

Which Life Do You Love Most?

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Date: 16 April 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Well, while you're standing, please take your Bible. We'll read the Word of God standing up here together, and you can turn to the Gospel of John. We're in John chapter 12 this week. While you're turning there, let me kind of give you an overview of the structure of the book of John, because in this chapter we have a shift.

So John chapter 1 is the prologue, and then the conclusion of the whole Gospel according to John is John chapter 21. So you've got a prologue at the beginning, a conclusion at the end.

And in the middle, there are two books, you know, we could say. So the first one is the book of the signs, the book of the seven signs that are pointing to the final work of Christ, and then the second book is called the book of His hour, and it's the passion of Christ.

So you're going to see some language as we read this, John chapter 12, that's indicating a shift into the second half of the book. And just so you know too, just mapping it out, my plan is that at least this summer, in my mind we could do this for 30 years, every summer at least, but at least this summer we're going to be going through one psalm, you know, the great book of psalms.

These were the songbook of Jesus, it was His hymnal. We're going to go through one psalm every Lord's Day. So my plan is to get up until somewhere around John 13, somewhere in there, and then we'll pause and we'll go through psalms for about eight weeks or so, and then we'll pick up in the Gospel of John in the fall, and we'll probably finish the book of John around December.

[1 : 3 0] So just so you know, that's where we're headed. All right. And while you've got it there now, so John chapter 12, go ahead and look at verse 23.

So John chapter 12, verse 23, see what Jesus says? He says, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. So our Lord Jesus Himself is indicating a shift, because up until this point He said, it's not my time, it's not my hour.

Now in John 12, the hour is here. One of our older kids asked me earlier this week, where are we at? What's the sermon about? Like, what's the story? And I said, well, you remember last week it was the raising of Lazarus.

This week is the effect that that had. Like, how did that change everything? And that's what we're going to see today. It's the effect of Lazarus coming back to life. And what I want you to listen to in these first 26 verses, Lazarus' name still comes up four different times here.

All right. So John chapter 12, beginning of verse 1 through verse 26. And as you hear this, remember, this is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear and sufficient Word of God.

[2 : 3 6] Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for Him there.

Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with Him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment, made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. Verse 4, But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, he who was about to betray Him, said, Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

He said this not because He cared about the poor, but because He was a thief. And having charge of the money bag, He used to help Himself to what was put into it.

Jesus said, Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.

[3 : 44] When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of Him, but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of Him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. Verse 12, The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him.

[4 : 49] The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised Him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they had heard He had done this sign.

So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him. Verse 20, Now some, now those, I'm sorry, excuse me, now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked Him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus, and Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

[6 : 04] If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Would you pray with me?

Father, I ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you will cause us in our minds and in our hearts to see Jesus, to behold you, Lord God, in the flesh, as the hour of your great work to be glorified has arrived.

Please speak to us, Lord. Help us to not only understand, but to receive your word. And I pray, Lord, that by the power of your Spirit, you will change us. You will make us prepared for the gospel.

And that when you work in our hearts, the gospel, it will change everything in our lives. For your glory we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the question I invite you to ponder today is this.

[7 : 45] Which life do you love most? Which life do you love most? See, at the end of our text, we just read this.

Jesus says, if you love your life in this world, it will perish. But if you lay down your life in this world through union with Christ, He will preserve your soul for eternity.

There is this life and there is the life to come. I think Lazarus is one man, one illustration of this great truth. There is a spiritual kingdom to come.

And the soul of Lazarus, he had died. His soul had left his body. The soul of Lazarus was put back into his body. He got new life in this world.

If we ask Lazarus that question, I think his answer would be pretty easy. Do you prefer this life in this fallen sinful world? Or do you prefer the life that your soul will enjoy for eternity in Christ, the kingdom of heaven?

[8 : 54] Now, we're going to walk through verse by verse, but I was even thinking about this, you know, for myself. Think of all that we have to do to take care of our body. And we should take care of our body.

