

The Resurrection and the Life

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Date: 19 May 2024

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[0 : 00] Both here are just making up for last time. Alright, yeah, I'm going to be in John 11, so you can turn there. As I'm just introducing myself, so my name is Jeremiah Bloom.

My wife Emma and I have been married for about a year and a half now. And we have an eight-month-year-old son named William, William Daniel. So we wanted a good, strong name for our firstborn son to be the leader of our kids.

So, yeah, so I've been in seminary for three years now. I've got one year left, and I'm hoping that light the tunnel's not a train. But we'll see in another year.

But, yeah, I grew up in northern Virginia, actually, in Loudoun County, Virginia. And my wife grew up on the other side of the mountain from me. And then when I was at the end of high school, I moved over to West Virginia, which is right up to the mountain, to be close to our church.

The Lord led me to be in pastoral ministry through our pastor, who had gone to a little school in the mountains of West Virginia called Appalachian Bible College.

[1 : 04] So I went to Appalachian Bible College for four years, graduated in spring of 21. And miraculously, I made it out of that school single still. And so then I decided to continue my education in seminary and started dating Emma.

And as soon as we started dating, she went to Thailand for eight months, and I went to Virginia Beach. So the day after she got back, I proposed. Ten weeks later, we were married and we moved down here.

So it's been a roller coaster, but it's been good. Yeah, the Lord's been faithful through it all. So my goal is to eventually go into pastoral ministry somewhere where the Lord leads.

But we're still praying for that. Anyway, let's jump right in. Head to John 11. We're going to be talking about Christ. So I thought the songs were so fitting about how our hope is in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

So when I was in Bible College, I'd come home some summers, and I worked at a sawmill for a couple summers, just moving lumber.

[2 : 14] Some pretty rough guys there. And I asked one guy, I said, what do you think comes after death? And his hope was, I don't know, man. I just hope it's peace.

He didn't believe in Christ. Not many of the guys there did. He didn't have any hope for Christ. Well, he had a hope in the worldly sense of the hope.

It wasn't a confidence. We as Christians have confidence in what comes after death. And I love that you guys have been in Genesis because I feel like I'm going to be stealing the thunder. I'm bringing the solution.

And you guys have just figured out the problem. Adam sinned, plunging man into humanity, into death and chaos. The creation has been cursed.

And God has promised in Genesis 3 to send a Savior. And here he is on the earth. As John said, he came to his own, and yet his own did not know him.

[3 : 11] So let's read John 11. I'm just going to read until verse 44. It will be a long read, but if you'll bear with me, just pay attention to the text. Listen to the story that John is telling us because this is an important story.

I think one of the most important stories that we find in John to tell us about the identity of who Jesus Christ is. So let's read from verses 1 through 44.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

So the sister sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill. But when Jesus heard it, he said, This illness does not lead to death, for it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after he said to the disciples, Let us go to Judea again.

[4 : 22] The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and you were going there again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?

If anyone walks by the day, he does not stumble. Because he sees the light of the world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.

After saying these things, he said to them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him. The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.

Now Jesus had spoken of his death. They thought that he meant taking rest and sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

But let us go to him. So Thomas called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, Let us go also, that we may also die with him. I'm going to actually break up the reading a little bit.

[5 : 27] This is the first scene that we have throughout this story. There are going to be three scenes in the story. The first, John points to beyond the Jordan. The second is when he is right outside Bethany.

And the third is when he is outside the tomb. Many of us know the story. But it is a really good idea to refresh ourselves. And for those who don't know it well, to relearn it.

To learn it well by heart. So back in chapters 7 through 10, Jesus was at Jerusalem twice. In chapter 7 through near the end of chapter 10, verses 10-21, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths.

That's when he made the statement, I am the light of the world. And he healed the blind man, proving that he is the light of the world. He also stated that I am the good shepherd.

Throughout the book of John, we are going to see these different identities of Christ that he will be revealing to the people of Israel. John is all about the identity of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 33] Then in chapter 10, 21-24, John tells us that Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication. And the Jews seek to kill him because he calls God his father.

They pick up stones, they're ready to throw it at him, which is not an uncommon thing in John. It says actually that they picked up stones again to throw at him, and yet he escaped again.

The book of John is kind of, it is unlike the other Gospels. The other Gospels show kind of an increasing hatred of Jesus throughout the religious leaders. But John, he just hops right into it.

He shows that all throughout the book of John, the Jews are after his head. They do not like Jesus, they do not like his ministry, they do not believe in him.

