

I am the Resurrection and the 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: 30 July 2017

Preacher: Roderick John Campbell

[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, we will now turn back to the portion of Scripture that we read together in the New Testament, in the Gospel according to John, chapter 11, and we'll read at verse 25.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

I am the resurrection and the life. There are seven I am sayings in John's Gospel.

They are, I am that bread, and I am the light. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

I am the true vine. But tonight we shall look in particular at the fifth saying, I am the resurrection and the life.

[1 : 09] The resurrection is an important concept within the realm of salvation. For Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthians, Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God. Because we testified about God, that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. So what Paul is saying there is that if there is no resurrection, then there is no faith and there is no salvation.

[2 : 26] So we can see from that how important the concept of the resurrection is in the realm of salvation. Now all these I am sayings that we have here in the Gospel of John is given in a particular context.

For instance, the first of these sayings, I am the bread of life. The immediate context is where Jesus had fed 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fishes.

And many who ate of the bread have begun to follow Jesus even when he goes to the other side of the lake. They follow him there. And Jesus tells them that their true motive in following him was that he had done this miracle among them of multiplying the bread and satisfying their hunger.

And now all they can see is mountains of bread. They haven't really understood that that miracle was actually a sign for them. It is interesting that John, when he speaks of these miracles, always presents them as a sign.

And a sign points to something. And all the miracles that Jesus, that is recorded for us in the Gospel of John, that Jesus performed, are signs that is pointing us to Jesus Christ himself.

[3 : 54] There were signs that was pointing to himself. He was pointing to himself as the bread of life, the one that could really give and bring satisfaction.

Now the same is true here. He gives us this saying, I am the resurrection and the life, within a particular context. Jesus spoke these words to a woman named Martha at a time when her brother Lazarus had died and had been buried.

These words were actually spoken beside the grave of Lazarus. And here is Jesus and he is reminding Martha that he has power that is more powerful than the death and the grave.

It may be just beneficial for us to spend a few moments on the connection of Jesus with Martha. If there is one place in the polygamy of Jesus that was most cherished by him, it was his friendship in the village of Bethany.

About two miles from Jerusalem, we are told here. And it was specially in the place or in the home of Martha and her sister Mary and her brother Lazarus.

[5 : 21] We often find Christ coming to this home in Bethany. It was like an oasis for him in the wilderness, a time of communion and fellowship that he would have with his friends there.

And in the sketch that we have here of the Bethany home, we are told that Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus. How or when they first saw Jesus, we cannot tell.

They had probably been among the number of those Jews who had prayfully waited for the consolation of Israel and who had lived to see their wishes and their hopes realised in the person of Jesus Christ.

We are given no information regarding their previous history. Our attention here is drawn to the home where an unwelcome intruder has entered and he has turned their joyous dwelling into a place of mourning, grief and pain.

Suffering enters into the home. First the sufferings of illness and then of death, followed by the suffering of grief and pain.

[6 : 41] So here in John chapter 11, we are brought into a situation that brings a change into the home of Bethany.

The home in Bethany is changed to be a mourning household. Now before Lazarus died, the sisters had sought the Lord.

They had sent messengers to him with the message, Lord, he whom you love is ill. But Jesus deliberately waited until Lazarus was dead.

Now how harsh that seems to us. You would almost say that he didn't care. If it wasn't for the words that we have in verse 5, where it says, Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

There was no coldness in his affection for the sisters or Lazarus. But the right moment for him to act had not then come.

[7 : 56] You see, we must always be mindful of the sovereignty of God. That is something, a concept that we may not be so conscious of in our day and generation.

That is the sovereignty of God. That God is on the throne. He is on the throne of the universe. He is in control.

Everything is in his hands. He is working out his purpose. As we look in our world tonight, there is chaos. There is uncertainty.

There is confusion. There is a mess. All caused by man. But nevertheless, here is where we find our rest in the midst of the chaos and confusion and uncertainty.

The knowledge that God is in control. And he is working out his purpose. He is going to be ultimately glorified.

[9 : 11] He is ultimately going to bring about the new heavens and the new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. And he is working out to that end. And that is why we need not be disturbed by the chaos and the confusion and the uncertainty that is around us.

If we are in Christ, if we have trusted in Christ, we know that he is in control. And here in this situation, he is in control.

