

# Pastoral Advisory

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Date: 27 January 2022

[ 0 : 00 ]     Amen. Thank you. Turn your Bibles to John chapter 11. That was beautiful. I love that song. John chapter 11, verse 25. It's been wonderful. It's always good to be back here in Alpharetta.

And get down into, I was watching the temperature gauge on my truck as I was driving down from Michigan to slowly tick up. So that was a blessing. That was a blessing. I'm headed back tomorrow.

It's going to slowly tick back down. This is why I'm all shaggy right now, because I'm growing every bit of hair that I possibly can to keep my head warm. Obviously up here, it just hurts. It just hurts.

Appreciate Brother Smith preaching the words of Christ. I want to go to the same thing tonight. John 11, verse 25. It's good to meet some new friends today. Everyone involved in the cause of world evangelism. John 11, 25. The Bible says this, Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Shall never die. Believest thou this? Personally, my life, my devotional life, the Lord has been challenging me and working in me to contemplate the words of Christ and to take those words at face value. Sometimes we want to rationalize them or put them in a context that makes more sense to us. But Jesus said what he said, and he meant what he said. Lazarus, the friend and follower of Jesus, and the brother of Mary and Martha died. Word had reached Jesus that Lazarus was sick, and it was serious. Up in verse 4, Jesus responded to that news. And when Jesus heard that, he said, the sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

[ 2 : 04 ]     And Jesus waited two days in the same place and then announced his intentions to go to Judea to see Lazarus. The disciples responded with nervousness and caution because of the increased hostility of the Jews. So they were kind of nervous about going, are you sure you want to go to Judea?

That's where they want to kill you. And Jesus responds in verse 11, these things said he after that he said to him, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. So they're trying to believe, they're trying to make sense of what Jesus is saying here. Now he's all right if he's asleep. Verse 13, how be it Jesus spake of his death, but they thought that they had spoken of taking a rest and sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there. To the intent you may believe, nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him. So here Jesus gives him the news. Now he's not asleep, he's dead. And then notice the audacity of the words that Jesus says in verse 15. To be so bold at a funeral to say these words, and I am glad.

Jesus, I don't know if that is 21st century bedside manner. Lazarus is dead, and I'm glad for your sakes. This kind of gives us an answer as to why God allows certain things to happen to certain people. We understand this in context of what Jesus is about to do. Sometimes we don't understand what Jesus is doing, and yet he says, notice there's a plan, I'm glad. Notice Thomas makes a statement of being ready to die with Jesus.

That's what, you sure you want to go to Judea? Sounds like he's going. Thomas, who we always claim as a doubter, says, all right, let's go. Let's go die with him in Judea. Now Lazarus had been in the grave four days, and Martha meets Jesus with disappointment. John 11, verse, we're down in 21, then says Martha unto Jesus, Lord, thou hast been here, my brother had not died.

So she comes out and meets him. You know the story. Meets him with disappointment, to which Jesus responds with truth. Verse 23, Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

[ 4 : 33 ] Now in context, we understand that he means like in the next 30 minutes, like out of that grave, Jesus will rise again. But Martha dismisses this truth by lobbing it out into a distant future expectation. Look what she says in verse 24. Martha said unto him, I know, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. In other words, she was incapable or in that moment, and for whatever reasons, and we can see her heart and intent to not simply take Jesus at his word, but rather had to put it into a framework and a context that made sense to her, instead of just believing Jesus just said, my brother's going to be alive. She lofts it to a future safe spot that doesn't endanger or threaten her present perception and reality of Jesus. How do I make this make sense? And so she lobs into the distant future. But then notice, what's this, what's this? Catch this. Jesus, in dramatic fashion, grabs this distant future, almost irrelevant, weak comment, and brings it right back into the very moment that they shared and the very person that was standing right in front of her. So here she is, she's going to lob it away so it makes sense. Try to make, instead of just believing Jesus. And Jesus says, no, no, no, right now, right in front of you. Jesus says in verse 25, I am the resurrection and the life.

Now I will be. I am. Right now, right in front of you. Resurrection life right now. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Shall never die. Believest thou this. Now all her senses were telling her, my brother's in a grave and he's dead. What are you talking about? And yet, in respect towards Jesus, she was trying to change it so he wouldn't be a liar, so that it would be true. But Jesus was, what Jesus, Jesus said what he meant. In other words, no, Mary, I'm not going to allow you to be dismissive of this truth by relegating it to some dateless future. Right now, Mary, I am the resurrection and the life. Death and life simultaneously right now. He that believes in me, though he is dead, shall he live. And get what he's about to say to you and I. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Shall never die. Not, he's talking about a present reality.

How guilty are you of being dismissive of this truth? He just said that you will never die. Seriously, you will never die. This was the present reality that he was forcing Martha to deal with in that moment. You may say, well, I know, I know, Pastor Jay. We will get to live with Jesus forever in heaven in the future. Someday we get to experience the eternal day, sing the praises to God in a place that I cannot even imagine. It is going to be wonderful, or at least I know I'm supposed to believe that it is going to be wonderful. This is not what Jesus is saying here. He is looking someone in the eye who just witnessed the death of her brother and said, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

He will be alive. While the verb here, for he shall live, is in the future sense, we understand the context that Jesus means not the future like way later on in some distant resurrection, but for Lazarus, physically in the future, like in a few minutes. We further understand this by what Jesus tells Martha directly, verse 26, whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this? Not later, not now, shall never die. He's forcing her, demanding of her that she believe this in her present reality, in her present situation, in the face of her brother in the grave who had stopped breathing. He was dead. He was thinking already. I know, I know, Pastor Jay, the Bible says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and that our last breath here will be followed by our first breath there. But can I make to you the contention that Jesus here is not talking about a future moment in your life? He is talking to Martha about right now.

