

# Death and Life

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 24 October 2021

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's now turn to God's Word and turn to John chapter 11. John chapter 11.

You can read verses 1 down to verse 45 of the chapter. John chapter 11. Let's hear the Word of God.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord of ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

Therefore his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.

The Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

[ 1 : 15 ] And after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he, and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.

But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then his disciples said, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death.

But they thought that he had spoken of taking a rest and sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. Then I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe.

[ 2 : 18 ] Nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Then when Jesus came, he found he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off, And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. But Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

[ 3 : 30 ] Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when they had she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister, secretly saying, The Master has come, and calleth for thee.

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then, which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in his spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him?

They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him. Some of them said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died?

[ 4 : 50 ] Jesus therefore again groaning himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh. He has been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto you thee?

If I wouldst believe, I shouldst see the glory of God. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou heardest me always. For because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

When he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes.

[ 5 : 50 ] And his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loosen, and let him go. Amen. We give praise to God for his holy, his perfect word.

Let's again send to God's praise, this time singing from Psalm 121. Psalm 121. Again, of course, a psalm which, those of us who know the Lord, a precious psalm to us.

The reality that it's only from our Lord and him alone we have life and we have hope. Psalm 121. I to the hills will lift mine eyes. From whence do I come my need? My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth have made.

Psalm 121. Psalm 121. Psalm 121. Psalm 121. The whole psalm to God's praise. Psalm 131.

Allip tiefed world, He bear his name. Holy Spirit. Thy fruit till not heads, thine, nor weth, be slumbered at thee.

[ 7 : 20 ] He was evad, kid, Israel, he stammered on our streets.

The darkly kings, the darkly kings, on thy right hand astray.

The moon by night, he shall not smite, nor ever stand by thee.

The dark shall kill, thy soul he shall preserve thee from all earth.

And for thy holy covenant, God ye forever will.

[ 8 : 43 ] Let's turn back for a short time to the chapter we had, John chapter 11. John chapter 11. I'm taking in the whole account that we have of Lazarus.

John 11. For the sake of a text, we can perhaps take verse 25. John 11, verse 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

I was going to say just now, continuing on in our series, but it's been a month since we last were in this series. But we're looking slowly together over the months at some of the I am sayings of Jesus in the book of John.

And here we are with our second or third time together. Looked previously at Jesus, the good shepherd. I am the good shepherd. Here we are today looking at Jesus stating so beautifully that he is the resurrection and the life.

[ 9 : 58 ] We said before, but just to quickly recap. Every one of the I am sayings we find in John, when Jesus states it, the place he's in, the geography, the actual location he says it in, always somehow corresponds to what he's saying.

When he says that he is the bread of life, he declared that the day after and to the same crowd that he previously fed at the feeding of the 5,000. When he declared that he was the light of the world, he said so under the great lampstands of the temple.

And here we find in our text this afternoon, Jesus declaring he is the resurrection and he is the life. And perhaps we could quite easily argue this is the most clear example of Jesus speaking into the situation he's finding himself in.

At the very point where we see the reality, the full reality of darkness and of destruction that sin brings into the world. At the very place where the death of a loved one is still so raw and so real.

Here we see the great I am simply beautifully declaring that he is the resurrection and he is the life.

[ 11 : 17 ] For a short time this afternoon, let's look at this section, verses 1 down to verse 45, 44, 45, under three very general headings.

First of all, looking verses 1 down to verse 17 where we see the land of the dead. The land of the dead. When we see the Lord of life and then we see the love and the power of the Lord.

The land of the dead, the Lord of life and the love and power of the Lord. First of all, looking roughly verses 1 down to verse 17. We begin, of course, this section in verse 1 with the announcement of the illness of Lazarus.

We can note that John then gives us context of who Lazarus says, of course. He tells us that Jesus knew Lazarus, he knew his sisters. In fact, we see later on that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters.

We see that in verse 2. Mary anointed Jesus. He knew them. He spent time with them before. Now we see, of course, plenty and in many instances throughout Scripture, throughout John itself, where we see Jesus being brought those who are sick, who are ill, and he's asked to heal them and asked to save them.