Everything is in his hands. The Bethany home is turned and plunged into sorrow, grief and mourning.

Then we are told that Jesus expressed to his disciples his intention of returning to Judea. He announced to them that he was going to awaken Lazarus out of sleep.

The disciples thought that Lazarus was going to recover from his illness. But Jesus then told them plainly that Lazarus has died.

[10 : 32] Lazarus is dead. And referring to his death and to the figure of sleep is very suggestive. But we won't wait there tonight.

We have no description of the journey. John simply tells us that when Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been buried four days. We do not know how long before that he died.

But probably not long for burial was usually not delayed in that region because of the climate. But four days may be significant.

Because there was a Jewish belief at this time that the mourning reaches its height on the fourth day. And that all hope of any restoration to life is banished.

There was that belief among the Jews. So it may be of great significance that it took Jesus four days to come to the grave of Lazarus. It means that the time had been reached when the only hope

for Lazarus was really a divine act of power.

[11 : 43] Also it points us to the fact that Lazarus must have died very soon after the sisters had sent the messages away to Jesus to tell him that Lazarus was ill.

Or in the origin it is that Lazarus was sinking fast. So when they came back to the Bethany home, Lazarus was actually already dead.

When the messages arrived back to the home, Lazarus was actually dead. We are not informed of their return, but I think it would be natural that they would return immediately to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

And when they did arrive, they must have been shocked to hear the mourning in the home. And the fact that Lazarus was dead.

For when they delivered the message to Jesus, he said to them, This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

[12 : 48] That's what Jesus said to the messengers. He said to them, Bring that message back to the home. This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

They would obviously have taken this as a word of promise. This illness does not lead to death. It is a word that is full of hope, a word that is full of joy and of gladness.

They must have returned all excited to bring such news to the sisters. But when they arrived, what confronts them? Shocks them.

Their joy and excitement is absolutely dashed. Lazarus is dead. And his sisters are mourning.

Now for a moment, let us think of Jesus' reply and the situation in the home of Bethany. Here he said, This illness does not lead to death.

[13 : 58] It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. It gives us some encouragement that the situation was going to be reversed.

But that word that gives such encouragement and hope suddenly becomes a word of testing. A word of trial.

A word of confusion and perplexity for the sisters. And I think there is a lesson for us here as well. Like them, we don't always understand what is going on.

And there are times when we don't always understand how the words of Jesus can be applied to our present situation. And one of the texts of the word of God that comes to mind is that text in Romans that everything works together for good to them that love God.

Well, we can be brought into situations where it is difficult for us to understand that text. And this is one of them. What has prevailed in this home at this time?

[15 : 16] How is this working out for good? But the word of God says that it does for those who love God and who is called according to his purpose.

The situation here before the messengers and the sisters made it really difficult to understand Jesus' reply. This illness does not lead to death. Lazarus is dead.

Their providence seems to be against all that Jesus had said to them through the messengers. And it is difficult when providence and the word of God seem to be in conflict.

It may be difficult for us to put these two things together. But remember what I already said. God is sovereign.

He is in control. The confusion is on our side. Not on God's side. And always remember that. When things may seem confusing to you.

[16 : 19] When providence and the word of God seem to be in conflict. Remember that the confusion is on your side. There is no confusion with God.

The Bethany home that was so joyous and happy is plunge into the suffering of grief. And that grief is real for both Martha and Mary. There is always the danger that we lose a sense of the reality of their grief.

Because we know what was going to happen. But they didn't. This was a home that was plunged into grief.

Perplexity. Confusion. Sadness. We all know what it's like when we stand before an open grave. We feel so helpless. But we would love to hold on to our loved ones. And yet they are taken away.

[17 : 26] They are snatched out of our hands. We stand as those who are helpless and hopeless.

When Martha came to Jesus. She said to him. Lord. If you had been here. My brother would not have died.

You know there are some who think that Martha here is rebuking the Lord. As much as to say. You got it all wrong. You should have been here. And our brother would not have died. We sent a message to you.

That our brother was ill. Some take it that she is rebuking him for his delay. Why didn't you come? If you had come.

Lazarus our brother would still be alive. Why Lord did you let this happen? Why were you not here when we needed you most?