So then Jesus removes himself to near the Transjordan, and people who believe come out to him because they see and they believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

[7 : 37] And then in chapter 11, we're presented with a problem. A friend of Jesus is sick. And he's about to die. Excuse me. My throat always gets dry when I try to speak.

And we are told the purpose of Lazarus' death is twofold.

First, that God would be glorified. And second, that people would believe that Jesus is the Christ. Look down at verse 10. Verse 10 says, But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him.

Excuse me, that was the wrong verse. He says, in verse 14, sorry, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

But let us go to him. So, it's traditionally believed that Jesus was about a day's journey away from Bethany, away from Jerusalem.

[8 : 49] D.A. Carson holds the idea that he is about two days away from Jerusalem. And that this messenger that got to Jesus, when the messenger arrived at Jesus, Lazarus was probably still alive.

But as soon as the messenger left, Lazarus would have died. So, Jesus, waiting two more days, would have ensured that Lazarus would be dead for at least four days.

This being a confirmation that Lazarus was really dead. There's no possibility that he's faking it, that he's just hiding out in a tomb, waiting for Jesus to arrive, to present miraculous healing, and then showing that Jesus is really the Messiah.

No, this is a real death. And it seems kind of callous for Christ when he says, in verse 5, Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer.

You would think that if Jesus loved Lazarus and Martha and Mary, that he would have left immediately. But it says, because he loved them, he stayed. And this goes to show how, even in hard times, Christ's love is the most powerful.

[10:15] Christ shows his love to us through hardships sometimes, instead of easy rolling. The strongest, the times where we grow the most, are sometimes through the most pain.

And as humans, we want to be comforted. We want peace. We want Christ to come in and make our lives better. And yet, Jesus, in his love, waited, creating more pain, more heartache, so that he would be glorified.

And ultimately, this showed that he loved them. So, this is the first scene in verses 1 through 16.

And then he says, Thomas, called the twin, in verse 16, it says, Thomas called the twin, said to those fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

I love the pessimistic view of Thomas. He's just convinced that they're going to go to Jerusalem and Jesus is going to die. Now, he's right, but they don't end up dying with Christ at that time.

[11:29] But you've got to give it to Thomas a little bit for his loyalty, too. I mean, some people would have said, No, I'm out. I'm not going to follow Jesus to death. But he, at least his intentions were good. I mean, he said, Let's just go to Jerusalem.

We're going to die. He had invested everything in Christ. As we can see later, he may not have fully understood the implications of Christ being who he said he was.

Christ being the, well, the Messiah. The Christ. But he was at least willing to go to Jerusalem with him. So then, in verses 17 down through verse 37, we have the main chunk of this story.

And we're going to see the solution to the problem. Let's read verses 17 through 37. Now, when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him.

[12:37] But Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give it to you.

Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to him, Yes, Lord.

I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, The teacher is here and calling for you. And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

[13:47] Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And he said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, See how he loved him. But some of them said, Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?

This right now is the most important part of the story. Verses 25 and 26, as we'll see, are the heart of the story.

Martha, when she comes out to Christ, she's grieving, but you also see some faith in her.

I love what she says in verse 27. Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. It's just as good of a confession as Peter made back in Matthew.

[14:58] That Jesus is the Christ. When she references the resurrection here, she may be thinking of Daniel chapter 12, verse 2.

And I'll turn there and read. You don't have to turn there with me if you don't want to. But Daniel speaks of a resurrection that is in the future. Daniel chapter 12, verses 1 and 2 says, Verse 2.

So Martha shares the Pharisees' view of the resurrection.

The Sadducees of that time, they believed that there was no resurrection in the future. They believed that once you die, that was kind of it. Whereas the school of the Pharisees believed that there was a resurrection in the future.

And Jesus shows the Sadducees that there is actually indeed a resurrection coming. The scriptures talk about it.

[16:20] And Martha believes in that resurrection. She kind of considers that this death of her brother Lazarus is final, at least until that resurrection.

So she lives in a little bit of hope. But she doesn't fully grasp, or maybe she does fully grasp who actually Jesus is. If you remember the story of Elisha and the Shunai woman who he stayed with, him raising her son.

Elisha did it not of his own power, but he did it through the power of Yahweh. Martha recognizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that God listens to him.

And Jesus says to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. This is, as I said, the heart of the story.

Christ is the resurrection and the life. He not only can defeat death, but he keeps people from death. He is the promised Messiah who would bring life to God's people, everlasting life.

[17:41] The identity of Jesus is an important part of John, as I previously said. There are several I am statements throughout the book of John.