We brush our teeth, we get our hair cut, we trim our nails. We do a lot. We feed, we exercise, you know. But think about your soul. And when you think of who you are, do you think first of your body when you stand in the mirror, that's who I am?

Or do you think first of your soul? We have a body, we have a soul. That picture that we got with Lazarus getting a new life, it's really to teach us you have a new life.

When God breathes life and gives, regenerates your heart, He breathes a new soul into you. That's how Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians 5, 17. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. So if your soul is united to Christ, the new creation has already begun in you, in your soul.

[10 : 02] So chapter 11, we saw how Lazarus was raised from the dead. Life conquered death. Light conquered darkness. The kingdom of heaven is conquering the domain of the kingdom of the earth.

It was the free gift of God's grace, life in Christ that conquered the wages of Adam's sin, which is death. Well, in chapter 11, it was about God giving one man new life.

And here in chapter 12, I believe it's like the ripple effects of a new life. So picture yourself in one of those beautiful lakes here in Colorado and you're down almost on the level of the water and it's perfectly still, no wind.

You could take the tiniest little pebble and drop it and you'll see a ripple effect, won't you? And that's how it is. When God breathes life into one soul, just one person who will believe in him, it causes a ripple effect.

I believe that's what we will see in this chapter. Jesus said, whoever loves his life loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

[11 : 11] So the Bible teaches, our Lord Jesus Christ teaches that there are two lives. There's the life of the flesh and there's the life of the spirit. There's a life that's enslaved in darkness and there's a life that's received the light of the kingdom of heaven.

There is a life that's perishing but there is a life for your soul that is imperishable. There is the earthly life and there is the heavenly life. Which life do you love most?

Now look at verse 1. We read that Jesus six days before the Passover. Now this is the first time that the Apostle John in this gospel does not call this the feast of the Jews.

So he's already indicating a shift. He's anticipating. This is about, this feast of the Passover is about to be transformed. He came to Bethany where Lazarus was which had been raised from the dead whom he raised from the dead.

Now Lazarus got a new life and it changed everything. There was a Puritan pastor named Richard Sibbes and it was said of him that he was a wicked man.

[12 : 26] He was a sinner. But when they looked at his life as an old man, as a man who had been just loving the Lord, serving him within the church for many, many years, they looked at Richard Sibbes, this old pastor, and they said, heaven was in him before he was in heaven.

That's probably a great way to describe Lazarus. The new life he got four times mentioned in this passage. You could say heaven was in Christ before Christ's bodily, glorified body was back in heaven.

And the same might have been true of Lazarus. We don't get much focus on Lazarus. The focus is on Christ. Brian Voss helped me to see next in verses two and three a great contrast here.

We're going to see a contrast between Lazarus and his two sisters versus Judas. And that's the focus of John, how he tells this story. So what I want you to observe is this, that we're told that Martha and Lazarus and Mary, they're each are doing something but they don't say anything.

Their actions say it all. There's no dialogue with them. But the life of heaven abounds in grateful service in communion with Christ. See, they see this new life in their brother and look at the result.

[13 : 40] In verse two, they made a dinner for him. Now, in one week from now, Jesus would be the one preparing a dinner for his disciples. Bethany had been a place of escape for him in the past.

Now, the hour has arrived. It's like the king mounting for war, for coming in for battle, the last victory. In chapter two, Martha served and Lazarus was one of them who sat and reclined at the table.

So with Martha and Lazarus, we have a picture of serving the Lord out of gratitude and relaxing and reclining and enjoying communion with the Lord.

And then with the other sister, we get one more response of gratitude. Look at verse three. Then Mary took a pound of ointment. This is nard, or some translations render it spike nard.

And we're told it was very costly. What Judas says gives us a price tag to put on it. And it was equivalent to one year's wages. So before bank accounts and stuff like that, you had to store up all your reserves, all your money in something physical.