[18 : 33] But I do not think that we should isolate the words of verse 21 from verse 22.

I think we should bring them all together. Both together. For she went on to say. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God.

God will give you. You know in her bereavement she has not lost her confidence in Jesus. And she still recognizes the peculiar intimacy that he enjoys with the Father.

In other words I can put it like this. She is conscious of the sovereignty of God. She is conscious of the sovereignty of God. She can't understand it.

A lot of questions. But she believes in the sovereignty of God. That he is in control over this situation. She has such a view of her sovereignty of God.

[19 : 34] And in that light she takes a look at her suffering of grief. And although she may still have many questions that have not been answered. But she has lost her confidence in Jesus.

That he is in control. We must not forget the other part of the reply that Jesus gave in verse 4. The silliness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God.

So that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Sometimes when the word of God and all providence seems to be in conflict with one another.

When things are dark. When things are confusing. When things are in absolute chaos. When God doesn't do things the way that we thought he was going to do it.

Or the way perhaps we would like him to do it. Let us remember that whatever he is doing. Is ultimately to his glory. That he may be glorified thereby.

[20 : 43] Jesus here seizes the opportunity to say to her. Your brother will rise again. To which Martha replied. I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

Martha takes the words of Jesus to refer to the final resurrection at the end of the world. She was sure about the resurrection at the last. But she had no idea what Jesus was going to do.

That he was going to show now. His power over death. And over the grave and the raising up of her brother. And here it opens the way for Jesus to say.

I am the resurrection and the life. Jesus does not simply say that he will give resurrection and life. But that resurrection and life is so much associated with him.

That he is the resurrection and the life. He is himself. The resurrection and the life.

[21 : 47] Here is something that is very important for me and you to grasp. Here Jesus was not simply correcting the vision of Martha. By turning her from the distant future to the immediate present.

But he fixes her eyes upon himself. He says I am the resurrection and the life.

Strength, blessing and comfort are imparted just so far as we are taken up with Christ himself.

He is pointing her to himself. And you know that is so true with many of our own situations in life.

What makes it so perplexing for us is very often that we leave Christ out.

But if we bring Christ into our situations. Then you know it brings strength, blessing and comfort.

[22 : 48] However hard the situation may be. If we bring Christ into it with us. And that is what Jesus is saying here to Martha. Bring me into the equation.

Bring me in. Look at me. Anticipating his own glorious resurrection. He may well say to Martha and me and you. Whoever believes in me though he die.

Yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. His own resurrection was to be the given pledge. And guarantee of his people's everlasting salvation.

The risen Lord was to be the proclamation that he had purchased all. That he had paid the ransom price. That he had procured all the spiritual blessings for his people.

As we come to look at the empty tomb of Jesus. What do we see in the tomb? What do we see in the empty tomb of Jesus? We see sin cancelled. Guilt been blotted out.

[23 : 53] We see the law being magnified. Justice being honoured. We see the salvation for the sinner. I am the resurrection and the life.

Earlier on in this gospel Jesus spoke about two resurrections. If you look tonight at chapter 5. There you'll find that Jesus is speaking about two resurrections. Let me just quote these words.

Truly, truly I say to you. An hour is coming and is now here. When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. And those who hear will live.

Now we could easily have understood it for the raising of the dead at the last day. Was it not that he says in these words. And is now here.

Let us hear them again. Truly, truly I say to you. An hour is coming and is now here. When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. And those who hear will live.

[24 : 57] And is now here. Which means that it is already here. He's talking about the present. What is he doing here?

Well, he is making reference to a spiritual resurrection. What we call the new birth. Or born again by the power of God. That's what he's referring to in verse 25 of chapter 5.

But then in verse 28 he says. For an hour is coming. When all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life.

And those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. This is still future. He says there is another hour. Which has not yet come.

He is making the reference to a physical resurrection. What our physical resurrection will be depends on whether you've had the first resurrection or not.

[26 : 00] If you've had a spiritual resurrection. If you've been born again. It is only those who hear the voice of God now in the gospel of grace and mercy.

That will rise in holiness and glory. With bodies. Like into the body of Jesus Christ. That's the apex of our redemption. To be made conformable to the image of the sun.

And both resurrections are authorized by him. I say to the soul live and it lives. And I will say to the body come out and it comes out.

