

Tomb Raider

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[0 : 00] Well, we've got a little while left, so it's great to have you in the service with us. And I want to talk a little bit about that story that Bev read just now.

It's a long story. How many of you have heard it before? Have heard the story about Lazarus being raised from the dead? Raise your hand if you've heard that. Oh, that's good. That is a very, it's a happy story.

It's a story about Jesus giving us wonderful things. Now, I want to ask you a question. How many of you have ever been to a funeral before?

Raise your hand if you've been to a funeral. Oh, some of you have been. Yeah. Have you? So that means that somebody you knew died.

Has anyone ever known somebody who's died? Raise your hand. Okay. Has anyone had a pet that has died? Raise your hand. Yeah. Yeah. How did that make you feel?

[1 : 00] Very sad. It does. It makes, when people die or your pets die, you feel very, very sad. Do you know why? Because that's not the way God meant the world to be.

And did you know that one day God is going to change the world so that there won't be any death and no pain and nobody will cry? Did you know that? Well, it is.

And I'll tell you why. It's because of what we heard today. Okay. Now, do you remember what happened? Jesus, best, what was Jesus, one of Jesus' best friends' name? What was his name? Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And who else in the story today? One of his best friends. Yes. It was Lazarus. And somebody came to Jesus who was far away and said, your friend Lazarus died.

Now, did Jesus go right away? No. No. What did he do? He stayed for a while. And what happened when Jesus got to where Lazarus used to live?

[1 : 59] What did he find out? He died. Yeah. Lazarus was dead. And who, you know, somebody came out and went to meet Jesus. Who was that? Martha.

Yeah. It was Martha. And Martha was Lazarus' sister. And she was very sad. Just the way you're sad if somebody dies or your pet dies. Very, very sad. And she said, you know, Jesus, if you had been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died.

But even now, I know that God will give you whatever you ask. Now, Jesus said something very strange that sounded to Martha very strange. She said, Lazarus will rise again.

And you know what she thought? She thought, well, maybe someday, a long time from now, that will happen when God does something really great. She didn't really know much about what would happen, but he knew something good might happen in the future.

But what did Jesus say? Jesus said something to her that was really different. She said, I am something. Raise your hand if you know what Jesus said about himself. Yeah, what did he say?

[3 : 00] I am two things. I am the resurrection and the life.

And he said, you know, if anyone believes in me, even if they die, they will live. And if anyone lives and believes in me, they will never die.

And he asked Martha, do you believe this? And what did Martha say? What did Martha say when Jesus said, do you believe this? Yeah. What did Martha say?

What did she say? Yes, that's right. She said, I do believe. I do believe that you are the one who is sent from God who can give life. And Jesus was saying that there is one person in the world that is stronger than death.

Who is that? It's Jesus. He is the only one stronger than death. And we don't have to be afraid of death anymore because Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

[4 : 03] Now, did Jesus just say that and not do anything else? Or did he do something next to prove that he is the resurrection and the life? What did he do? What did he do? Yeah, and what was that?

He healed Lazarus. That's right. Now, we want to look at this. We want to see how this worked. I'm going to need your help. The first thing I need is a corpse.

I need a pretty big corpse. Who will be a corpse? I think we'll have Dave be a corpse. And I need Dave to sit on this chair.

And I need you all to stand up and come around and help me because this is what people did to people who were dead. David has to pretend he's dead for a moment.

Now, what they would do is they would take a big, huge sheet, and it's called a shroud. And they would put it over the corpse, the person who has died. Now, I need some help.

[5 : 01] Several people, can you put, grab this. Here, you can grab this. And you need to put it right over David Short's head. Okay? Got to put it right over his head. Good.

That's good. You guys are very helpful. Got to make sure it covers him completely. Okay? Good.

Now, the other thing they did is they wrapped his head with a cloth.

Okay? So, I need you all to help. Can you grab this in? And you need to wrap it around his head.

Okay? Okay? That's very good.

Okay. Now, I need to get at his feet here because we're going to tie. It says that they tied their feet.

He looks like a snowman.

He looks like a snowman, yeah. He kind of looks like he's a prisoner, too, doesn't he? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[6 : 02] Because we... I think he looks like a snowman. Okay, you guys can sit down now because I want the rest of the children to see. Now, what has happened is that Lazarus looked a bit like...

Not exactly, but a bit like this. And he was bound. And he was like... It was like he was a prisoner as well. And Jesus went to the tomb.

And many people were crying. They were very, very sad because how long had Lazarus been dead? Does anybody remember? No? Not three? Four days.

We got four. That's right. Four days. And it wasn't smelling very good in there. The body was in very, very bad shape. And... That's not why I chose David.

And Jesus... Jesus loved the people that were there. And he wept with them. But he walked up to the grave. And he said something. He said three words.

[7 : 09] Does anyone remember what Jesus said? Yes. What did he say? Exactly. He said, Lazarus, come out. He said it very loudly. And that is exactly what happened.

