

Comfort in Death

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John, entitled, Jesus is God.

Amen. What a great song. What a great truth. I hope that one day that you will be at that resurrection too. It's one of my greatest joys throughout the week, I mean outside being a dad and a husband.

But every Thursday afternoon I get to go and I get to teach to the training centers. I get to teach twice, but Thursday is my favorite class. I get to teach on the book of Acts. And it was the first day, the first day we had the Acts, I guess the start off of the Acts class.

I had the students go and we read through John 14, John 15, and John 16, and John 17. And it seems kind of weird, it's like you're teaching a book of Acts. Why are you reading in John?

Well, there's several promises that the Lord gives the disciples in these passages of Scripture. And one of the great things that strengthens my faith is that they come to fruition in the book of Acts.

[1 : 1 2] And in John 16, if you guys are with me, John 16, Jesus promises that he's going to bring his Holy Spirit. He says, it's good for me that I would leave.

Because whenever I leave, I can send down the Holy Spirit. You see, that's good for the people in the book of Acts because they can't do anything without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Amen? Just like us.

And so, right now we're at a passage in John chapter 11. You say, what does all that have to do? Well, right now, Jesus in John chapter 11, he is changing his ministry from a public ministry where he was out there doing things in the public.

He's changing it more to what we would call the priority ministry. You guys remember that triangle up there? Yeah, I took that down, okay? I've gotten hounded for that.

But anyways, we have that thing that used to be, do, serve, train. You remember? And it was also called the private ministry, your personal ministry, your public ministry, and the priority ministry.

[2 : 1 0] And the priority ministry is basically this. Training others. 2 Timothy 2.2. What you guys do in the foundations, it's training others. That's the priority ministry.

And what Jesus is doing in John chapter 11, if you just pay attention just for a second, is he is transitioning from his view to the public more so right now to his disciples.

In the book of John, he has broken up in these last chapters. It's going to talk about the last days of Christ. And so what's Christ doing? He's preparing his disciples to continue on the ministry after he leaves.

So he's pumping them full of truth. And this truth is applicable to us today. If we just pay attention, we believe, and we trust in it, it's applicable for us today. And that's why in John chapter 11, verse 15, if you're looking up on the screen, it says, he says, Jesus says, I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent that ye may believe.

What Jesus was saying, he was talking to his disciples. He's saying, I am glad that Lazarus died for your sakes. Because what's going to happen in the next few days is Jesus is going to die and they're going to be scattered abroad.

[3 : 24] And Jesus says, I am glad for your sakes that ye may, to the intent that ye may believe. So have that in the back of your mind as we go to this text. If you would, turn with me to John chapter 11, and we'll start in verse 17.

And we'll read down to, I guess, verse 27, if you would. Actually, 28, we'll read down to verse 28. The Bible says in John chapter 11, verse 17, it says, Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave for four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off. And many of the Jews came to Mary and Martha to comfort them concerning their brothers. If you would, if you have an ink pen, circle that saying, they came to comfort them.

That's pretty, that's pretty, we're going to talk about comforting today. And then Martha, as soon as she heard, verse 20, Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him.

Talking about Jesus. And Martha, hold on a second, I lost my place. But Mary sat still at the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, when she came to him, she said, Jesus, Lord, if thou hast been here, my brother had not died.

[4 : 29] But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask God, ask of God, God will give it to thee. And Jesus said unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

And Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. And Jesus interrupts and says this, he says, I am the resurrection. I am the life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? And she saith unto him, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

And when she had so said, she went her way. Listen to this. And called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, the Master cometh, and he calleth for thee.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as I come to you in prayer, Lord God, I ask that you just fill me with your spirit. Lord God, help me to communicate these truths that were so important that you kept this down in your Bible and your word and you want us to hear it.

[5 : 35] Lord God, I ask that you just do something great and mighty, Lord. I know that if we can just cling to these truths and believe in them, Lord God, we could be just like that church in Acts. And we could do something radical and change this world upside down with the gospel.

All these things I ask in your Son's name. Amen. Amen. Before we get on, before I move on, I just want to let you guys know just something outside of the notes. You guys look in verse 28. Notice what Mary says.

He says, the Master is come and he calleth for thee. Now, just so you guys know what Jesus said in that passage. Jesus said this to Mary. He says, thy brother shall rise again in verse 23.