[14 : 48] This was her one year's wages set aside as a savings. Most likely this nard was imported from India. Remember Jerusalem? It's a crisscross for all these major highways connecting all the continents.

It was a place of trade and it would be a way to acquire this rare and expensive ointment. We're told that she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.

Paul explains to the Corinthians how a woman's hair and their culture was a sign of her honor. So here she is at the feet of this man, Jesus Christ.

He is everything to her. Her sister is serving, her brother is reclining and eating and enjoying communion with him. And her way of expressing her gratitude is to lavish everything she has as a way of saying he is all to me.

I laid down my life savings. I laid down my honor. Father, Jesus Christ, God, Lord of all, he is everything to me. You see the ripple effect of a new life?

[15 : 56] It results in grateful service and communion. Mary worshiped him, the creator, in humbleness. We sing, let all things their creator bless and do just that.

Worship him in humbleness. If all the creation saw the Lord for who he was, this would be the only natural response. In verse 3, we're told that the whole house was filled with the fragrance of this ointment.

When was the last time in this story that we were reminded of a smell? It was the stench of death, wasn't it? You see how now a new life has replaced the stench of death with a fragrance that fills the whole house.

Christ's own death does the exact same thing. The stench of the curse of sin of death is replaced with the wonderful aroma of new life.

So the life of heaven, it abounds in grateful service and communion to Christ. That's one of the effects of a new life. Which life do you love most?

[17 : 10] Christ. Are you like these siblings here? Mary, Martha and Lazarus? They loved this life of the spirit that they got to enjoy being with Christ, serving him, lavishing everything they have at his feet.

They loved the light that he brought to their darkest point of their lives in their world. They loved the newness that they were enjoying. They didn't want anything to do with the old.

They loved the imperishable, the value of their souls being united to the king of kings rather than holding on to that which is perishable like this nard.

Jesus calls us to bury our earthly life with Christ. Keep him as your all. See, what Mary was also doing is that she was anointing Jesus.

She was anointing him as king for his triumphal entry as he's going to go into Jerusalem as the king. But she was also preparing his body for burial. And our response is that by laying it all down and saying, Christ, you are the anointed one of heaven.

[18 : 26] I trust my soul to you alone. You will keep my soul. You will guard it. You will protect it. You're the one who will sanctify and prepare my soul for heaven with you. There's no better place for your soul to be.

Well, a second contrast here though is that new life, it doesn't change everyone. For those who see the new life, who enjoy and experience new life in Christ, it changes everything.

But Christ's new life does not change everyone. And the contrast between these siblings is with Judas. He's their foil. See, they said nothing, but their actions spoke volumes.

Now, Judas, he doesn't do anything to show his value of Christ, but he does talk. His words say it all. Look at verse four.

Then Judas Iscariot, we're told in others, text that it was Simon's son. He was one of the disciples. So being really precise, this is who I'm talking about. And this is the one who would betray Jesus.

[19 : 29] So he's letting us know right away. This was a wolf in sheep's clothing. He said in verse five, why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii or 300 pence in the money given to the poor?

Now, we're not absolutely certain, but it's possible when we read, you know, one piece of silver that equals one denarii. It was a common, you know, currency. So however much money an average person would make in one day would be one denarii or one piece of silver.

And we know that Judas in Matthew 26 is going to leave from here and go sell the Lord Jesus to those who want to kill him for 30 pieces of silver.

We know from the Old Testament that that price, you know, 30 days wages, that's the price that you would buy a slave. Or if your ox killed another man's slave, you would pay him that price, 30 pieces of silver.

to Mary, Jesus was worth all. To Judas, Jesus was a common servant or slave.

[20 : 39] Jesus was anointed by Mary. One week later, Jesus would be the one taking the posture of a servant and washing the feet of his disciples, including Judas.

In verse 6, Judas said this not because he cared about the poor. Remember what Jesus said in John chapter 10, the hirelings, they don't really care, but because he was a thief.

