

A Message From Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Now, if you turn with me, please, to the passage we read in John chapter 11. Tonight we're going to look at verses 28 and 29 of John 11. When she had said this, that's Martha, of course, when she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, The teacher is here and is calling for you.

And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. There are just so many studies that we could take out of this one event of Jesus and the way that he dealt with the death of Lazarus, with Lazarus himself, in restoring him to life.

We could look at the Lord himself throughout the whole of this incident, find so many things that are said about him, so many things that he did as they are recorded for us here, so many things that he said.

And that itself would be such an important and beneficial study. We could look at these two sisters. We could look at the way that they had lost their brother Lazarus.

We could look at the way that they're sitting here mourning and the way that Jesus dealt with each of them differently, taking account of their personalities and their different needs, even though they are very close sisters.

[1 : 1 9] We could look at the miracle itself when he brought Lazarus back from the dead, as later on you find in the chapter. We could see how that came about through the power of Christ, the word of Christ, bringing the dead back to life.

We could look at the plot, amazingly, that's mentioned as you go on reading through the chapter towards the end of the chapter there, from verse 45, how there is a plot to actually try and apprehend Jesus and bring him into custody.

And then when you go into chapter 12, that follows through even to the plot, including putting Lazarus to death as well, because obviously the fact that Lazarus was brought back from the dead and now appeared as a living person once again, that was a great blow to the Pharisees and to those who wanted to find fault with Christ and even to get rid of him.

So all of these would be really beneficial studies for us within this one amazing incident where Jesus deals with the death of Lazarus. But we're looking at this particular one here, where Martha, having met with Jesus, went back to the house and spoke in this way to Mary, her sister, who had remained in the house and who privately or secretly or quietly, probably, in a way that whispered in her ear, said, The teacher is here and is calling for you.

And the response of Mary then, when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. First of all, it's important to see how this message that came from Jesus through Martha to Mary, how this message followed a confession of faith on Martha's part.

[3 : 1 4] You go back to chapter 2, verse 27 in the chapter, and you can see the confession that Martha makes there when Jesus had revealed himself to her as the resurrection and the life and that whoever believes in him, though he die, yet shall he live.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? And then her answer to that is effectively a confession of her faith. Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.

And in that one verse, you have three parallel titles that she gives to Jesus in that one confession. The Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.

And each of these are also important titles in themselves. We're going to focus mostly on that third one, this one who is coming into the world. Because that's really effectively a title that's given to Jesus, not just here, but elsewhere in the Gospels as well, going back to the Old Testament promises that there would be one who would come to be a deliverer, a saviour, a messiah.

And that he would actually be the one that was promised by God right back into history itself, right back to Genesis. And as you go through, you can see these verses.

[4 : 35] For example, and it's interesting actually looking at this in comparison with Matthew 11. If we just take a wee bit of time to go back to Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7 and from verse 18.

These are messengers from John the Baptist, the disciples of John the Baptist. And they're coming to have reported to them all the things that they had actually discovered.

And John calling two of the disciples said, sent them to the Lord saying, Are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another? You see, there's built into that the same emphasis on Jesus, the one who is to come.

They were waiting for the one who is to come. And this is the question that they wanted to send back to Jesus. And then when the men had come to him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us to you saying, Are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another?

And very interestingly as well, though we could really probably make too much of it, that immediately follows a passage where Jesus had raised the son of this widow from Nain, who was being carried to his burying place, this funeral that he came across, and he brought that man back from the dead.

[5 : 56] Brought him back and delivered him to his mother. So very interesting that that's like John chapter 11, where you have an emphasis on death, where you have an emphasis on Jesus as the one who is able to overcome death, to reach into death as it were, and take out those who have died and bring them back to life, demonstrating that he is the resurrection and the life, demonstrating for us spiritually that our spiritual death is no problem to him.

That he is the one who has the capacity to raise us from that spiritual death, where we're dead in trespasses and sins as we come into the world and bring us back to life.

So there you have in Luke's gospel an emphasis there as well, or reference at least to Jesus as the one who is to come. And then when you come back to, when you look further at that chapter in Luke 7, you can see that when the messengers had reached Jesus, he sent them back, verse 22, go and tell John what you have seen, and demonstrate that to him as the work of Jesus.

