus puts us on the spot to either harden and rebel against him or to worship. Do you understand that?

[35 : 34] Every moment of our day, in all the challenges that we face, over and over again, the issue is going to be this. Am I going to worship him as the only one who is the absolute center of my life and the one who will satisfy or am I going to step away and pursue my own idolatrous ambitions and interests?

What was Jesus saying in this passage? You look at it and he says here, I'm it. I'm the one. I'm the resurrection of life. I'm it.

I'm it. I'm all there is. And when the Lord of glory, the creator and sustainer of the universe, says that I am the one and I am it, it puts the soul of man on notice and forces that person to do one of two things.

Either to say, yes, you are the Lord of glory and the one who is all that I need or it drives a person forward in their hardness and rebellion to say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I hear what you're saying, but I'm really more interested in myself.

How did Mary respond? How did Mary respond? Look at the passage in verse 27.

[36:58] She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ. What's that? The Savior.

I believe you're the Savior. You're my Savior. I wonder whether you can say that this morning. Do you follow that? Here is Jesus speaking to you and in essence, he's saying, do you believe this? I am the resurrection and the life. One of the things I chuckle at is individuals who will tell me that they believe Jesus was a historical person and that he was a pretty good guy.

But, you know, that's it. My answer to that is, let me tell you something, you can't be a pretty good guy and a liar at the same time. I mean, if what he says is true, it has to be believed or it has to be outright, outrightly rejected and turned away from.

Do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life? The answer is, yes, I do. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Savior, and you're mine. I believe that you're God.

[38:04] And that had to be an unbelievable stretch for the Jewish mind to look at someone in physical form and say, you are God.

Because in the Old Testament, the thing that it hammered over and over again is no man has, no man has ever seen God at any time. And here is Jesus saying, I am the resurrection and the life. And Martha's confession, significant one, you are the Savior, you are God, and there's a third one, the one who is coming into the world.

Three things I want you to see in this little statement that Martha makes. Number one, there is the confession of the fact that Jesus is the only Savior. Number two, that Jesus is the God that we are to worship.

And number three, He is the one who has been promised. Now I want you to think about this for a moment. What's the value in believing? Why did Martha rattle off three things? Yeah, I got it.

[39:14] I know who you are. I'm good. Why did she say these things this way? Here's what it says in Scripture. These things are given for our instruction. The reason these words are penned is so that we can be well informed of the reality of who Jesus really is and reminded this morning.

He is the one who God has promised and God has satisfied His promise in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me tell you something.

If you are sitting here this morning as a person who knows Christ, you who enjoy that blessed relationship can hang all the burdens and all the heartaches and all the difficulties and all the uncertainties of your life on the fact that the God you and I know and serve keeps all His promises. I know how the story ends. About a week and a half ago I was getting tried for shoes. You know, I got just a little walking and stuff and we were having a conversation and another man sitting there and we ended up talking about heaven.

You know, it's something I like to do and we're talking about heaven and I ended up saying, well, when I die, I'm going there. He says, well, I hope so. I thought, I said, I'm going there. He said, no, well, I hope so too for me and I said, no, I know for sure I'm going.

[40:32] He looked at me like, well, you arrogant guy. He didn't say that but he was like, what do you mean? I said, well, I got to tell you the reason I'm going to heaven when I die is not because I'm a good guy.

I'm a skunk. Now, I'm not as skunky as I used to be. Thank the Lord. But the reason I'm getting to heaven is because I trust in the finished work of Christ who died on the cross, paid the penalty for my sins and I came as a bankrupt, ruined sinner and say, Jesus, I need you.

And if God keeps his promises and gives salvation to the broken and repentant, I got to tell you, God will also keep his promise and he will bring judgment and discipline on all those who harden their hearts against the truth and deny it.

Do you understand the importance that God keeps promises? It's profound. And so, here is Mary with this huge theological confession.

You're the Savior. Can you say that this morning? You're the Savior. You're God and you're the one who keeps your promises.

[41:50] There is no time in a believer's life that these three truths are not supremely significant. and I encourage you this morning, if you are here and know Christ as your Savior, I want you to hold on to those.

I want you to believe in those. I want you to delight in them. I want you to be satisfied. To be able to say by faith, you are my Savior and you are my God and you're the one that has been sent who is coming into the world and you have fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament and you will fulfill the promises yet to be done.

And if you're here today and do not know Christ as your Savior, I want to plead with you. What the Scriptures make undeniably clear is that the same one who came to be the Savior of the world by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins will also be the judge of the whole earth.

and he who was willing to die to satisfy the wrath of God for your unrighteous wicked heart will be the one who looks you in the eye and says, and what were you doing refusing what I did for you? And he would be cast out into outer darkness. To preach the word of God and to lift up the glory of Christ is to put people on the spot of saying yes or no to Christ.

[43 : 28] Isn't that right? There it is. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. And the question is, do you believe in him or do you deny him?

Let's close in prayer. Without anybody looking around this morning, I want to just take a moment and ask you to think quietly where you are.

Do I know Christ as my personal Savior? Or am I denying him at this moment and turning my face against him? If you're a believer and you're here this morning and you know Christ as your personal Savior, I want you to hang on to those three truths.

He's the Savior of the world. He's your God. And he's the one who's coming into the world answering promise and prophecy. If you're here and you do not know Christ, I would plead with you this morning in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

That means coming to the point of recognizing that your sin has separated you from God and your sin will someday be judged. and God sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for that sin on the cross and he offers salvation to whosoever will believe.

[44 : 58] And right where you sit, you can say, I need Jesus as my Savior. I understand the burden and the blackness and the darkness and the hopelessness of my heart has no remedy in my own improvement.

only Jesus can save me. Call upon his name and believe in him. Father, we pray for your work among us this morning that we who know Christ delight in the Lord Jesus and those who are here that do not are drawn to the sweetness of the gospel and the truth in the Lord Jesus.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.