

The Believer Will See

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Preacher: Rev Scott Macleod

[0:00] Turn back to the Gospel of John, chapter 11, and we want to read again at verse 40. Jesus said to her, that's Martha, did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?

Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? Can I ask you a question off the back of that verse?

Would you like to see the glory of God? The quick answer would probably be yes, but I suppose the more we think about it, the more hesitant we might be to see that glory.

The more we think about it, it probably becomes a terrifying prospect. But if our quick answer is yes, just to imagine if we could see, just for a moment, if we got a glimpse of the glory of God, if we could see that beauty, if we could behold that wonder, if we could see into the throne room of heaven, if we could see that glory, so often many say, then I would believe.

But that's the wrong way around, isn't it? That's not what the verse says. It says, if you believe, then you will see the glory of God.

[1:33] But one comes first. That's believing. But if you read that passage there, like that verse there again, there's a very weighty if in it.

A very weighty if that lands squarely on our laps this morning. If we believe.

And we can deduce from it if we do not believe. We won't see glory. We won't see the glory of God. There's an eternal ring about this verse.

An eternal truth in this verse. If we don't believe, there'll be no comfort, no grace, no mercy, no compassion.

And in the context of the chapter that we're reading, there'll be no life. And the word of God is speaking to you again this morning to listen.

[2:49] Maybe it's a second time. Maybe it's a third time. Maybe he's back again, fourth, fifth, twelfth, hundred and fortieth time. Jesus wants you to believe.

You can see it in verse 15. Jesus waited there so that you may believe.

And it comes through again in verse 42. That all things were done in this account as he prays to his father. So that the crowd that were standing around would believe.

Jesus wants you to believe. So when we think about this resurrection account of Lazarus, who's it for?

I think it's for Lazarus. He got his life back. But it's not really. It's for the people. It's for everyone standing around.

[3:55] It's for everyone standing around. That they might believe. And it's for us, as we stand at a distance, that we might believe.

You can imagine these people who saw this running off and telling their friends. Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. And being persuasive with them.

And the joy bursting out of them. The question is, would they believe? And the question is, do you believe?

So I want to hinge your thoughts on that. That this resurrection account, it's for you this morning. So that you might believe. And what we're going to do is we'll just really kind of throw a skipping stone over this passage. There's a lot in it. But I want to land on four points about this resurrection account, which is for each and every one of us.

[5:00] And the first point is going to be that there's a time in it for you. The second point is that there's going to be a promise in it for you. The third point is that there's sympathy in it for you.

And the last point is that there's evidence here for you to believe. So there's a time for you.

Now, Ecclesiastes tells us there's a time for everything. There's a good and a right time for everything. Now, you know that yourself.

You can tell the simplest of jokes. Tell it at the wrong time. It doesn't land with the effect that you were maybe hoping. Tell it in the wrong company. It turns out to be terrible.

Even the best invention in the world, if it lands at the wrong time, it's revealed in the market at the wrong time, it doesn't have the right effect. And in our passage here, Jesus' timing grabs our attention.

[5:59] You'll see Jesus' approach to time really come through in verse 6. When he had heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

He delays to act. The Son of God would have rightly have known the severity of Lazarus' condition. How ill he was waits not just one, but two days.

And the message has come from his two sisters, Mary and Martha. And it's not a message that says, brother, is ill. Come quickly. It's a message that says, Lord, he whom you love is ill.

And the love of Jesus, it kind of backdrops this whole scene. Because it's highlighted and emphasized in verse 5.

It says there specifically, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. It's almost like he loved to be with them. And the message from his sisters that he whom you love is ill almost emphasizes that great love that was evident between them.

[7:13] And you would, well, we would expect Jesus to go straight as he could to the one he loved. That they might get better. But we see Jesus doesn't respond in the way that we would expect or the way in which Mary and Martha would expect.

And all this is happening whilst in the conversation with the disciples. Jesus goes on to say that they're going to return to Judea again.

The disciples hearing that, their ears plucked up. Because if they're going to go to Judea, they know that the Jews are there ready to stone Jesus.

If we're going to go there, we're possibly going to get killed. For the disciples, it seems like the right time to stay put, doesn't it?

It would be the wise thing to do. Stay where we are. Jesus responds by saying in verse 9 that, well, there's 12 hours in a day.

[8:27] He refers to time. And commentators will agree that, well, what he's saying here is that, well, there's a time for work to be done. You know, you graft your hours in the daytime and then you rest in the dark in the evening.

Jesus is saying, what needs to be done will be done. And the time that I've been given, my hour has not yet come. These are the days to work for the glory of God.

So for the disciples, Jesus doesn't respond the way they would expect. Mary and Martha want them to come.

Disciples, they want them to stay. But they shall delay. They say, sisters are sure he can help.