Well, that's exactly how the wolves are described. They are thieves. They came to destroy him. Because Judas was the keeper of the money bag and he would carry away what was put into it. Now, Jesus, he knew all of this, didn't he?

So the shepherd, he delays his judgment, he delays his judgment. He knew all of this with Judas right there. But the shepherd king also defends his lambs.

So what Judas is doing to Christ, he allows. But when he went as a wolf and his fangs come out against Mary, look at what Jesus says in verse 7, leave her alone.

[21 : 44] She has kept this for the day of my burial. So Jesus knows where this is all heading. It's foreshadowing that his body before it's put into the grave will be anointed and perfumed.

In verse 8, Jesus says, the poor, this is important, the poor you always have with you. When he's giving them a picture of the church, it's a church with poor in it.

The poor, yes, you are to care for them and you will do that as my church. They are with you. That's my vision for my church. But you do not always have me.

This is so important because our Lord Jesus, he wants to clarify that if you are showing care for the poor, it needs to come out of the overflow of worship to him.

You worship the Lord Jesus like Mary and Martha and Lazarus and out of that overflow, that love for Christ, the poor are with you. You're bringing them along into it. You're not rejecting them.

[22 : 50] But, care for the poor must never replace worship. Have you ever seen that happen in a church? So this is so important.

The poor must be with the church. You must draw them in and serve them by serving me. Take care of the weakest members. But this is never replacement for worshiping Christ.

We're doing this together. They are with the church. But it is never becoming a social gospel. Where that's our ultimate purpose. Now, I don't want you to just think this is a story that happened a long ago.

It has nothing to do with you as you sit here. Judas had to decide, is it this life? This life right now with this money?

One year's wages? And I can dip into some of it? Or, is there a life for the soul? A life in the age to come? And you and I are like Judas. We were born enslaved to this world.

[23 : 47] And on top of that, we added on our own sins. We are bound under the chains of sin when we are born into this world. And our soul, it's being hunted down.

Martin Luther felt this so intensely. Martin Luther said to one person who was trying to make an argument that by your own free will, you can save yourself. Martin Luther's point is no, your will is bound under the curse of sin and death.

That's what your will is biblically. And Martin Luther simply said to him, your thoughts concerning God are too human. We could say the same to Judas here.

Judas, you don't value Christ. Your thoughts concerning Jesus Christ, the God-man, your thoughts about Christ are too human. And that's the temptation we all can fall into.

Our thoughts about God are too human. Our will is bound. Our spirit is dead. Our hearts are of stone, the Bible says, until the Holy Spirit by His power regenerates you.

[24 : 57] That's when you believe. And when you believe you behold Christ for who He is, you worship Him. You're at His feet. Maybe, maybe you've been deceived and maybe you're sitting here without having given much thought to the life of the age to come.

And you're enslaved to that old life, the life of the flesh, of darkness, that's perishing, that's bound up in this earth. Is that really the life that you love like Judas?

Jesus calls you to bury your life with Christ and He promises that He will keep, guard, protect, and sanctify your soul for eternal life with Him.

New life changes everything. The third thing I want to draw your attention to is how one person's new life leads others to worship Christ as King.

So, let's focus next on the crowd, this crowd. Look at verse 9. When a large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they also might see Lazarus, also whom He had raised from the dead.

[26 : 13] Now, look at verse 17. Those people that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised Him from the dead, they gave witness.

Verse 8 said, Therefore the crowd also met Him because they had heard of the sign that He had done. So, let's remember, okay? Lazarus died.

These people from Jerusalem came to mourn with this family seven days of mourning, and on the fourth day, right in the middle of this week of mourning, the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

And all those who were barefoot and sackcloth with ashes on their head, they had been fasting, singing these really sad Hebrew dirges, they're now bearing witness. This really happened.

And they're spreading the word. They're telling everyone, Jesus Christ gave new life to a dead man. They're bearing witness. And a crowd that had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, they are now hearing about this.

[27 : 13] Whoa, hold on. What is going on? One person's new life leads others to worship Jesus as king.