In verse 25, he says, I am the resurrection and the life. And he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this.

That's all Jesus said. He never said, cometh to me. Why would Martha go back to Mary and say, Mary, Jesus wants you to come unto him? What were the Jews doing at that time when they came to Mary and Martha's house after they lost their brother?

[6 : 36] You guys remember? You guys circled it? What were they doing? They were trying to comfort them, right? And as soon as Martha heard that Christ was there, she went out and she talked with Christ. And Christ gave her some truths, some everlasting truths.

If we just get in our heart, it would comfort our soul. And after she heard these truths, she went to her sister. And what she said? The Master's come and he calls for you. He's saying, Mary, I know where the comfort's at.

It's not here with these Jews. Come and let's talk to Jesus. I have a question for you tonight. Is there comfort in death? Is there comfort in death?

Can a man and a wife, or a man who loses his wife and wakes up in the morning and the bed's empty, is there any comfort in that? Or what about a mother and a child who the child dies and goes away and the mother's there left with that empty crib?

Is there any comfort in that? Can I say something? Outside of Christ, there is no comfort. Outside of Christ, there is no comfort. And we find what the comfort is in here in verse 25.

[7 : 41] And if you would follow me along, in verse 25, Jesus says unto her, he says, I am the resurrection. This is what Jesus says to Martha. He says, I am the resurrection.

What an outrageous statement. Who can claim that they are the resurrection? Who brings the dead back to life? Who has that power? Can man?

There's been tons of gods out there. There's been Buddha. Who claims that they can bring the dead back to life? Who has done that? You guys might be reminded by the story in 1 Kings chapter 17.

And Elijah is there with the widow woman and her son. And her son becomes sick and he ends up dying.

And the widow woman comes up to Elijah and he says, oh man of God, why did you come here and call to remembrance of my sin? Why did you do this and cause my son to die?

[8 : 36] Why? What was Elijah's response? You guys remember the story? You guys remember the story? I guess you guys don't. I'll tell you what happened. Okay? He says, take your son into the upper room, in the upper chamber.

And in verse 21, he cries out to the Lord. And three times, this is what he says. He says, and he stretched himself upon the child. And three times he cried, Lord. And he said, oh Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul come again, come into him again.

What did Elijah realize? What did Elijah see? What did Elijah know? What did Elijah believe in? That he couldn't raise the son back to life. That there's no one that can raise the people.

There's no one that can take the dead and raise them back to life outside of God. And what was Jesus saying when he was saying, I am the resurrection? He was saying, I am God. I have power over death and life. I can raise the dead back to life.

I am the resurrection. He was getting this point across that he had power to raise the dead. I feel like you guys, I don't understand the resurrection.

[9 : 45] I feel like Paul when he says in Philippians chapter 3 verse 10, you guys remember that? That I might know him. And the power of his resurrection. I don't understand it.

But I know the scripture speaks some things on the resurrection. So I would like to go there. If you guys got your Bibles, I ask you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 22.

It is Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that says that without the resurrection, listen to this, we of all men, of all men would be most miserable.

Paul writes these words. Follow along with me if you would. In verse 12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen? And listen to this statement right here. He says, and if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is in vain.

[10 : 50] Can I say something to you? That if Christ had not died and rose again on the third day, then me preaching right here would be in vain. It would be empty. It would be useless. It would be pointless.

And he just doesn't stop there. He just doesn't say my preaching would be in vain. But he says your faith would be in vain. What you believe in, what you're hoping in, what you're trusting in, it would all be vain. It would be worthless.

It would be worthless. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God because we testify that he raised up Christ, whom he had not raised up, whom he raised not up.

If so be that the dead raised not. What was Paul saying? He says if Christ didn't raise again, then we would be a bunch of liars. We would be liars. Not only would our faith be in vain, not only would our preaching be in vain, we'd be liars.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain. And what's he saying in verse 17?

[11 : 52] He says, and ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

Verse 19, this is what he says. If in this life only, only, we have hope in Christ. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

If your only hope today here is in Christ, and Christ had not raised again, can I tell you? We would be of all men most miserable. Why?

Because you would still be in your sins. Your faith would be in vain. Everything that we preach from here, everything that we come here, the reason why we come on Sundays, the reason why we worship him, it would all be in vain if it wasn't for the resurrection.