Now come back to John chapter 11. Here is Martha having gone to meet with Jesus. Here is Martha being taught by Jesus. Here is Martha as she spoke about Jesus as the teacher, as we'll see in a minute.

But he had brought to her an additional revelation or knowledge that she had not previously experienced or known herself. I am the resurrection and the life.

[7 : 37] And she goes back to Mary with her mind filled with that great truth. And as she goes back to Mary with that great truth, she urges Mary and says to her, the teacher has come.

The one that we were waiting for is actually here. And he's calling for you. And you see how much theology John really packs into that brief statement.

The teacher is here. The teacher has come. When you go back over in John's gospel itself, the way that Jesus is spoken of as the one that was coming into the world right at the very beginning of John's gospel, you find that mentioned in the opening part of the first chapter where you find that this was indeed the light who was to come into the world.

Verse 9, the true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world. And then all the way through John's gospel, chapter 10 for example, where Jesus speaks of himself as the one who has come into the world.

I have come that they might have life and have it in all its abundance. Contrasting himself with the false shepherds. So all the way through Luke's gospel and John's gospel and you can see the church at the time brought out from that in their expectancy, they are expecting the one who was promised who is entitled the one who is to come.

[9 : 10] And now Mary is being told the teacher has indeed come. And he's here. Not that Mary didn't know this of course, but in her old experience at that particular moment, she comes to realize in a way that had not realized it before who Jesus is from what Martha actually said.

He is the resurrection and the life. He is the one who has come. He is the one who is able to deal with the dead even. And with her mind full of that, she comes with this confession with these details. In other words, what you have before you is to begin with a very dark and somber scene. A scene of death and of mourning and of sorrow and of loss and of sadness.

It's a dark chamber. It's one where it includes even a sepulcher in which the body of Lazarus has already been buried. And here is Martha coming, having listened to Jesus, having heard him describe himself, more or less saying to herself and to Mary, this light of the resurrection, this light of who Jesus is has come into our situation.

In other words, this dark scene of death is lit up by this reference to resurrection, to Jesus being the resurrection and the life.

[10:48] The devastating effects of sin. the darkness that is in that scene. And all of a sudden, it's lit up by this splendid meteor of light.

I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe this? He said. Now it's with her mind filled with that great truth that Martha comes back to Mary and says this, the teacher is here and is calling for you. Have you noticed the beginning of verse 28? These words, when she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary. And it's somewhat strange to begin with as you look at these words in the verse.

Why does it say that, when she had said this? Why does it specify it's when she had said this that she then went and called her sister Mary saying this to her, the teacher is come.

Well, it really just again shows us that when she had stated this, in other words, when her mind had actually become filled with this great truth and actually brought it out in this confession, then she went to her sister Mary.

[12:06] Then she went filled with this. It's that blessing, it's that insight that she actually brought back to her sister Mary. Now we have known blessing, we have known blessing in this week that has gone by.

We have met with the resurrection and the life. Jesus has blessed his word. Jesus has met his people in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The resurrection and the life is clearly established even in that itself for us.

And is it not with our minds still fresh and filled with that blessing that we go and tell others about it? That we go and actually say to them the teacher is here.

The promised one has come. And I want you to come and meet him. Come and hear what he has to say to you. That's our great motive or one of our great motives for evangelism.

That we know that the teacher has come. That he has come into this world. That he has come into this world in the way that he himself came. In the form of a servant. That he has died the death of the cross.

[13:19] That he is now risen from the dead. That he is alive forevermore. He is here. And is calling for you. So go and tell.

Go and tell them that this is fact. That this is true. That you have come to know this great truth for yourself.

It's a message following a confession of faith. Secondly, it's a message focusing on Jesus as the teacher.

The teacher is here and is calling for you. The older translations have the master. But the word in Greek actually means the teacher. the one who is the teacher.

Who is above a group of pupils. Of course when you come across this in the gospels what you really are confronted with is discipleship. Because that's what a disciple is.

[14:17] A disciple is a pupil. A disciple is a student. A student of the teacher of Jesus. And so really the theology of John and the very words that are used there in the description the teacher is here of Jesus.

reminds us that that's who is present in the gospel as well. And of course Jesus referred to himself later on in chapter 13 in another amazing incident when he washed the feet of the disciples and therefore gave a demonstration of his own state as a servant that he was carrying out the will of the father as a servant in this world coming even to stoop so low as to wash the feet of these disciples. And when he then asked them the question having done so do you know what I have done to you? You call me teacher and lord and so I am.