Now, picture this crowd. What was on their mind? They had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. You know what the Passover was for the Jews?

It was Independence Day. They're remembering how the Lord brought them out of Egypt. They're remembering how they had been enslaved to another nation, and now they got their freedom.

And I mean, you picture Americans on Independence Day, you got, I just picture large pickup trucks, fireworks, flags, you know. And this is a patriotic moment. This crowd is now here.

We've got someone in the village next door who brought new life to a man. And it's Independence time. Let's go gather around. So here comes this big crowd. And what were they singing as they were traveling to Jerusalem for Independence Day, for Passover?

[28 : 15] They were singing from their songbook, the Psalms. They were singing the Psalms of Ascent. And these Psalms of Ascent are putting their minds on a great day when the priestly office and the kingly office will be joined in Jerusalem, and He will reign over all the earth.

Like Psalm 118, these travelers come weary singing these songs, and they sing, Out of my distress, I called on the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free.

It's Independence Day. So that's how the crowd was. But we're told that Jesus, in Matthew 23, Jesus, as He was looking out over Jerusalem about to enter, knowing what the crowd was thinking, how they're cheering, how it's a patriotic moment, Jesus weeps.

He weeps over Jerusalem. And He says, How I have longed to gather you under my wings. It's the same language that Boaz sang over Ruth.

You could say that of Boaz, couldn't you? Heaven was in Boaz before Boaz was in heaven. Well, now look back at verse 13. This crowd took branches of palms.

- [29 : 35] They took branches of palms, and I don't think it's wrong if churches want to do that, but listen to what this would actually mean. The palm branches were never ordained by Scripture as part of the ceremonial law, so we shouldn't read symbolism into that.

It became a tradition of the patriots, the national Jews, during the Maccabean revolt that we mentioned a little bit ago with the Feast of Dedication. So then, when they took back the power, they started printing coins, minting coins with palm branches on it as a symbol of independence and patriotism.

And Jesus sees all this happening, but His Spirit is longing to gather them under His wings. Verse 13 says, They went out to meet Him, crying, Hosanna!

Blessed is He coming in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. Now, even though their expectations of Christ were at least mixed, we could say that, they didn't quite have the right picture of how His kingdom was coming.

Their words were right. Jesus is most blessed. And He is coming in the name of the Lord. He says, I am. That's who's coming.

- [30 : 49] It's Jesus, God Himself. And He's coming as King not only over Israel, not only over Jerusalem. The phrase Daughters of Zion is another name for Jerusalem, but He's coming as King over all.

Now, think about how one person's life has led to many others worshiping Jesus as King. Lazarus, his life, his one life in this world was buried like a seed in that cave.

And now, many are bearing witness of a man who was dead, who got new life from the King of Kings. Because of him, large crowds of a harvest are now gathering around Jesus Christ.

may this be true of us in your life, in my life, and in our congregation, that if there is genuine new life, it won't just be that one.

It will multiply. Here's a soul that got drawn into the life of the kingdom of heaven because this life is buried with Christ in this world, and the harvest follows, even if we don't see it.

- [31 : 58] It might take generations. So which life do you love most? There's the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit, of darkness or of light, the old or the new, the perishing or the imperishable, heavenly or earthly.

Jesus says, bury your earthly life with Christ and He will keep and guard and protect and sanctify your soul for eternal life in Him.

Well, the fourth thing I want to draw your attention to is that only the Holy Spirit can show disciples the glory of Christ's new kingdom. Look at verse 14. Jesus, then Jesus, finding a donkey colt, He sat upon it even as it had been written.

Verse 15, Do not fear, daughter of Zion. Behold, your king comes sitting on the full of a donkey. This is a scripture was written, we're told.

Where was this written? It was Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9, which is a prophecy. It's a word of hope to the people in exile and it says, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

- [33 : 16] Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation is He. What type of king should they be expecting?