Jesus says, I am the resurrection, and if it wasn't true, we would be most miserable. It's by the resurrection that Christ can be declared the Son of God with power. Romans chapter 1 verse 3 says, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by what?

[13 : 04] By the resurrection from the dead. That's Romans 1 verse 4. What's that mean? There's been several people that's claimed that they are God.

Does that make sense? You guys know this. You guys are watching the news, right? There was a guy that was down in Miami or down in Florida that claimed to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And you know what the Bible says?

The only way that you can prove, the way that Christ was declared the Son of God, you know how he did that? Was through his resurrection. You know Matthew 7 talks about this. He says that people will come unto him and say, Lord, Lord, haven't we done many miracles?

Haven't we done many wonderful works? And what's Christ going to say to them? Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you. There's people that can do miracles.

All right? We know that in Revelations, that the devils will do miracles. We know that the Antichrist will do miracles. We know that he'll do great and mighty wonders. But who can bring life to a dead man?

[14 : 04] It's only through the power of God. And Christ proved who he was. He proved he was the Son of God through the resurrection.

Christ not only claimed to be the Son of God, but he demonstrated it through his resurrection. Praise be to God. Praise be to God. Not only does he prove it, but the way he births us into a lively hope.

The way he gives us that hope is by the resurrection. 1 Peter 1.3 says this. 1 Peter 1.3 says, Notice the word.

Notice the phrase. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Resurrection is so important. No wonder Paul wanted to know it.

No wonder Paul wanted to know it. Last thing I want to say about the resurrection. Paul, I want you guys to notice something. The resurrection empowered the disciples. After Christ was hanging on the tree and he died and they put him in the grave.

[15 : 18] I just want you guys to think about this. Go through your Bible. And you guys know the story. Where were the disciples? They were in the upper room, right? Let's go back a little bit before that.

When Christ was on the stage with Pilate and Pilate brings out Barabbas and he says, Which one do you guys want? Where were the disciples? They scattered, right?

When Christ was there and he was in the temple and he was being tried before the high priest. Where were the disciples? When Christ was there at the garden of Gethsemane.

After they took him, the Bible says they fled. They fled. They ran. They were scared. They were there with Christ when he turned the water into wine.

They were there with Christ when he healed that impotent man. They were there with Christ when he gave sight to the blind. They were there with Christ when he gave speech to the dumb. They were there with Christ when he gave hearing to the deaf.

[16 : 18] They were there with Christ when he raised Lazarus again. But yet, in the last time, they were gone. They were gone. when he needed him the most, they were gone. Yet Peter, when he was standing beside the fire, and that little handmaid, that little girl, said, aren't you with Christ? What did he say?

I don't know him. I denied him. He cursed him. And then he ran and he cried. But after Christ rose again and he showed himself to him, what were they doing? They were out there preaching the gospel to everyone because they had no fear because their Christ was resurrected.

Jesus says, I am the resurrection. Christ, actually that same guy that was scared by a little girl. What was saying? That little girl that pointed her finger in that face. And he took off crying like a little baby and he ran away.

That same guy, oops, that same guy in Acts chapter, Acts chapter 3, Acts chapter 4, when he's before the temple and he's before the high priest and he's standing there and they say, this guy has filled doctrine.

He's telling people that Jesus, in Acts chapter 4 verses 2, they want to put that up on the screen so you know I'm not lying. He said, this guy has talked about the doctrine of Jesus raising again. We need to put a stop to this. And they look at him and they say, Peter and John, stop preaching.

[17 : 31] What do they say? What do they say? This is what they say. They say, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. We cannot but seek the things, speak the things which we have seen. We have seen him risen again.

We have seen him risen again. We aren't scared anymore. We can't but help speak this word. Man, the resurrection. What a great thing. What comfort we can find in the resurrection.

What fear do you have in death when your God has power and control over death and life and he can give it at will? What fear do you have in death? Not only does he say that he says he's the resurrection but he also claims that he's the life.

He says that in verse 25. Look at what Jesus says. He says, Jesus said to them, he says, I am the resurrection. I'm sorry for yelling. I just get excited. I just love teaching about this.

He says, I am the resurrection. In these next three words, in the words, I am the life. It was Christ. In Genesis chapter 1, you know, the story of creation.

[18 : 36] It was Christ, the one that took that, his hand in that clay and formed that man and that dead, that lifeless corpse laying on the ground. It was Christ, the one that knelt down and breathed in the nostrils the breath of what?