[ 12 : 37 ] We see parents crying out for loved ones. We see parents crying out for their children. We see friends bringing other friends to the feet of Jesus asking for healing.

But here in this chapter, we see something different taking place. This is the first time we see Jesus being asked to heal someone he had met before. To heal someone who was, humanly speaking, one of his friends.

One he loved. See that in verse 3. Therefore, our sisters went to him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. The one you love, he's sick.

Dear friends, we've looked before, and I know you've heard over the many, many years, the reality, the true reality that we worship our risen Savior, an eternal Savior.

And here we see the eternal Savior, who's existed for all eternity, in perfect glory, perfect love, perfect joy, perfect unity, the Father, of Spirit, an eternity of perfection.

[ 13 : 49 ] We then see that Jesus, that second person of Trinity, entering into his own world. And here we find our eternal Lord coming face to face with the reality that sin has brought into his own creation.

The reality of our glorious Savior, the one through whom all things were made and all things were made for. We see him here coming face to face with death.

The ultimate working out of sin in this world. The illness and the death of one who he knew, a one who he loved.

Dear friends, we can't think, and we mustn't think for a second, that Jesus is somehow distant. He's somehow removed from his people. Somehow removed, as it were, from his creation.

When he was on earth, it wasn't as if he was just somehow stoically moving day by day, forward and more forward, towards the end. He wasn't just here to complete his mission, as it were, and not care about those around him.

[ 14 : 55 ] No, that's not what we see. We see Jesus in his time on earth. He was one amongst his people. Like us, in all ways, apart from sin. And we'll see that in more detail, God willing, this evening.

He had an emotional life. He felt as we feel. His friend is at death's door. All that being said, we then see a strange response on the face of it in verse 4.

Verse 4. He's been told his friend's sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Of course, what we know, that those around him did not know, is that it would not lead to Lazarus' ongoing death at that time.

He would, of course, be resurrected. But first, indeed, he must die. Now, there's not enough time today to dig more into this and to dig into the indications of this verse.

[ 16 : 01 ] But perhaps yourselves have heard this verse being put to Christians personally. Friends, non-believing friends, have used actually this verse at least twice, not three times, in context.

Of saying, well, if Jesus knows everything, then how can he say in verse 4 that sickness is not unto death? People use this verse to show, well, Scripture is just littered of contradictions.

Full of it. If we have more time together, we could do a series on the contradictions of Scripture. We could suppose the contradictions of Scripture and see that every single contradiction, every single one people like to grab onto and show us, well, the Bible is obviously talking rubbish.

You all believe in all this nonsense. They're not true. Every contradiction we find again and again that people use to try and disprove Scripture, almost all of them are solved when you actually read the verse in context.

Of course, we know that verses are man-made. The verses are not inspired. The verses are given to us. We praise God for that. But they're not inspired. If you read the whole chapter as a chapter, things, of course, make sense.

[ 17 : 11 ] Because there's not enough time today to delve into why verse 4 truly is not a contradiction, but it's safe to say that the reality of what Jesus is saying here is true.

If the sickness wasn't unto death, Lazarus would, of course, rise again. He would give him life again. It's all for the glory of God.

The Son of God might be glorified, whereby. We'll come back to that as we look through these verses in a short while. Why verse 4 is so important for us. Scripture always interprets Scripture.

And even in our own readings of Scripture, when we come across hard passages and difficult passages, Scripture always interprets Scripture. As we read on, we see that verse 4 isn't saying what perhaps we might think it says, first of all.

Verse 4 is telling us a great truth. If the sickness wasn't unto death, Lazarus would not remain dead. He would indeed rise again. He would indeed live again very shortly.

[ 18 : 17 ] Dear friends, never be discouraged as those around you try and point out the inadequacies of Scripture, the contradictions of Scripture. The truth is, every one, every issue we find, they can and they are solved when we read through Scripture as a whole.