The next words in Zechariah 9, He will be humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the full of a donkey. See, when the Romans led a procession through these major capital cities like Jerusalem, they got to do that every time they had gone to battle and killed 500 of the enemy.

they would come on a great war horse and it would be gruesome and it would be fleshly and to the human eye, that's what they saw as true honor and true glory.

Now look at verse 16, when His disciples did not know these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him and that He had done and that they had done these things unto Him.

See, even they with their human eye, they did not see the full glory of God in the moment. Christ had to finish His work, rise to the right hand of God and the Spirit descend on them.

[34 : 34] Then the Spirit showed them back through the Bible how all of this pointed to Christ. It has to be the Holy Spirit showing disciples the glory of Christ through all of Scripture.

Only God Himself by the Holy Spirit can open your eyes to behold the glory of this humble, otherworldly King. So how was it that these people came to believe that He was the true King?

The Spirit had to make them know that. Don't you have a loved one that you wish they would be able to see and understand Christ and His glory?

Pray for the Spirit to show them and He'll do that by His Word. I love this line in the hymn we sang that He speaks and listening to His voice, that's how, new life the dead receive, the mournful, broken hearts rejoice, the humble, poor believe.

Have you experienced this? Have you heard something about Christ from the Bible, about the Gospel, and no matter how many years you've been hearing the Bible and the Gospel, it just comes alive inside of you in a way you can't explain?

[36 : 00] If you've experienced that, praise the Lord, that means it's His Holy Spirit teaching you and showing you what only He can teach you. This is what the disciples experienced and bore witness to in Luke chapter 24, verse 32.

They said, listen, our hearts burn within us. How? While He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures.

That's what our Lord Jesus and His glorified buddy loves to do. He loves to minister to you by His Word and make your heart burn within you because He's given you that new life.

Ask God to make you know Him. What a glorious truth. You get to know God. If someone asks you how you're doing, do you think about your life in this world and all those things?

Or do you think about that simple truth? How are you doing? I get to know God. My soul gets to know God.

[37 : 07] That's the life of the Spirit. That's the light of life and light. It's new. It's imperishable. It's heavenly. And you only experience it when your life in this world has been buried with Christ and you're trusting Him.

He will keep your soul and guard it and protect it and sanctify it. He will prepare your soul for eternal life in His heavenly kingdom. But Jesus says count the cost and that's what I want you to see even with Lazarus' own life.

It's that new life in Christ makes you a target for Christ's enemies. Remember, He's the shepherd king and where is He marching to? He's marching the road of the cross.

So I want to focus next on how Satan used the chief priests and Pharisees. And I just want to be really clear. The Romans were part representing all the rest of the world and the Pharisees, the teachers of the law.

They were part of it too. But it's Satan working through these people and God saved Jews and Greeks and Romans as well following this. There were churches planted among all of them. So this is what we are all like.

[38 : 17] But look at verse 10. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well. You see, new life, it makes you a target for Christ's enemies.

Satan distorts the reality and he tries to draw people in to be part of that. They said, okay, everybody here, everybody, these crowds all know Lazarus was the dead man.

He had been dead four days. Everybody knows that. So what do we need to do? We need to distort reality. We need to kill Lazarus because he can't go on like this. They already had plans to kill Jesus.

Now they have plans to kill his church. See, the new life of Christ made Christ a target, obviously, but it also makes a target of anyone who belongs to the kingdom of light. Now verse 11 says, because on account of him, this dead man, Lazarus, who got new life, many of the Jews departed and believed in Jesus.

See, their religion, it was not about truth. It was about numbers. I feel like I need to repeat that one more time.

[39 : 34] The enemies of Christ, their religion was not about the truth of the reality. Distort the reality because their religion was about numbers.

enemies, those are enemies of Christ. They're coming after Christ's people. In 1 Kings chapter 1, we're told all these wonderful, glorious promises about David and the son of David, the one who would come from the line of David.

When David is time to hand over the crown and the throne to the next, this is where Israel gets shredded apart. But something happens before that.