[ 9 : 33 ] He's saying, believest thou this? So he's not telling her about a future hope. He is telling her about a present reality that is designed to challenge. Jesus is challenging Martha's very perception of life and death in her present reality. Jesus said, if you will believe on him, if you believe on him, you will never die. Do you believe this? I don't mean, do you believe this in a rationalization?

Oh, I know, I know what he means. He means metaphorically. He means spiritually. Yet that's not what he said. He is telling Martha, shall never die. Shall never believe. Shall never, shall never, you shall not experience death. Now notice this. Not do you believe in a semblance of this, or not do you believe in a rationalization of this. Jesus is challenging you tonight to change your perception of life and death right now because he is the resurrection. See, what he's challenging here is not the fact whether or not a person will ever stop breathing.

What he is challenging here is, is that the definition of life? Because the life that I have just promised you that you shall never die. You shall never die. So let's, let's give some, and listen, I'm not here to propose I have this fully figured out, but let me give you a perspective on this. Two things.

Jesus is challenging you to change your perception of life and death right now because he is the resurrection. Number one, grab a hold of this. Life is more than what I'm afraid to lose. Life is more than what I'm afraid to lose. You hold on to life in different parts of your life for fear of losing them, but Jesus just said, you can't lose life. Which then begs the question, what am I so afraid of losing?

Perhaps what I am afraid of losing is really not life to begin with or not the totality of life or not the life that I should be living for. The whole world is defined by the fear of losing life and yet Jesus just makes this promise to her, I am the resurrection. You cannot lose your life. You have eternal life.

[ 12 : 14 ] What if I'm defining life and what if you're defining life and valuing life wrong based upon what I'm afraid to lose? What if I'm defining life and valuing my life wrong based upon what I'm afraid to lose because Jesus said, I shall never die. Life is more than what you're afraid of losing. Jesus said in Matthew 6 25, therefore I say unto you, take no thought of your life what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body or what you should put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? He says on in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 19, lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and dust and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where the thieves do not break and steal for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Friends, life is more than what you're afraid of losing. We spend so much time anxious and worried about losing the breath of my lungs, losing the separation of relationships and yet Jesus is saying, I have come to give you eternal life. You shall never die. Do you believe this? In other words, define life in such a way of the things you can never lose. To lay up our treasures in heaven which can never be corrupted.

You define your whole life based on what you cannot keep instead of defining your life based upon what you cannot lose. Life is not simply defined by breath and possession or even relationships.

I preach this in my church and I have a Jim Elliot quote in here, but I'm at vision. I mean, everyone knows this quote. He's no fool, right? That gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.

Did I say that right? In order to gain what he cannot lose. Life is more than what we're afraid to lose. So often, we focus and we live in fear. We mourn our loss instead of praising him for our gain.

Eternal life. The life that he is, the resurrection is a present reality now, meaning that there are things that would be defined as life that you will never lose.

[ 14 : 46 ] That you'll never lose. So life must be more than simply breathing. Life is more than just simply breathing. So point number one, life is more than what I'm afraid to lose.

But secondly, death is less than what I'm afraid will happen. Death is less than what I'm afraid will happen.

The fear of death holds people in bondage. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 15, And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetimes subject to bondage.

The world right now is holding on to a life they can't keep and are trying to avoid a death that is inevitable. But yet, Jesus comes to give us resurrected life and to give us life that we shall never lose.

In other words, to define our life by things that can never be taken away and gives us victory over death so that death cannot be as bad as what the world says it is.

[ 15 : 52 ] Death is less than what I'm afraid will happen. The moment they stop breathing, the moment they perceive they can no longer exercise will the world is afraid of.

Yet Jesus says to you, shall never die. Will you stop breathing someday? Yes. But you must rectify your, unless the Lord should return, and even so, Lord, come quickly.

But you must rectify your perception and dread of that moment with the truth that Jesus says, you will never die. The world calls and fears the snuffing out of breath as dreaded death.

But Jesus says, ye shall never die because the life you now have in him will never end. And beloved, that's life. That's life.

And even death, physical death, cannot rob you of the life that you have in him. The problem is we want life, we want it to be eternal.

[ 16 : 56 ] The problem is we want the life we want to be eternal, not the life that Christ has given us to be eternal. This is why we always conjecture heaven as the greatest day on earth forever.

Fishing day, hunting day, whatever. I'm with my family forever, and yet we're misconstruing what he has given us. The problem is we want the life we want to be eternal.

And friends, he didn't give you the life you want to be eternal, he gave you his life to be eternal. And so that is how we ought to define life. Life is more than what I'm afraid to lose.

Death is less than what I am afraid will happen. Friend, are you afraid of death? You know, you don't have to be. You can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said to Martha, believest thou this?

Would you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Would you believe what he says about you, that you're a sinner? And that the wages of sin is death, but that he came to give us life and to give it to us more abundantly.

[ 17 : 57 ] If you'll place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will have resurrection life, not then, but right now. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your word.

Lord Jesus, help us to simply take you at your word. Lord, you said you shall never die.  
Believest thou this? I pray that that would totally transform my perception of life and death.

Jesus, we love you. Thank you, Jesus, for what you've done for us. In your name we pray.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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