Scripture interprets Scripture. We praise God for his living word. Brings us to verse 5.

We're asked again, we see again the reminder in verse 5. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

We were told in verse 2 that the one who, verse 3, sorry, that the one who Jesus loved is sick, that he loved Lazarus. Now we're told again in verse 5 that he loved Martha.

He loved Mary. He loved Lazarus. And when something is repeated for us in Scripture, it's there for our purpose. Not a single word of Scripture is wasted. And this repetition is here for us to understand.

[ 19 : 16 ] Why is verse 5 telling us this? Why are we told again the love of Jesus for the sisters and for the brother? Because of what's about to take place.

Because in a short time we're about to hear of the death of Lazarus. We're about to see the raw emotion of two mourning sisters. As we grieve the loss of our beloved brother.

We're about to see the full raw emotion and pain that death brings into the world. And we have to be reminded that he loved this family.

He loved his family. Their sisters are about to lose their dear brother. Lazarus is about to die. He's about to enter away and to leave this place.

As far as they knew, that was the end. I can stand up here and tell you what I'm about to say. But only you yourselves have gone through this know for certain in your own lives.

[ 20 : 21 ] But when life is at its darkest point. When you're faced with a situation we find in this section. Grief. Grief.

Death. Illness. Whatever the situation might well be in your life. Just now or perhaps this coming week. It's at these times the truth of verse 5 needs to be repeated for us.

The reality of verse 5 shines through. In our darkest times. In our most distressing times. It's then we have to be reminded of the love of Jesus for his beloved people.

That the times we are so distressed. And we find ourselves in such darkness. It's then we are so liable to forget that reality. Scripture reminds us that as we're about to find out the death of Lazarus.

About to hear about the reality of the true nature of sin and of death in the world. There's a pause and we're reminded that Jesus loved this family. And nothing stops that love.

[ 21 : 25 ] Not even the death of one who he loved. Dear friends. It's verse 5 we cling on to isn't it? Brothers and sisters. We cling on to verse 5 in our darkest of days. That truth that we have a saviour.

Who knows. And who loves his people. The next question I have to ask is in verse 6. Why then did he wait so long?

He knows Lazarus is dying. When he had heard therefore that he was sick. He abode two days still. Jesus heard he was sick. And waited two days longer before he went to Lazarus.

Of course Lazarus' illness would have led. We see that to his death. Before Christ arrived. So when Jesus arrived. Lazarus had been dead for four days.

And scripture tells us this exactly. Why do we have to know? Why is it important for us to know that Lazarus had been dead for four days when Christ arrived? Again there's no wasted words in scripture.

[ 22 : 31 ] We're here today to learn about the reality that we worship a Lord who is the resurrection. Who is the life. Why then the scripture gave us this precise timeline of four days before he arrived at the grave of Lazarus?

We know for certain that at the time the Jews of that area, the Jews of that day, they had a belief that was unscriptural.

But they had a cultural belief as we also have many beliefs that are unscriptural but are cultural. They believed that the body of the soul of the deceased would as it were hover, be present in the area for three days.

For three days there were still hope. For three days there were still hope that this person might just come back to life somehow by themselves as it were.

The spirit might enter back into the body. But after three days that was it done. There was no more hope for them. Again, not scriptural but they believed that in the culture of the time.

[ 23 : 37 ] We see Christ arriving when the fourth day. All hope was gone. Even by their own cultural standards, all hope was gone.

The third day had passed. Lazarus was now dead and he wasn't coming back. There was no more hope for him. And then we see Jesus arriving. The fourth day.

A pure demonstration of the power of the Lord's resurrection. Only he would raise Lazarus back from the dead.

If he arrived perhaps a day or two earlier, they might say, well Lazarus, the spirit came back into him and gave him life. They might rely on their own man-made beliefs to help them understand what took place. But now they only see Jesus in his full power and his full glory as the Lord of the resurrection.

As he declares Lazarus to live again. Christ will receive all the glory. And of course the disciples we see are nervous.