We read that David gave his royal mule to Solomon and paraded Solomon into Jerusalem. And Solomon was anointed and he was enthroned in public with triumphal celebration.

So who would be the one who would sit on that throne in Jerusalem and rule over all the people? Not ultimately Solomon.

[40 : 45] It was pointing to Christ. Of course he's going to be a target to God's enemies. They want the power and the money and the numbers. Look at verse 19.

The Pharisees therefore said to themselves, see how you profit nothing. In other words, you guys are losing. Behold, the world, the cosmos has gone after him.

What they saw as their great problem that the whole world is going after Christ, it was also a prophecy. Their problem was a prophecy. The world is going after this man as though he's the king.

Yes, and wait till you see him in his glory. The world goes after him. Zechariah 9.10 describes Christ that he will speak peace to who?

To the nations and his rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Everywhere that his word by the power of the spirit flows, everywhere, it wins.

[41 : 53] It prevails. So picture that like a Tucson desert in the middle of Arizona, dry as can be. And then here comes the monsoon river just forms out of nothing.

Nothing can stop it. And you can picture a big boulder, you know, or like turns in the desert and stuff like that. Nothing can stop it. It's going to flow and it's going to cover that entire desert like an ocean.

That's what the word by the power of the spirit of God does. Well, Martin Luther was also targeted by the enemies of God and he wrote this hymn in a moment of great torment and it became the battle hymn of the Reformation.

Luther, notice how weak he makes himself compared to the might of God. Luther wrote, did we in our own strength confide our striving would be losing.

For though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God has willed his truth to triumph through us.

[43 : 02] So if you are in the kingdom of heaven and he's given you new life for the soul, you do not need to fear those enemies. Know that you will have a target on your back but do not fear them. They belong to the kingdom of the flesh.

You are joined to Christ in the spiritual kingdom. The darkness wants to oppose the light but you belong to the light. The old resists the new kingdom, the new life.

The old will perish away. The kingdom of Christ will endure forever. Which life do you love most? Why would you not bury your earthly life?

Why would you not trust your soul to the maker of heaven and earth knowing that he will keep it and guard it and protect you and sanctify your soul for eternity with him?

Well the last observation is that new life new life is reformed by Christ's teaching. When Christ gives you new life, he doesn't just leave you there like a little baby.

[44 : 09] He teaches you, he feeds you, he grows you, he changes you, matures you. We're to establish and equip. You know, the church is not just to be planted with shallow roots, we're to be rooted and grounded and rising up and bearing fruit, equipped like an army taking charge with Christ now, going out.

And how does he do that? How does he establish and equip us and reform us? He changes your view of others, he changes your view of success, of purpose, and of honor.

Let's walk through those four. First, new life in Christ, it redefines your view of others. Look at verse 20. There were some Greeks. Now, Greeks represent the world.

You know, to the Jewish mind, you've got the Jews and you've got everyone else. And they're following after Alexander the Great conquered the known world, so everyone else is Greeks. And that's the lingua franca, the language they spoke.

There were some Jews among them that came up to worship at the feast. Verse 21 said, So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we desire to see Jesus.

[45 : 20] Now, you notice what's happening is there's no longer Christ only coming for the Jews already. Remember that prophecy? The world has gone after him. Yes, and wait till you see. Now, in verse 22, Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Now, here Jesus begins his teaching. We're going to start it here, and the next time we get to John will continue. Verse 23, Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

When Jesus hears that the Greeks, these non-Jews, are coming to see him, Jesus knows this is the hour. They are being drawn here for this very purpose.

They will be at the Passover. They will be ones who will watch me die, and they will be ones who will bear witness with their own eyes that I raised from the dead.

I laid down my life so I can take it up again, and these Greeks who are coming to see me, they are here for my divine purpose. They will be the ones that go back to their own cities, to their own people, some of them to their own countries, bearing witness of what they are about to see.