And if you run across it in the English, just underline the words I am. And you'll be surprised to see how many of them there are. There are a few times where he just says, I am.

And then there are seven times where Christ says, I am blank. I'm going to go a little grammar here. That blank is called the predicate. So you have, I am the, I'm the, the seven statements are, I'm the bread of life in chapter six.

I'm the light of the world in chapter eight. I am the gate in chapter 10. I'm the good shepherd in chapter 10. Again, I am the resurrection and the life in this chapter. I am the way, the truth, and the life in chapter 14.

And I am the true vine in chapter 15. The I am statement is, you can kind of put an equal sign between the I and the predicate. Jesus equals resurrection and life.

[18:54] It's not that he has a good relationship with resurrection and life. It's not that he can tap into the resurrection and the life. It is that he is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in Jesus enter into the resurrection and the life. Notice the purpose of John in John chapter 20, verse 31.

John 20, 31 says, I'll start back at verse 30. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Notice what he says at the end there. By believing you may have life in his name. Part of the purpose of the book of John is to show the way that people have eternal life.

As I said earlier, ever since Genesis, we've had this problem of death and sin. As you guys will see in chapter 5 of Genesis, there's a genealogy.

[20:15] And genealogies can be rather boring. But that genealogy particularly, if you read it through in the context of Genesis 3 and 4, notice how many times people die.

Every one of those people that Moses records in Genesis 5, they die. And Moses' purpose with that is to show that the curse has taken effect.

Nobody lives. Nobody has eternal life. And so the problem of sin has created death.

Nobody has been able to defeat it. None of the prophets were able to defeat death. None of the Pharisees.

No religious leader had ever been able to find a solution to death. Even the sacrificial system was only temporary. And yet here Jesus comes on the scene and he drops a bomb by saying, I am the resurrection and the life.

[21 : 22] This is a claim more than just mortality. This is a claim more than just humanity. This is the claim that Jesus is indeed the source of life.

Only God has the source of life. This is a statement of Jesus' deity. Paul will say in 1 Corinthians when he speaks about the resurrection of Christ, that without the resurrection of Christ, there is no hope for believers.

People may laugh at you on the job site. They may laugh at you when you try to share the gospel with them. They may think it's funny that we believe that we will be resurrected from the dead. But I think in our culture, it's so inundated that there's something beyond death that some people forget that death is a really big problem.

Christianity, especially in America, has kind of slid into the background of our minds so that we believe in a heaven and a hell generally, or at least most people do if you speak to them.

[22 : 34] Or if they don't, they think of nothing terrible on the other side. But the reality of Christ being the resurrection is the most important reality that Jesus shows to his disciples.

So then we'll move on from this a little bit. So in verses 25 and 26, Jesus shares his identity, which is also the hope of believers.

Notice that believers, he says, Whoever believes in me, though he die, he shall live. And everyone who lives and believes shall never die. There seems to be two, as you go through this actually whole story, the way that Jesus talks about death kind of flip flops a little bit.

Sometimes it seems to be referring to physical death, the first death. Sometimes he seems to be talking about the second death, when the devil and his angels and those who are not found in the book of life will be thrown into the eternal lake of fire.

When he says in verse 25, end of verse 25, Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet he shall live.

[24 : 03] He's speaking of the first death, physical death. And everyone who believes in me shall never die. That seems to contradict his statement before, but that is speaking of eternal death, when Christ shall return and judge the nation.

So because of this statement, like Paul will say in 1 Thessalonians, we who believe in Christ do not grieve as those without hope.

We have a hope that is beyond the grave, and that is Jesus Christ. So then Martha replies to him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into this world.

She has an amazing confession. She goes and gets Mary. Mary comes out, And this story seems to weave together the divinity of Christ and the humanity of Christ so tightly.

It's kind of hard to distinguish the two sometimes. You get to see a side of Jesus here that is very personal. Remember, these are his friends. The other Gospels don't really elaborate on the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus as much.

[25 : 24] But here in John, it explains that these were his close friends. These were personal people that he had spent time with. He loved hanging out in their backyard, having a barbecue.

He loved hanging out with Lazarus. Martha and Mary had served him. They had listened to his teaching. And when Lazarus dies, it just affects them so closely to their core, which is natural for a human.

And Mary comes out and she says basically the same thing that Martha had said. She says, If you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Now we know from other Gospel accounts that Jesus could heal at a distance. And you often wonder, Well, why didn't Jesus just heal from a distance here?