[ 24 : 40 ] Understandably they're anxious at the idea of Jesus going back to the place where they had faced trouble before. In verse 8, the disciples said unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee and goest thou.

For thinking, Jesus, why are you going back there for? They tried to kill you before. You're going back again. Here again we see just a glimpse, do we not? A glimpse as to the reality and the power of the I am who is speaking here in these verses.

See in verse 7 and verse 8, the disciples are worried, humanly worried, that Jesus might be attacked and stoned by his enemies. But Christ of course, he knew the timeline.

Jesus knew that his end would not come until the cross. But despite the attacks and the possible attacks of the enemies, despite the threats of being stoned and being captured, that that would not take place until the end was there.

He, as we see, was walking in light in verse 9. The disciples didn't understand that quite yet. But each and every day they were walking with their Lord by getting one step closer to the end.

[ 25 : 56 ] And this indeed was or would be their last journey ever to this place. Their last journey to Judea. The disciples still didn't fully understand, of course, what they were about to witness.

In verses 9 down to verse 13, Jesus explained to them that, yes, he is asleep, as it were. He must go to wake him out of his sleep. And the disciples, they're just not getting it.

And perhaps we're often quite hard on disciples. We think, well, how can they not get it? Well, put ourselves in the same position. We'd be the exact same as them. We'd be just as ignorant and just as clueless as they seem to be, wouldn't we?

And in verse 14, Jesus says to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. Verse 15 might then take us by surprise.

How can it be good for them? How can it be good for the sakes of the disciples that they would now see this dead man rise? Verse 15, I'm glad for your sake that I was not there.

[ 27 : 02 ] How can Jesus say that? How can Jesus say that he's glad for the disciples' sakes that he wasn't there to keep Lazarus alive? Why is that such importance to disciples?

After all, did Jesus not just say that he loved Lazarus? It's the one who he loved. In verse 5, we're told that. Well, he did love Lazarus. But the disciples had to see the reality of the one they followed.

We see, we said just now, the disciples didn't quite understand who they're with. They didn't quite understand yet the full reality of the I am they were walking alongside.

Jesus and his full deity, they didn't quite understand that he was the Messiah, the one coming to save his people. They understood parts, but they did not yet understand the whole.

And it's essential for them that they would see Jesus as the Lord of the resurrection. It was essential for them that they would see him as the one who was going to bring life to those who were dead.

[ 28 : 10 ] Because very shortly after he does this miracle of Lazarus, in a few short days, they would soon see their Lord dead and placed into a tomb.

They would soon see him placed there for days. And they have to see now that he is the Lord of the resurrection, that he is the Lord of life.

We see that in verses 18 down to verse 27. The Lord of life. Jesus, of course, arrives close to the home of Martha and of Mary. And we see the reality, the hurt of poor Martha.

This woman who the Lord loves. Verse 20 onwards. Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, she heard and she runs out and she meets Jesus. What's the first thing that Martha, this grieving sister, says to Jesus?

Verse 21. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if I was being here, my brother had not died.

[ 29 : 23 ] If only you were here earlier, he wouldn't have died. The reality is, and she's asking a question, isn't she? The question she's asking is, why weren't you here?

Why didn't you save him? An honest question of a grieving woman. True question. Even in her pain, even in her pain, we see her still acknowledging who Jesus is.

She asks, first of all, why didn't you save him? Why weren't you here? Then verse 22. But I know, but even now, whatsoever I will ask of God, God will give it thee.

She's grieving, she's pained, but she still understands the power of Jesus, the one who she's speaking with. How does Jesus reply? Does he answer harshly to her?

As she says to him, why weren't you here? Why didn't you help? Does Jesus answer back to her harshly? Does he answer her harshly because of her lack of carefully crafted words, her lack of respect towards him?

[ 30 : 25 ] No. Because he loved her. See, the first words from Christ to this grieving woman, they're words of hope, they're words of life. Your brother, verse 23, your brother will rise again.

Thy brother shall rise again. Dear friends, how often we put a veil on the reality of things. Brothers and sisters, we can look the part, we can talk the part, we can dress the part, we can act the part quite easily.