Life. That's Christ. He breathes life. Everywhere he goes, death flees, death flees and life follows. We serve a living Savior.

It was Christ, in Christ, was the life. And the life was the light of men according to John 1, 4. He says, in him, in Christ, was life.

And the life was the light of men. In John chapter 5, verse 26, the Bible says, for as the Father hath given, or as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

Life was given to Christ by his Father. Why is this so important? Why is it so important? Who gave Christ the life? Who gave Christ the ability to bring back to the life? It was God. It was God, Creator God, Jehovah God.

[19 : 45] It is Christ who is the bread of life. And whosoever eat this bread shall never eat or shall never hunger again. According to John 6, 51, he says, I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.

And the bread that I will give is my flesh. And I will give it for the life of the world. Not only Christ offers life to us here at 1125 Alpha Drive, he offers life to the world.

He offers life in Burkina Faso. He offers life in South Africa. He offers life everywhere to who all will just but believe. Just but believe. There is no magic genie.

There is no magician. There is no you put that and there is some God that offers life. There is only life in Christ. There is no well. Wait, wait a second.

There is a well. Isn't there? He says that he is the water of everlasting life and whosoever drinks of this well will never thirst again. According to John 4, 14, he says, Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him he shall never thirst.

[20 : 50] But the water that I shall give him shall be in him as a well of water springing up unto what? Everlasting life. Our God is a God of life. It was I keep on going back to Acts chapter I keep on going back to Acts but it's a great book.

Acts chapter 3 Peter comes Peter and John come into the temple and they're at the gate called Beautiful and they've seen this impotent man down there and you guys remember the story he was asking for alms he was asking for money and when they went down there they fixed their eyes upon this impotent man and the man was looking back at him and they said silver and gold have I none you guys remember the story but such I give you in the name of Jesus Christ rise and walk and he rose up and he walked and he began to jump and he was excited he was running around he went into the temple and it caused a big it caused a big a big ruckus is it a ruckus?

yeah it caused a big ruckus and people started coming around there by the thousands and Peter thought hey this is a great opportunity to preach the gospel to them so Peter jumps up and he says you guys what why are you guys looking at us like we did something great let me tell you something who did this it was Jesus Christ who did this and he begins to preach the gospel to him and you know what he says in the gospel this is crazy he says in Acts chapter 3 verse 15 he says this he says and you killed and killed the prince of life he said you killed the prince of life title of Christ the prince of life our God is not only a God of resurrection he's the God of life everywhere Christ went death fled or fled and life was there he is life you guys know this is so simple this is so simple this is I feel ashamed almost preaching this but it's his word John 14 verse 6 you guys know this he says I am the way the truth and the life and no man cometh to the father but by me not only is he the resurrection but he is the life and because he's these two things what does he do what does he offer

Miss Martha and everyone who else is listening notice that because Christ is the resurrection of his life look what he has to offer what's it say in verse 25 he says and he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live because he is the resurrection because he is the life he can take a dead man and make him live look at verse 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die because he is the resurrection and because he is the life he says you'll never die if you believe in me who can say that only God can say that what do these verses mean it means that you'll never die it means that you will live forever this was the mystery that caught up the Greeks that Paul preached to in Acts chapter 7 how could how could one resurrect how could we have life this was a stumbling block to him you see death entered to the world just so you guys know death entered into the world you guys know how death entered into the world

Romans 5 12 wherefore is by one man sin entered into the world and death and death by sin and so death passed upon all men you guys realize what that means right because Adam when he was in the garden disobeyed God's commandment he sinned and when sin is there it brings forth death and so Adam sinned and death came into the world and it passed upon all men meaning Adam had a son and his son was in death and his son had a son and his son was in death and his son had another son and his son was in death and this continual line keep on going down and down so in Romans chapter 5 verse 17 it says that death reigned on us what's that mean death reigned on us it controlled us it had every part I mean you couldn't do what you wanted according to Ephesians 2 chapter 2 he says you were dead in trespasses in your sin you were dead it reigned you it controlled you but Romans chapter 5 verse 17 it doesn't end there it says for if by one man's offense death reigned by one much more they which receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one