And he started shuffling along. Now, I... There's one more thing that Jesus said. What else did Jesus say? Does anyone remember? Jesus said something else.

And we need to say it right away here. Jesus said... Yeah, that's right. Unbind him. So I need you guys to come up. And you need to unbind him.

Take off those... Poor Lazarus. Okay.

Okay. Now, how do you think people reacted to that? I bet you they did just that. I bet you they clapped. And they were very, very glad.

[8 : 14] And do you know what? What did that prove? What did that prove about Jesus? Yeah. Who knows what that proved about Jesus? Yes. That he's stronger than death. That's exactly right.

That he is stronger than death. And he alone can give us life. And you know, when he called Lazarus, he called him by name. And each of the people in this room, each of you who believe in Jesus, when you die, Jesus will call you by name.

And you will have a new life that will last forever. But not only that, Jesus is so powerful that he is with you today and always.

That's what Jesus says when I am the life. He is always with you. Always, even when you die. And so we're going to give God thanks for that. And I want you to pray with me a prayer that you prayed in Sunday school before.

So let's bow our heads and close our eyes. And we're going to pray this prayer that we can pray because Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Amen.

[9 : 16] Amen. Amen. Our Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can trust you with our lives. We thank you that you are stronger than death and we need not fear dying.

We thank you that you made it clear to us that you are the Christ, the Son of God. Help us to believe in you. Amen. Amen. Okay, you can go back to your seats.

And I'm going to talk to your parents and others just for a couple of minutes. We just want to talk briefly about how this applies to our lives.

And, of course, if you remember right, what happened with a great result is that Jesus used three words, didn't he? In verse 43, Lazarus, come out. And what that shows us is the power of God in Jesus Christ.

Because just as God creates the world by his word, he recreates Lazarus with one word as well. Here the power of Jesus is being displayed.

[10 : 22] And so he reverses the decay of the body and gives life to him as well. And, of course, what is being shown here is that no one has ever exercised this kind of authority and power.

And as I said to the children, it is a foretaste of our own resurrection, where each of us who believe are called by name. Verse 45, if you have John 11 open for you, tells us that many came to believe in Jesus as the resurrection and the life as a result of Jesus raising Lazarus.

And that brings us to our application of this, really. It is what we are meant to do. Throughout this passage in the Gospel of John, we are challenged and called to place our faith and our lives in Jesus Christ.

John is constantly calling, in John, he is constantly showing that Jesus calls us to believe in him. These things are written, these signs that we have gone through the whole summer, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name. And so the point of this passage is that Jesus overrules the death of Lazarus so that people will believe in him as the resurrection and the life. He tells his disciples, I'm glad that I wasn't there when Lazarus died so that you might believe.

[11 : 45] It's unmistakable proof that Jesus is the ruler of death and of life. And then John makes sure we see how important belief is to Martha and Mary when he says to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

He who believes in me, he's going to repeat it three times, though he die, yet shall he live. Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

And at the tomb, Martha objects to Jesus taking away the stone. It's going to really stink, she says.

And Jesus says, didn't I tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?

And of course what we see is that she does believe. The stone is taken away. She sees the glory of God displayed in this extraordinary miracle. And this is the word for us.

Each of us sees the glory of God as we believe in Jesus. What faith does, what belief does is open our eyes. But not only that, not only do our eyes get opened, as we talked about last week, to the power of God working in this world, but also what happens is that belief actually prepares the way for God's mercy and his power and his goodness to be displayed in our life.

[13 : 03] Belief is a critical part of our life as Christians. And we see at the end of this passage that unbelief, very differently, hinders God from approaching us.

And he might, in a way, it keeps his hands shut to us. And so as we go away from that, this incredible scene that we have seen of Jesus' power, we're actually being called to place each of our very different lives into Jesus' hands.

We're probably facing very different fears, very different challenges, very different uncertainties from what Mary and Martha were experiencing. We might be wondering about God's timing in our life.

Why is he slow to act in the way we hope for? Why are the things that we hope for not taking place? But whatever is happening for us, we see here that Jesus calls you to believe that he is the resurrection and the life.

That the one who raised Lazarus in one word is himself the one who will raise you to eternal life. And the power of that resurrection is something that Paul said, I want to know more than anything else in the world.

[14 : 18] And we are called to desire that power in our own lives as well. To know that by his resurrection power, he gives us life now that is stronger than any evil, including death.

It's the very life of Jesus Christ that is within us. It can't be taken away and it transforms us, revealing God's glory in your life.

And this is something we have to have faith in, that the resurrection power of Jesus is within us and can't be taken away. And so our challenge is that we would place our lives in the hands of this one who is the resurrection and the life.

And I'd like to end by reading Romans 8 and for us to read it together. It's on page 149. This is the implication of Jesus saying he is the resurrection and the life.

It is a daily implication for us. Romans 8, 38, page 149. And we'll read chapter 8, verse 38 and 39 together.

[15 : 36] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor power nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As we sang this morning, this is the greatest news that we could ever hear. It is the gift that comes from Jesus Christ who is the resurrection and the life. Amen.