I am the resurrection and I am the life. They are both in me. Your soul lives because it is united to me by faith.

Your body shall live because it is too united to me in the same faith. I am not only the author of resurrection and life. I am the substance of it.

[27 : 04] You live because I live in you. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live.

If you believe in this man who has resurrection and life you may die. But even though you die you are going to live. In other words the life that he actually gives you.

The spiritual life that he gives you. Is a life that is not touched by death at all. Death cannot snatch that life away.

And making reference to the two resurrections there in John chapter 5. He is saying that death cannot touch one life at all. And he is saying also.

Death cannot conquer the other life. Death cannot touch the spiritual life that he has given you. And death will not conquer the physical life.

[28 : 11] Though you may die yet you shall live. Live. The spiritual life that he gives you is not touched by death at all. And death may touch your physical life.

But he will restore it to you. Jesus says to Martha. 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 this world. Has Martha grasped Jesus? Saying. Has she grasped what Jesus has been saying to her?

Well. She may not have understood fully the implications of what Jesus has said. But as far as she can. She accepts it.

I am. The resurrection and the life. I believe. She says that you are Christ. The son of God. And although I cannot quite comprehend or understand.

[29 : 15] The implications of what you are saying to me. Because you are Christ. The son of God. I accept it. You know there are times when we've got to accept.

What we cannot understand. Just aside maybe. Charles Spurgeon. You all know of him. He was preaching.

On. The fourth saying of the cross. My God. My God. Why. Hast thou forsaken me. And he sees this. Although we cannot comprehend.

These words. We adore them. And you know there are times when we cannot comprehend. What Jesus. Or what God is doing.

But we adore it. And that just seems to be what is happening here. She cannot comprehend these things. That Jesus has spoken to her. But she adores them.

[30 : 18] She accepts them. Because they are spoken by Christ. The son of God. What Jesus says. I am the resurrection. He is claiming a power. That the world doesn't know.

Or understand. Even the Christian. May find it. Sometimes difficult. To comprehend. What these words. Fully entails.

For what he is saying here. To Martha is. You know Martha. I can stop death. You know Martha. I can reverse death. I can challenge death.

And I am going to do it. I am going to reverse death. And I am going to challenge death. You feel your hopelessness.

And your helplessness. Here at the grave of your brother. He is unable. In himself. To come out of the grave.

[31 : 27] And you are unable. To bring him out of the grave. He cannot. Bring life unto himself. And you cannot give him life. But here.

Is where my glory. Is going to shine. Because. Although man is helpless. Over death. God. Is not. Lazarus. Could not raise himself. Nor could his beloved sisters. And his friends. Bring him to life. From the grave. But Christ. Comes on the scene.

He says. I am the resurrection. And the life. And everything. Changes. Remember Paul's words. To the church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians chapter 15. Where he. Speaks these words. Death. Is swallowed up in victory. Oh death.

[32 : 27] Where is your victory? Oh death. Where is your sting? The sting of death. Is sin. And the power of sin. Is the law. But thanks be to God. Who gives us the victory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul reminds. There.

The believer. That although it may seem. That death has the final say. If we are in Christ.

Death. Death. Death hasn't got the final say. Because death. Is going to be swallowed up. In victory.

Oh death. Where is your victory? Oh death. Where is your sting? Yes.

[33 : 27] We. We. Can say. The sting. Of death. Is sin. But Jesus. Can. Look death. In the face. And say.

Where is your sting? And death. Will say. Well my sting. Is sin. The sting. Of death. Is sin.

The soul. That sinneth. Shall die. And Jesus. Can reply. And say. I have come into this world.

To deal with sin. I am going. To the cross. To deal. With sin. I am going to demonstrate.

That I am the resurrection. And the life. Not only by. Raising Lazarus. At this time. But. I am going.

[34 : 26] To Golgotha. I am going. To the cross. And I am going. Into the territory. Of death. I am going to confront. Death. And I.

Am going. To rise. Again. I will. Lay down. In the tomb. But I. Am going.

To leave. An empty tomb. I will. Rise. Again. The sting. Of death. Is sin.

But. Christ. Has dealt. With sin. So for the believer. The sting. Has been dealt with. It's been taken out. Of his death. And the power.

Of sin. Is. The law. And the law. Says. That if we break. One. Statute. One.