So they send that urgent cry to him, that message. Does he stay because he doesn't care? No.

We've seen that he loves them.

[9:30] And they're dear to him. Why does he do it? Well, it tells in verse 4, at the end of it. It is for the glory of God.

First thing is that this would be for the glory of God. And the second thing is in verse 15. So that those may see and believe.

Not in someone that goes to do a healing. Jesus didn't want you to believe in a healer, primarily. But someone that could bring life.

Willish death. Someone that can bring resurrection. Someone that has the power over death. To conquer that power. Jesus waited for the right time.

And what is evident in our own lives is that God does not work the way we would expect him to.

There's a time where we cry out for help. Nothing happens. There's a time where he says, get up.

[10:50] We need to go. And we want to say, no. Let's stay. I'm comfortable here. I'm safe here.

Neither imply a lack of love. Times of suffering, sorrows, hardship may come to us. But God has it in his time.

In his control. And the right response for us is to say that, well, this is a time for us. And a time which we must say for the glory of God.

Today is a time for you. To hear this message. To hear the hope of the gospel.

Maybe it's a time where he's saying, get up and follow me. Time to trust me. Stop hiding. With only 12 hours.

[11:54] Hear his word and listen to his voice because it comes with great promise. That's our second point. The time is ours. The time for us to hear.

But to hear these words of promise that are for us today, this morning. Those promises give us a sense of certainty. When everything's uncertain. And promises, when it's made by someone who can fulfill it, make all the difference.

When they're capable to do it, uphold it, keep it, makes all the difference when we're at the center of that promise. Where is Jesus' promise in this passage for you this morning?

Well, you'll read it in verse 25. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

What a promise. A promise that is made by someone who is capable, able and faithful to uphold it.

[13:04] It's a promise for you. But in this conversation, and in this promise that is made, firstly to Martha, we read in verse 23 that Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again.

He puts it so simply. But Martha recognizes, yes, there's going to be a day of resurrection. She knows and she understands that everyone will rise.

Some to eternal life. Some to eternal death. Some to heaven. Some to hell. She's got all that right. Jesus makes it exactly clear what the difference will make on that day.

Whoever believes they'll live. They'll never die. Whoever believes in me will live.

The body will die for sure. Nothing surer. But the believer, their soul will live.

[14:27] Jesus makes that promise for us. And he validates that he is the person who can uphold it. I am the resurrection and the life.

The promise is there. But there's a question there too. For you to answer. A question that's set before us every time we open the word of God.

And a question that Jesus asks by the power of his spirit this morning. Do you believe this? Do you believe it?

Do you believe it? That even though the body dies, you live. There's a promise here of life for you. He can keep it. And he will keep it for you. With a very weighty if. Place it in your lap.

[15:39] If you believe. if you believe it's a promise but it's not a cold and empty promise it's a promise that comes with great compassion great sympathy for he knows that you need to hear it that's our third point there's a sympathy in this for you now knowing that someone has been through something difficult makes all the difference when we are looking for help ourselves we can go to that person there's a common ground there's a sympathy with one another although our feelings may be very different we can talk about things that are similar and we do that when we face these difficult times whether it's extreme suffering or sorrows or maybe it's even that we've made a grave mistake in our lives even as a Christian you know people that have made mistakes are helpful for us they've been through it and they understand it and to come out the other side should be a thing that should likewise glorify God there's a huge value in speaking to others who know it first hand and we see that Jesus is not detached from feelings and emotions associated with death in this passage he's not detached from us as a son of God he knows that experience amongst these experiences this is one of the well-known verses in the Bible the shortest one

Jesus wept and it's an interesting verse because if you look at the other resurrection accounts of Jesus woman of name son he says to her do not weep the raising of Jairus' daughter he says to the mourners do not weep so it's interesting now when we come to this death we find these emotions in Jesus as he weeps for one that he loved but is it because Lazarus has died or is it because he loves the crowd that are full of sorrow that know the full effects of sin knowing how much that loss means when they lose someone they love the despair of losing a brother he sympathizes with that pain he knows what it's like to lose someone you love the son of God in our nature and the full effect of it we see that he has this sympathy with those who mourn with those who have the questions where were you with those who have the questions why but alongside this emotion of sadness and sorrow there's another emotion that comes through in this passage and it's maybe not the clearest in the English that we have here although your Bible might have a footnote beside the word deeply moved it's here in verse 33 and it appears again in verse 35 there's an emotion there that implies when it's used in the Greek when it's used everywhere else it implies an anger towards something a hostility towards something it says indignant if you have the ESV food note it's almost

as if something's unfair something's wrong and it's not an anger towards Mary or Martha of course it's an anger a hostility against death it shouldn't be this way the effects of sin the sorrow that it brings the wages of sin is death that's what comes and so much there's this hostility against it the commentator