[46 : 27] And to the disciples, he wants them to be ready. See, the new life, this one little life with Lazarus, this is getting all of you ready for the new life that's about to come. your view of these Greeks needs to change.

These are your family. This is the church. These are your brothers in the battle. Bring them on. Let them hear my teaching, Jesus says. Number two, new life in Christ, it redefines not only your view of others, it redefines your view of success.

there were these missionaries who left everything, they had worked hard, they were educated, and they felt called to go to a mission field in a remote part of the world.

Well, believers and friends of theirs from a church went and visited them and just had to travel so long to finally get to where they were. And one of the friends just very innocently just said, man, you guys are really buried way out here, aren't you?

And the missionaries paraphrased verse 24. Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it abides alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.

[47 : 39] The missionaries said, yes, we are buried way out here. And that's how God will bring forth a harvest. See how life in Christ is life abundant?

Life, the new life that Christ brings, it redefines your view of others, it redefines your view of success, and it redefines your view of purpose. In verse 25, read that, Jesus said, he that loves his soul shall lose it.

In the Greek, it's soul. Now think about this in the context. Remember, Lazarus is mentioned here. He's a little picture of one seed being buried, and without the soul, the body is dead.

So he that loves his soul, in other words, loves having your soul and your body in this world, in this life, this earthly life, shall lose it. But he that hates his soul in this world, he that hates his soul in this world shall keep it to everlasting life.

That's a hard teaching. In the Greek, that's exactly how it reads. He that hates his soul in this world shall keep it to everlasting life.

[48 : 52] life. So notice, the soul continues. If you're loving your soul in the life it has right now in the body, on this world, if that's what you love, you'll lose it.

But that same soul for everlasting life will be kept. You will keep it if you bury your life in the body, in the flesh, in this earthly world now.

That's the hope of your soul for eternity. Bury your soul in Christ if you want to keep it. Lay down your earthly life in Christ, identify with him in his death and burial in this life, and your soul will have the hope of resurrection for the life to come.

Deuteronomy 4.9 says, take care and keep your soul diligently lest you forget the things that you have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.

So how do you keep your soul? You remember what God has shown you. You remember what your eyes have seen of the glory of God through his word by the help of the spirit.

[50 : 04] And the last one is that new life in Christ, it redefines your view of honor. It redefines your view of honor. Look at verse 26, our last verse.

Jesus says, if anyone serves me, let him follow me, and where I am, there also shall my servant be. And if anyone serve me, him will my father honor.

The greatest honor is redefined. The greatest honor you can have in this life is to serve Christ. It's to follow him.

It's to know him. You see the promise? You get to be with him. You get to be with Christ forever. That's the greatest honor the father can show you.

His son enthroned, ruling over the new heavens and the earth, and you are with him. So Christ's new life, it transforms everything.

[51 : 11] Which life do you love most? Romans 6 4 says that we were buried therefore with Christ in baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life.

If Christ has saved you and given your soul life in him, then you are like Lazarus, you are living for him. He raised you, he gave you new life in the soul now so that you will walk in that newness of life.

Don't you want heaven to be in you before you're in heaven? sin? I know the battle against the flesh in this life in this world, sometimes it feels like we're losing, but remember the promise, we sang this, that Jesus breaks the power of reigning sin, he sets the prisoner free, and it's his blood that can make the foulest clean, even you and me, because his blood availed for me.

There are two lives, Jesus gives new life, and it changes everything. My prayer for you has simply been that, that you will want and love the life of his kingdom more than anything else, and that by going to Christ once again today, you will have that, that life is yours.

Let's pray. Amen. from Ephesians chapter 4, verse 22.

[53 : 06] Lord, help us to put off our old self, which belongs to our former manner of life. That old life has been corrupted, our desires have been deceitful, and help us instead, Lord, to be renewed in the spirit of our minds to put on the new self.

Thank you that you have created us after the likeness of God in the true righteousness and holiness that Christ himself put on to his people.

Help us to trust you with this. Amen.

Amen.