[35 : 21] One. One. One. One. Of the law. That the curse. Is upon us. And Jesus. Says. But I have dealt. With the curse. As well. I.

Have gone. To meet. With that curse. I have gone. To meet. With the curse. That my people.

Deserved. And. You know. What I have done. With that curse. I have exhausted.

That curse. Oh death. Where is your victory? Oh death. Where is your sting? Death. Is swallowed up.

In victory. And so. The apostle. Goes on. And he says. But thanks be. To God. Who giveth us. The victory. Through our Lord. Jesus Christ.

Now friends. Tonight. There is one appointment. That I can assure you of. I don't know. About. Tomorrow.

[36 : 19] What is going to be. In your life. Or in my own. But there is one appointment. That I am sure of. Will be in my life. And in yours. Unless Christ shall return.

And that is death. The notice will be. Put up one day.
 So and so. Has. Passed away. And the name on that notice. Will be mine. And will be also yours one day. We shall all.
 Confront death. But the great question. For me and you. Tonight is. How we got victory. Over. That. Death. How we got victory.
 Over death. See what Paul is saying. But thanks be to God. Which giveth us the victory. Through. Our Lord. Jesus Christ. Will you have that victory.
 [37 : 18] Through the Lord. Jesus Christ. If you are in Christ. Tonight. If you are following Christ. Committed to Christ. Trust in Christ. You will have that victory. Over death.
 In the light of Christ's victory. Over death. Paul says. Therefore. My beloved brothers. Be steadfast. And movable. Always abounding. In the work of the Lord.
 Knowing that. In the Lord. Your labor. Is not. In. Vain. I am the resurrection. And the life.
 The resurrection. His own resurrection. Was to be the given pledge. And guarantee. Of his people's. Everlasting salvation. The risen Lord. Was to be the proclamation.
 That he has purchased all. He has paid. The ransom price. He has made. With what our sins. Deserved.
 [38 : 16] He has kept. He has kept the law. For us. He has procured. Blessings for his people. And as we look into that empty tomb of Christ.
 We see that our sins have been cancelled. Our guilt has been blotted out. The law that was against us. Has been magnified. And honoured.
 There is. My salvation. In the man who said. I am. The resurrection. And the life. Do you. Believe. This. You may not understand it fully. The implications of. What these words imply. But can you accept it as far.
 As you can. Maybe you are here tonight. And you are saying. Well preacher. A load of nonsense. Maybe you are here tonight.
 [39 : 15] And you are saying. When I die. That is the end. I die. And people will take me to the cemetery. And they will bury me. And that is it. That is it over.
 Well my friend. If you are right. And I. Am wrong.
 Then. We are on the same path. We are on the same. Level. But my friend. If I am right. And you are wrong.
 What then? Oh you are saying. I will run the risk preacher. I will run the risk. It is a foolish thing. My friend. To run a risk.
 When your eternal destiny. Depends upon it. It is a foolish thing. To run.
 [40 : 16] The risk. Who said. I am the resurrection. And the life. It was Christ. The darling of heaven. The son of God.
 Who came. To work salvation. And victory. For me and you. Over death. Over the grave. To give me and you.
 A full. Complete. Salvation. Do you. Believe. This. Do you.
 Believe. This. And if you do. And if you are trusting. In Jesus. Tonight. You know. When we go to. The cemetery.
 I always have the feeling that. In the majority. That is there. That. They are looking upon it. As so. In such. Negative terms. But for the Christian.
 [41 : 17] He must not look at the grave. In a negative way. But in a positive way. Yes. My body will be deposited there. If Christ does not return. But that body is united to Christ.
 And one day I know. I will have that victory. In Christ. That I can sing. Death. Is swallowed up. In victory. What a hope that is.
 My friend. In view of the. Assured. Appointment of death. For me and you. To have that hope in Christ.
 Do you have that hope? Well tonight. It is offered to you. What are you going to do with it? It is up to you. I am not going to be responsible.
 For what you will do with it. But my responsibility is to tell you of it. And I have told you. And I hope and pray. That it will not be a means of your condemnation.
 [42 : 18] At the judgment seat of Christ. That you have heard. And that you have done nothing. About it. Do you believe this?
 Let us pray. Thank you.