Mullen says that yes his eyes are tears of sympathy but his soul is held by rage he advances towards the tomb as in words that Calvin says as a champion who prepares for conflict it's almost as if he's got that mind to defeat sin's devastation the effect of it the power of it the sorrow of it we can feel and know the sorrow of death we can sometimes have an anger in our hearts deep within us a hostility full of questions Jesus isn't detached from these circumstances that he can sympathize with us and it's not just knowing this in our heads it's knowing it in our hearts knowing what it means in that day it's easy to say in our head it's easy to say when we don't have these heavy weighty questions in our lap but knowing it in practice knowing what it means on Monday knowing what it means when these things meet us in our experience even when we're struggling to believe we see Martha walking to the tomb with Jesus standing there in front of it Jesus says roll away the stone and she's there saying what are you doing he's been dead four days Martha had all the right answers she knew about the resurrection she knew about God's power but when it came to the moment she couldn't help but doubt so he says to her do you not remember really did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God having it in our heads it's totally different believing it in practice so what I was saying to the children it's good to come to church to be reminded it's good to read our bibles to be reminded we so easily and quickly forget we have so many truths in our heads that in the moment the mist comes down and we forget them it's good to be reminded to hold on to these truths so that in these days and in these circumstances that are most difficult for us where we face the strongest of emotions in our hearts God the Father speaks to us great promises great comforts great assurances sympathizing with you in your need and it's a word that evidence is itself our last point there's been a time for you there's a promise for you there's a sympathy for you in this passage and lastly the evidence is here for you evidence makes all the difference when you've got a decision to make evidence makes all the difference in the courtroom when they're making life changing decisions over people's lives there's evidence here for you that'll change your life if you believe in it every

[25 : 33] Christian here is evidence of the life giving power of Jesus they have been born again taken from the death of sin freed from the effect of sin there's evidence in every Christian for you and maybe you've seen that change in someone as you look at yourself there's evidence of sin there's evidence that you be guilty before God if you are put face to face with his glory John wrote this gospel so you would believe Jesus performed this miracle so you would believe

Lazarus come out in verse 43 he comes out of that tomb I don't know how he came out was he crawling shuffling rolling I don't suppose it matters but out of death he came it is all done for the crowd that stood by it was evidence for them so that they might believe in him that they may have that promise that they may have that assurance that Jesus is the one that has power over death and when death comes knocking at the door you know this in your head

I'm pretty sure all of us know it in our head but when death comes knocking at the door when we're face to face do you believe that you'll have life it's a hard thing to believe if we're honest with ourselves we're often plagued with unbelief we have our doubts like Martha so we need to be reminded we need to come to this evidence this truth and the greater truth of the resurrection of Jesus himself power over death assurance for you this morning for the one who believes will see the glory of God in measure and work in this life the work of God's hand in the life of the believer bringing them from death to life but yet a greater sense with a believer in time when the twelve hours of their life have passed that they behold the glory of God in ways that words cannot express so this resurrection account of

Lazarus it's actually it's more about the people that we're standing by isn't it it's a resurrection account for you and in God's timing we're here together twelve hours a time to hear his call a time to trust Jesus maybe it's a right time now for you to come to him he's got a great promise for you the greatest of all assurances if you do come and believe the body will die but you'll have eternal life and you'll battle with all the emotions in your experience all the difficulties that plague us but he's a sympathetic

God that knows our suffering and so there's evidence here for you to believe in the resurrecting power of God that you may believe and be assured you will have life and that you will see the glory

of God people that are dead in sin brought to life and kept eternally in his hand forever knowing the beauty of the glory of God for all eternity the questions in your lap do you believe it amen our [32:14] Lord and God we pray that you would help us to believe give us years of understanding at this time as we stand before this evidence speak to us we pray you give us assurance of your great promises that we may come humbly before you and fall at your feet and believe in the giver of life be with us we pray help us in these things in Jesus name amen we'll conclude by singing in psalm 90 psalm 90 of the scottish psalter version which you'll find on page 350 we'll sing from verse 15 i'll sing the last three stanzas of the psalm psalm 90 psalm speaks of the beauty of the lord and yet in measure a work that is evident in the believer that even though they die they shall live according as the days have been wherein we grief have had and years wherein we ill have seen so do thou make us glad let thy work and power appear thy servants face before and show us to their children dear thy glory evermore and let the beauty of the

Lord our God be as upon our handiworks establish them each one so we stand to sing these words to God's praise according as the days of year when we dream of year and year we we ever have seen so do thou make us glad oh let thy power and power appear thy servants face before! and show unto their children dear thy glory evermore! and let the beauty of the Lord may may Rest upon and remain with you all, now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.