If I then your lord and teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done to you.

What he's saying there is I am the teacher I am lord in fact but that hasn't prevented me from serving you in this way. I have come to be the servant and to serve you and to give my life for you.

[15 : 49] And now here is this great statement the teacher is here the teacher has come. Jesus' authority and Jesus' prophetic office is all built into that same word the teacher.

Remember the shorter catechism in question twenty-four how does Christ execute that means how does he carry out the office of a prophet? Not how did he but how does he?

It's an ongoing thing. Something that he has a ministry in as he now ministers to us through his Holy Spirit from heaven. Well there's the question how does Christ carry out the office the role of a prophet?

The answer is Christ executes carries out the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his word and spirit the will of God for our salvation.

Who's here tonight as well as yourselves? In what form is Jesus present through his spirit in this gathering tonight? I was talking to somebody this morning after the morning service.

[17 : 05] We were just discussing a text in the Bible where it says where two or three have been gathered together in my name there am I in the midst. That's not a promise. That's a fact.

A promise is something that need not necessarily have yet been fulfilled. But when Jesus says where two or three have been gathered in my name there I am in the midst.

It's a fact. It's something that you take as a fact. It's something that you know is true right now.

Jesus Christ is here and he's here as the teacher.

He's here to reveal to us by his word and spirit the will of God for our salvation. Doesn't that put a thrill through your heart? Doesn't that gladden your mind?

Doesn't that really lift you above yourself that he has not left you and me to our own capacity as to how to preach the word how to declare the gospel.

[18 : 05] He is the great prophet. He's the teacher and he's here tonight to teach you and to teach me in his prophetic office by his word and spirit the will of God for our salvation.

It's a message from the teacher. The teacher is here and is calling for you. Secondly it's a message as it's focused on Jesus as teacher it's a message for our circumstances.

Now look at verses 21 and 32. Verse 21 there you find Martha saying to Jesus Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died.

And move ahead to 32 when Mary actually came to where Jesus was she fell at his feet saying Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died.

Now from that we take it that these two sisters in their sense of loss and in their grief that they were actually dwelling their minds upon this point that they would have been discussing this point together that they would have spoken in these terms more than once many times probably when they reflected back four days to the death of their brother Lazarus and over these four days this has been occupying their minds they've been going over this again and again if only the Lord had been here this would not have happened our brother would not have died if only Lord you had been here when they met him this is what they said to him and how often life is like that if only if only it had been different if only I had done something differently if only so and so had not done what they did this would not have come to pass our life is filled with if only if only this if only that what that's really doing is dwelling our minds upon something that cannot be undone what cannot be reversed although of course

[20 : 22] Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead that is a unique declaration of his own ability as the resurrection and the life to prove the point maybe you're here tonight with something in your life that causes you to say if only if only I hadn't done that if only I had not spoken the way I did if only I had not acted the way I did if only such and such a person I know had not gone out and done what they've done well that's how life is but you see it's into that that Jesus speaks his great word of power over death it's into that situation that Jesus says to Martha and to Mary too that the teacher that he is is speaking as the resurrection and the life and now Martha is saying with this new insight to her sister the teacher is here and what she's really saying to her as I'm sure she did explain somewhat later as well and filled it out a bit more for her indeed

Jesus himself might have done so as well because we don't have in the Bible every single thing that is spoken by Jesus on such occasions or even others it's the gist of it you have there you've got the crux of it there you've got the kernel of it there there's enough there that God has revealed to us to know what it's about but it's that new insight that Jesus gave into who he is and what his power is like and his ability over death that's packed into this reference the teacher is here and tonight that's the teacher that's reaching out to you as well in the gospel we all have our losses at various times in

different ways some of these different to the losses other people have various kinds of losses but the the most painful obviously is the loss that we have in death when death comes to our families when death takes loved ones away and we go on missing them maybe we go on saying if only that here is the resurrection and the life that makes all the difference to our situation that brings this light of triumph over death right alongside us and into our experience and the fact that he's here that he's here against your loss however great it may be and it will be doesn't it make all the difference that he's here that the teacher is here with you that he's reaching out to you that you know he has power over death and over your circumstances remember when