We can act as if everything's fine, as if we have our whole life and walk sorted out perfectly. But truth is, every one of us, every one of us here know what it is to struggle in life.

But Christians here to struggle in our walk, to struggle in our faith, to struggle with assurance, and so on, and so on, and so on. When we come to our Lord, we come to him, as we'll see this evening, we have to come to him honestly.

Martha didn't come with fancy words, didn't come trying to make herself sound good or look good. She came honestly and asked her question honestly and Jesus dealt with her in love. Of course, poor Martha, as Jesus tells her in verse 23, tells her your brother will rise again.

[ 31 : 44 ] She doesn't understand, of course, she says, well I know that, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. But of course, Jesus is talking about something that Martha can't even begin to imagine.

She believed in the final resurrection but there's something much more beautiful about to take place in her life. He's about to show her the reality of verse 25, that he is the resurrection and the life.

Dear Christian, this is where we find the hope of all that we are, isn't it? We worship one who has the resurrection and the life. Our eternal life now, our hope of eternal life now it rests in him.

But right now we know as brothers and sisters in the Lord, dear Christians, we know that our future ahead of us, our eternal future, it's guaranteed for us because we believe and we trust and we hope in the one who has the resurrection and the life.

Sometimes if we're asked, do you have an eternal hope? Even my own, as a younger boy, I remember older Christians being, usually at communion, fellowships being asked, do you have an eternal hope?

[ 32 : 59 ] Usually in Gaelic, and the answer, of course, well, I have a hope. And they meant well, they meant well, but there's no place for us to have a lack of assurance when we're told here that we worship the one who is the resurrection, who is the life.

If we know Jesus, if we love Jesus, if we seek to serve him, if we know the one in these verses, we have this hope for ourselves and we can say with certainty, I know him, I serve him, I therefore trust what he says to me, that he is the resurrection, he is the life, because he lives, I will live forever with him.

We can say that and say it boldly, we must say it and say it boldly. There's no place we hear this evening where some kind of feigned humbleness, scripture doesn't allow us to do that, we must be bold in our proclamations because he has done the work.

We rely on his finished work, not our efforts, and we know that. Because Lazarus is about to be raised by the same power that Christ, where he works in us, we have a hope of eternal life, the evidence that he has all the power, all the power to keep his people alive and to give them life for all time.

We see that hope being explained in verse 25 and verse 26. Verse 26, what is the hope of a Christian? Verse 26, Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

[ 34 : 24 ] Shall never die. Christ tells us we must believe the words of our Saviour. If we know him, if we love him, we have eternal life. We can rely on that, trust in that, rest in that.



Again, Lazarus, the miracle of Lazarus being brought back to life, of course, an important miracle for Lazarus and his sisters, but in reality, this miracle, like all the other miracles of Christ, are just there to show us a glimmer as to the true power he possessed and bring Lazarus back to life and giving him new life.

Christ shows he has a power to do that and so much more for all his people. That's our hope this morning. That's encouragement this morning. We have hope because we worship and we know the Lord of resurrection, the Lord of life.

Yet we die, we shall live. The end of verse 25. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Though we die, yet we live.

That is our proclamation, that is our hope, that's our confession, that's our battle cry this day. Yet we will die and we will die, but we know that we shall live, those of us who know our Saviour.

[ 35 : 42 ] What a hope. That final enemy, the great divide, death itself, conquered by Jesus. We fear the physical pain of it, we fear the reality of it, yes, but we need not have any fear as to the certainty that we will spend in eternity with our Saviour.

If we know him now, if we love him now, if we can call him our Lord now, he will call us to himself and be with him for all time. That's our hope.

That's our hope this morning. On that final day, we'll be called up from the grave. I'm sure, I know some faces here have been in Graver a few times and when you're in Graver, the church hall, especially if you're preaching in the hall, on the left-hand side you can see the new graveyard.

It takes up almost all the windows. It's quite incredible preaching in Graver Hall. You can see in the stadion of your eye constantly the graves shining and the graveyard in Graver faces out to the sea.

