

I AM the Resurrection and the Life

The common reality for all of humanity is that we will die. Death is inevitable, whether it is physical or spiritual; the point is we have to come to grips with the fact that our lives are not our own. So we should not expend our energy avoiding death; instead we should pursue Christ, the One who has conquered death and is eternal life.

In our passage Jesus wants Lazarus' death to reveal that He is the resurrection and the life. Jesus plans to use this death to strengthen His followers' faith and glorify God.

John 11:17-27

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. **20** So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." **23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" **27** She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

I. Jesus wants you to be deeply moved by the pains of death (vv.17-19).

a. It is from the surrounding context that we understand that Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus. In fact, when He arrived and was taken to the tomb He was deeply moved and greatly troubled. Scholars suggest that He may have delayed His travels, because evidence shows that Jews believed that during the three days of the burial the spirit was still hovering over the body seeking re-entry; by the fourth day you would typically see decomposition, which suggested that the person would not come back to life. Essentially what we see is that Jesus is not pleased with death, because God did not intend for His people to suffer the effects of sin. Therefore we ought to be deeply moved with compassion for those suffering from death and various tragedies.

b. Jesus wants to use your sorrows to bring glory to God (vv.20-26a).

i. Notice in v. 4 Jesus says, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God maybe glorified through it." Martha knew that Jesus could heal Lazarus if present, but she did not expect Jesus to raise Him from the dead. She did not understand Jesus' response that Lazarus would rise again because Martha thought He was referring to the resurrection on the last day, when God would restore all things. But in the powerful statement Jesus makes it's clear that He not only teaches on the resurrection and eternal life, but He is the very embodiment of that future reality.

c. Jesus wants you to believe (vv.26b-27).

i. Jesus asked Martha a profound question: "Do you believe this?" to which she made a clear and powerful profession of faith. But we ought to notice that even though she believed Jesus to be the Son of God, she did not expect Him to raise Lazarus from the dead. We know this because if we look ahead at v.39 we see that Martha tries to stop Jesus from opening the tomb, assuming that Lazarus' body would be decomposed. I believe we can struggle in our faith at times, not sure whether we trust and

believe in the sovereign power of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus arrive four days after Lazarus was in the tomb?
2. Why were the Jews there to console Martha and Mary?
3. How does Martha contradict herself regarding the resurrection in verses 21-24?
4. In verse 27 Martha makes a clear profession of faith. How does this encourage your heart? Take a moment to reflect on your conversion story. How has God used your story to encourage others?

Going Deeper

1. How does John 11 challenge your perspective on death? Do you live your life in fear of the day you will die?
2. In what ways does knowing that Jesus is the resurrection and the life inform the way you live as a Christian?
3. Are there times when God has used your sufferings to bring glory to Himself? If so, how?
4. Where do you struggle in trusting God with your life?