John in the book of revelation in the first chapter where this great vision he had of of of Jesus and when he fell down before him awed at this great presence and this majesty of this figure and Jesus put his hand on him and said don't be afraid I am the living one who became dead and I'm alive forever more if we take the words literally and translate them literally that's really what the text is saying that's what Jesus himself said to John he put his hand on him what a wonderful touch that itself is to a man who's afraid in the presence of this awesome figure fear not don't be afraid why not because I am the living one who became dead and now I'm alive forever more he's saying to him much more than the fact that he was dead and he's now alive what he's saying is I am the living one and it is as the living one that I came into the world it is as the living one that I came to the cross it is as the living one that I gave myself to the death of the cross it is as the living one that my body was laid in the tomb it is as the living one God that I came forth from that tomb and I am alive forever more

I'm the living one who became dead I gave myself to death and I overcame death and I'm alive forever more and death will never touch me again and that's why as the resurrection and the life he assures you and he assures me whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and though our body could be in the tomb for thousands of years death is not going to be the final victor over it if I have believed in Jesus Christ whoever lives and believes in me shall never die shall never be subject to death claiming them do you believe believe this that's what she brought to her sister Mary that's the news she brought from Jesus that's the message that she brought in the terms in the words the teacher is here and is calling for you of course we're looking at it in reflection from everything else that's around it it doesn't necessarily of course mean that

Mary knew that instantly when Martha said the teacher is here but we're looking at it as a message from Jesus to you and to me tonight and as you look at it in the context in which you find it it's a message for our circumstances he's here as that hymn writer Katharina von Schlegel put it in these well known words and this applies not just to those experiencing bereavement and loss and sorrow but all kinds of troubles and anxieties and traumas be still my soul the Lord is on thy side bear patiently the cross of grief or pain leave to thy God to order and provide in every change he faithful will remain be still my soul thy best thy heavenly friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end be still my soul when dearest friends depart and all is darkened in the veil of tears then shalt thou better know his love his heart who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears be still my soul thy Jesus can repay from his own fullness goodness all he takes away the teacher is here and it's as the teacher that he comes to bring his own presence to bear on all our circumstances whatever your circumstances are tonight every single person in this building tonight put all your circumstances together and even if your circumstances tonight are absolutely different to anybody else's in here these words apply to you as much as to anyone else the teacher is here and is calling for you there is nothing more important for you to know than that

[28 : 12] Jesus the teacher has come toward you is reaching out to you in the gospel a message from the teacher a message for our circumstances a message thirdly for the individual notice what he said what she said to Mary the teacher is here and is calling for you that text is really just almost a plum in the teacher's mouth in the preacher's mouth because what you find there is so easy isn't it to deal with and just say well this is so applicable to a preaching occasion to a worship occasion where it's saying to us the teacher has come the teacher is here and he's calling for you you singular every single one of you tonight this teacher is calling to you through the gospel he's calling you to come to him to go to him it's a message directly and it's a message personally for you here tonight for you whatever your circumstances are he's calling to all of you who are unsaved who still don't know him still remain unconverted you have not come to yield your knee your life and bend your knee to Jesus he's calling for you he's reaching out to you in the gospel the teacher is here that's what he's saying to you that's what he's doing in his invitation through the gospel he is calling for you he's calling for you particularly what does it matter who else he's calling to he's calling for

you never mind who else is here if you're here and you're not saved he's calling to you don't pass it off to somebody else don't think this is not really for me it must be for somebody else it's for you it's for you it's for you who are hesitant for you who are stalling for you who are holding back for you who are doubtful as to whether or not this would be a good thing for you to do to come to Jesus or you who are reluctant you who are questioning you are afraid you have all of these thoughts going through your mind as the gospel addresses you well the teacher is here he's calling to you he knows your circumstances he knows your mind he knows your thoughts he knows what you're thinking he knows your situation in life he knows every single thing that you're saying to yourself right now as you hear his call and you are hearing his call you're listening to his call you're hearing his voice forget about the preacher forget about who's in the pulpit this is that's not important what is important is that you hear through the gospel the voice of the teacher and he's saying