It's a beautiful view, I have to say, and that reality that one day, one day soon, the dead in Christ will rise first and they will come up and they will see with new bodies be given eternal life in new bodies, uncorruptible, without sin.

[ 36 : 59 ] That's our hope, isn't it? That's our future because we worship the Lord, verse 25, the resurrection and the life. Very briefly, we have thankfully summarised for us, we're thankful to the Lord and his provision for us and the men who had created and who came up with our confession, our catechism, catechism 38, question 38, what benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Dear friends, those listening just now and those who perhaps may be listening in the future, as we, like Martha, have heard from the Lord of life, the Lord of resurrection, we've heard that he gives life to all who are his.

We also have to ask the question that Jesus himself asks at the end of verse 26. Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Do you believe this? I am the Lord of life, I am the Lord of resurrection, whoever believes in me will not die. Do you believe this? We are faced with the same question this morning.

[ 38 : 29 ] As we're hearing all about the reality that we worship a saviour who gives life to the dead, who brings spiritual life to those of us who are spiritually dead, which is all of us at one point.

The question is, do you believe it? Dear friends, I can come up here, I can come here week by week by week and run through every single sermon I can even come up with and the most eloquent words possible, spend weeks and days and hours crafting the most beautiful poetic sermon, they won't change you.

I can come and rant and rave, come down and shake every one of you, they won't change you. Do you believe? For all the show we put on, all the drama we put on, all the good looks we put on, the question at the end is, do you actually believe in the Lord of life?

Do you actually believe in the one who gives life to all who ask it from him? If not, why not? How many more years of excuses do you have left in you?

Come, even this day, put aside pride, put aside all the things holding you back and come to the Lord of life, come to the Lord, we find in verse 25.

[ 39 : 42 ] Don't waste any more of your precious life, come to him who gives life, who is a resurrection, who is a life, who promises eternal life to all who come to him, who promises that all who know him, all who love him will live forever with him.

Why are you wasting your time? Come and live, come and know, come and have life, come and have the sure hope of eternal life for yourself. Very briefly, we come to the final few verses here, final section.

So of course, Martha's come, now we see poor Mary then coming to Jesus. And of course, when Mary comes, she says the exact same thing, doesn't she, as her sister? The exact same thing.

In verse 32, then Mary came where Jesus was and saw him. She fell down at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus sees her weeping.

He sees the crowd weeping. He sees all around him weeping. And he asks, where is he? Where have you laid him? And we take Jesus, as aware, towards the tomb. As Jesus approaches the tomb, what happens?

[ 41 : 01 ] This verse we all know so well. Verse 35. As the Lord, the eternal second person of the Trinity, our eternal beloved Saviour, with all power, with all glory, the one who is from all eternity, who reigns and knows the right hand of the Father, who all creation is made through him, all creation is made for him.

What does our Lord do? As he approaches the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus, Jesus wept. There are tens, if not hundreds, of deeply theological discussions as to the impact and importance of this verse and the reasons behind it.

But sometimes it pays just to be simple, doesn't it? It pays to read things as we have it. What's happening in verse 35? Well, our Lord, our Saviour, is seeing, as it were, face to face, the reality of sin.

He's seeing face to face, as it were, the reality as to why he has come to his own creation. He has come to give his life so that those who know him, who trust in him, would never have to die eternally.

Dear brothers and sisters, we'll see more this evening. We can see that your Saviour, your beloved Saviour, he's not detached, he's not distant, he's not far off, he's not somehow removed from the scene.

[ 42 : 31 ] He is open, he is there, he is clearly engaged and he weeps with those who weep. He had and he has an emotional life. He sees Mary, he sees the crowds, he's moved in his spirit.

We're so uncomfortable and we're so uncomfortable dealing with the emotional life of Christ but the scripture tells us here, verse 33, he groaned in his spirit, he was troubled.

The big words being used are big words in the Greek, very strong words in the Greek. Jesus was moved, he was troubled, his emotions were stirred up and it made him cry because he was like us and always, dear friends, always but sin.