[25 : 10] Jesus Christ what's that mean it means that when Adam came into life when Adam sinned he brought death into the world and so when he had a son death was reigning upon him it controlled him that was his destiny and when he had a son it was the same same outcome and then he had a son and then he had a son and it wasn't until there was a virgin born savior came in there and he broke the line he says now I offer life and whoever believes they can live forever who doesn't find comfort in these words why why do you think why do you think the apostles could go out there and they could hazard their lives how could that be because they knew that death wasn't the end they knew that they had a savior that was a resurrection they knew that they had a savior that was the life they knew that it was the final that they would live forever and they should never die they knew that not only do they knew that not only do they know that but they believed it you guys get that did you hear that did you hear what what Martha said look what Martha said in verse was it verse 24

I believe or verse 22 she's okay verse 24 Martha said unto him I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day Jesus doesn't ask Jesus doesn't want you to know you know there's a difference between knowing and believing you realize that right knowing is saying okay I've seen one plus one equals two so therefore okay I see that and I know that and I understand that it's going through it's going through your understanding and it's going through your past experience and you say okay I know this but what's believing believing is saying I'm trusting in this I am trusting in this I am trusting in this Jesus I just don't know that you're the resurrection I'm believing in it I'm trusting in it with all my heart I believe it in the depths of my soul I believe it the problem with the church nowadays is that you know what we know too much we sit in here and we hear sermon after sermon and we say

I know it I know it but there's no belief there's no trusting in it one of the one of the disciples they seen him they seen him day in and day out I can't get this I can't I hope I can get this across they seen him day in and day out they seen miracles done by the hand of Christ they knew what he could do but yet they still fled and it wasn't until the resurrection they say I see that I believe it I know he can I believe it with all my heart and now I'm going to just surrender my life over to it and I'm just going to go wherever he wants me to go and I'll be a witness into him in Jerusalem and I'll be a witness in Judea and I'll be a witness in Samaria and I'll be a witness into the uttermost part just use my life I'll hazard my life it doesn't matter if they beat me it doesn't matter if they stone me I know he's a resurrection I know he's life the application comes to you just like it came to Martha look at verse 26

Jesus says this believest thou this it's pretty simple simple invitation believest thou this do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection do you believe that Jesus is the life because if you do you can find comfort in death because you know this isn't death death is not final it's not the destination you continue on do you believe it if you do then there is there is comfort in trusting that this life isn't everything there is comfort in knowing and trusting and believing that this life isn't everything because Jesus is life there is comfort in trusting Christ and telling him there is comfort in trusting Christ and having him tell you where you're going to go and that you will live forever it's not that I come up here and I yell and I scream and I spit and I say that Jesus is the life he's the resurrection you won't die it's not just that I'm saying it's that coming from his word there is comfort in knowing that that Christ says you will never die you will live forever because I am the resurrection

I am the life there is comfort in those words it's not only comfort when we face our loved ones it's also comforting as we face our own death you guys get that I don't know what's going to happen when I go out those doors I really don't and I don't see any teens that can drive so I think my odds are pretty good that I'm going to be able to live double better that Miss Betty is not here and we don't have to worry about her when she's out in the road but you understand what I'm saying I don't know what's going to happen with my life but you know what one thing I know for sure I will live forever nothing it's not going to kill me my God has life and death in his hands he is the resurrection and he is the life and I have comfort in this that he can do whatever he wants with my life and though man may threaten my life you know what it doesn't matter they don't have control they're not going to kill me you know why it's so hard to kill Christianity how can you kill a man that knows that he's never going to die how can you stop it you can't after the apostles

[31 : 00] I can't keep saying enough after the apostles had seen Christ after the resurrection brother Gardnerism they were wild men on fire just going around teaching everyone they knew about Christ and his resurrection they believed something you hear that they believed something about the death of Christ they believed something that they were totally different people they believed who Christ was do you right now with everyone's heads bowed and every eyes closed I don't know your hearts today it might be that you have never believed in Christ can I say today is the day right now we have some men ready to take the scripture and if you would raise your hand say brother Robert I don't know if I was I don't know this I don't believe this if you would just raise your hand I would love to have a counselor stop by and talk with you your brother dear sister know this let me correct myself believe in this that Jesus

Christ is the life I hope that changes your life I hope that that knowing or believing that Christ is the resurrection life that it would do something inside your soul that we would see this world changed up that we would hazard our lives for the gospel sake you have been listening to Robert Campbell pastor at vision baptist church in Alpharetta Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com