I'm here and I'm calling to you and he's calling to you young people all of you young people whose presence here is such a wonderful thing to see he's calling to you tonight because you're never too young to come to Jesus you're never too young to come to know him as a teacher he's calling to you tonight he's not leaving you out of the audience or out of those who are receiving this great invitation or this message and so Jesus is really through the gospel saying to you young people the teacher is here I am here and I'm calling you I'm calling you too young people have their own needs young people have their own pressures in life and you need Jesus and Jesus knows you need him that's why he's saying I'm here and I'm speaking to you tonight and I'm calling to you to come to me this is what the preacher is saying to you the teacher has come and is calling to you it's here too for you who are saying I'm past that stage now in my life

I'm okay as I am most of my life is over what's the point in me coming to Jesus what's the point in me thinking about being a disciple I leave that to the younger ones do you think that Jesus accepts that from you do you think that satisfies him do you think the message is not for you too even if you're on the brink of eternity and any of us could be tonight the teacher is here and is calling for you every single person in here has something by which they may serve the Lord by which they may come to take their place in his confessing church and here is the message from the teacher to you tonight directly if this is what you're saying about yourself that it's long since passed for you now and you'll just stay as you are the teacher is here and he's calling for you once you respond he's not satisfied with you just staying as you are if you haven't already come to know him to follow him to serve him to confess him he's calling to you believers as well the teacher is here and is calling for you for you to go and tell others about him for you to serve him more than you've served him hitherto for you to come and be his disciple openly for you to come more fully into discipleship yourself and he's here for you tonight if you're backslidden and if you've gone away from following the Lord closely the teacher is here and he's calling for you he's not going to let you go he's not going to leave you thinking

I just can't go back now of course you can of course you should he wants you back he wants you where you should be the teacher is here and he's calling for you it's a message from Jesus a message focused on him as the teacher a message from the teacher it's a message for our circumstances whatever they may be the message addressed to us in these circumstances it's a message for the individual that means every single one as we've said whatever your circumstances are he's here and he's calling for you and fourthly just in a word it's a message for immediate acceptance look at verse 29 when she heard it she rose quickly and went to him when she heard it as soon as she heard it she rose quickly and went to him if you're here tonight you haven't yet gone out to him he is calling for you to rise up from where you are from your station in life from your condition as it is and go out to him and he's asking and he's demanding indeed that you do it now because if

Jesus is at all worth following why should you delay any further in following him if he is indeed your teacher and your master and your saviour and is to be your saviour and your lord from now and forever why should you spend another hour another moment without him why should you actually sit where you are what would Mary have done if she had sat in this house what would have been like for her if she had just sat and said well that's alright but I'm not really going to go just now think of what she would have missed out on when Jesus saw her weeping he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled she drew the increased sympathy of Jesus toward her when she came to him Jesus is never going to be inactive when you come to him you will always find him active towards you in the best possible way when she heard it she rose quickly and went to him will you do

that now believer or unsaved whatever we might be tonight this in principle is really the same thing isn't it let's go to him get up from where we are and go to him the teacher has come and is calling for you let's pray

[37 : 33] Lord our God we thank you for your voice through the gospel we thank you for the reality of your presence we give thanks that you are indeed the teacher of your people and that you come to teach them the things of your salvation as no one else can Lord we ask that you would help us this evening to respond to your call help us not to delay in responding to your voice calling upon us to leave where we are and come to you help us we pray to commit ourselves to you help us to realize that it's the best thing we can possibly do is to heed your command to heed your invitation to heed your call and to come to you as the teacher receive us we pray now and pardon our sin for Jesus sake amen let's conclude our worship this evening and singing from psalm 62 psalm 62 on page 294 the tune is martyrdom and singing from verse 5 to verse 8 my soul wait thou with patience upon thy

God alone on him dependeth all my hope and expectation he only my salvation is my strong rock is he he only is my sure defense I shall not move it be and when the psalmist says that he waits upon God that's by no means the same as delaying it's the very opposite of delay to wait upon the Lord means coming to him and depending upon him and as we sing these verses let's do so still hearing the voice of the teacher who has come and is calling us to come to him verses 5 to 8 my soul wait thou with patience my soul wait thou with patience upon my God alone on him depend doth all my hope and expectation he only my salvation is and my strong rock is he he only is my sure he fair I shall not do with thee in God my glory place it is and my salvation sure in God the rock is of my strength my refuge most secure he people praise pure confidence in him continually before him for he out your heart

God is a refuge high I'll go to the main door this evening now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always amen and may seek with mem anybody for more than Martha or is Kevin a■■■■ Pu and people don't please God not God it