Not far off, not distant, he's close to all who cry out to him. Don't think for a second our Lord and Saviour is not moved by your life or by your situation. He doesn't stand far off and look and shake his head and go, what a shame.

No, he is with you, he is beside you, he is working all things out for the good of his people and for his glory. For all the days of your life, he's not distant, logically working things out.

[ 43 : 45 ] No, he is close to his own and those of us who are his own, we know that for ourselves, don't we? We know that in the times of darkness, in the times of greatest trouble in our lives, that he is beside us, that he is with us.

Again, for all the deep, theological and quite likely good and right theology behind verse 35, let's just take the simple reading this morning and we have a saviour who cares for his people, who cares so deeply for his people, he's willing to go through all the human emotions that we go through.

He wept for his dear friend, like us in all ways apart from sin and we go against scripture and we are a very dangerous place to make our saviour cold and emotionless.

That's not the reality we find before us. But see, it's not all emotion. Some like to make Jesus all emotion, all feeling and not much else.

A saviour who's all emotion will come alongside us but he's no use. A saviour who's just emotion, who's just feeling it's good for a while but he's actually of no real use to us.

[ 44 : 52 ] But here we have a saviour who is emotional, who has an emotional life, who feels as we feel but who's also, of course, fully man but fully God.

And we'll see it again more in the evening. But because he is fully God we see the story doesn't end at verse 35. If he was just fully man the story ends with Jesus crying. What else can he do but weep and mourn?

The story carries on, the account carries on. We see Jesus again as the life, as the resurrection, as fully God. As he asks the stone to be moved away and we see that, of course, Martha is concerned.

Lazarus is dead, he's been dead for some time. Let's not do that. But no, they take away the stone. And the God-man, Jesus Christ, fully God, fully man, he then shows the reality of his power in verse 43.

He prays to the Father. In verse 43, we see Jesus and his full deity declaring, Lazarus, come forth. Simple words.

[ 46 : 00 ] No song, no dance, no ceremony. Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth. Dear friends, it's not the same story for all who are believers today.

We're so prone, even the Christians here, we're so prone to wanting to add things to scripture, wanting to add things to salvation, to make the process sound more complicated.

We love our routines, we love our smells and bells, as it were, and perhaps we say we don't, what we do. We're all bad for adding bits and pieces, but in reality, it's quite simple.

Christ speaks life into a dead person's life and they become alive. There's no song, there's no dance, there's no special ceremony. Christ speaks and a person lives.

As true as it is for Lazarus, the same truth, it is the same for all who, even this place today, who have heard that cry, heard that voice. Those of us who know Jesus this morning, we were all once spiritually dead, all once spiritually without hope.

[ 47 : 07 ] As it were, the three days of hope had gone, we were left in the tomb, no hope, no help. And Jesus declared to all of us who know him this day, come forth, live again.

we now live for all time. We know now that our lives are his. We will live with him for eternity.

Dear friends, those of us here who as of yet don't know Jesus for yourself, those of us who as of yet don't know what it is to know him as your Lord and your Saviour, it's not complicated. To our shame, again, to our shame, Christians, we have complicated things over the years and added bits and pieces where we should not have added bits and pieces.

And again, there's no time for that discussion today. But look to this account of how Christ gives life to one who was dead. How Christ can give real, physical life back to one who was really dead.

The same can be said for you, even this day. Even before you have your lunch and you leave this place, this can be you. Only you would come and ask that Christ would give you life, would give you eternal life.

[ 48 : 22 ] Come and trust in the one who is the life and resurrection. Answer the question of verse 26 for yourself. Do you believe this? Do you believe in the one who is life, who is resurrection, who can give you eternal life?

Only you can answer that question for yourself. to your friends. But our hope and our prayer and it would be our joy, the joy of your congregation around you, the joy of your community of believers who you come and worship with, it would be our joy if you'd come and know Jesus for yourself.

Come and trust in the Lord of life and the Lord of resurrection. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. and the Lord of life. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.