But as we go through this story, we realize that Jesus saying, I'm the resurrection and the life, makes it so much more powerful that he is here in person. Now this whole story is going to lead eventually to his own resurrection in the book of John, showing that he has the power over death.

[26 : 39] If Jesus can raise someone from the dead, then he can certainly raise himself from the dead. When I come to this text and it says that Jesus wept, I'm not really sure why he wept.

It doesn't give us an answer. John doesn't say that he wept because of certain things happening. But notice that he weeps before he gets to the tomb. It's not the sight of the tomb that makes him weep.

It's not the sight of the tomb that makes him troubled in spirit. It says, When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come together with her weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

And he said, Where have you laid him? The word greatly troubled could also be translated in more of a sense of anger. There's an indignation in Christ that these people are weeping as if they have no hope.

He had spent his entire ministry showing that he has the power over sickness, disease, and even death. There are a few other times where, like the procession with the widow, I think it was the widow of Nain, who he raises her son from the dead.

[27 : 57] These people had seen his miraculous signs. They should have gone to their Old Testament Bibles, been looking through the scriptures, realized that the blind were seeing, the lame were being raised up from the ground, the deaf were hearing, and that this was the Messiah.

And if they had realized that, they had realized who Christ was, they wouldn't have been weeping in this way. Weeping without hope. So, there are two ways you can kind of take that Jesus is weeping. You can take it either that he is weeping because of the reality of sin and death. That he sees the consequences of death. He sees people's emotions just breaking down.

And that he himself, being human, fully God and fully human, himself cries. Another way that you can take it, and I lean more this way, though I think you can have a bit of both, is that Jesus was weeping not over the situation of death, so much as the situation of unbelief.

There was another time when he looked at Jerusalem in Luke 19, and it says that Jesus looked at Jerusalem, and he wept over Jerusalem because of her unbelief.

[29 : 23] And I think that's something similar here. Jesus sees these people coming together, that Jesus is right there, the resurrection and the life has come, and yet they are still acting as if it's a funeral, four days later.

Instead of viewing it as a wedding processional, where the bridegroom has come, where the Son of God has finally come down in flesh to earth, as they should have been expecting, they are treating it as if it's a funeral.

Then we move on to the third scene, and that is at the tomb. Let's read verses 38 through 44.

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.

Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you had believed, you would see the glory of God? And so they took away the stone, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

[30 : 39] I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out!

The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him and let him go.

Here at the tomb, Jesus shows that he is the resurrection and the life. He's already said that he is the resurrection and the life, but his claim is backed up by this miracle.

I find it interesting that Lazarus would still die. This is not the final resurrection that is talked about in Daniel, or that is shown in Revelation, or that is talked about by call throughout his letters.

This is just a miracle. Lazarus came out of the tomb, wrapped in the garments, still bound to death. His body was still bound physically to this world.

[31 : 54] He had not received the resurrection body, but Jesus used this to show that he, his claim that he is the resurrection and the life is true. If Jesus could raise a man dead four days to life, then he could surely raise people who are dead from their sins.

I love Jesus' prayer here. He prays expectantly that his father has heard him.

He prays with confidence, and he prays to the situation. Notice what the purpose of the prayer is.

He says, These people did not believe that Jesus had sent him, at least not most of them.

Some of them apparently did, though, again, Martha, she just falls right outside the bullseye. She had made this incredible statement that Christ is the Messiah.

She believes in him, and yet she's more concerned about the smell of the tomb than what Christ is about to do. I guess she didn't have any Febreze on her, but...

[33 : 13] Lazarus, come out. This miracle showed that Christ is the resurrection and the life. The main point of the story is that Jesus holds the power over life and death.

Yes, as I said, Lazarus would go back to the grave. He would someday die. But Jesus had this miracle to show that he is more than a mere man.

He is the Son of God, incarnate. He has the power over sin and death. And he would someday raise those who put their trust in him. So, brothers and sisters, I ask you today, have you put your trust in Jesus Christ to raise you from the dead?

For some of us, it seems like a long way off. Death seems distant. The consequences of not believing in Christ are eternal.

The consequences of believing in Christ are eternal. So, I want to pull a few applications out of this text for us today.

[34 : 26] The first, I've kind of already stated, but bad things can happen in our lives solely for God's glory. This story shows us a family who Jesus loved.

Jesus had intimate fellowship with them. And yet, he willed Lazarus, he allowed Lazarus to die go through pain, go through suffering, just so that he could be glorified.

So that people would believe in him. If you're going through a trial today, whether it's physical, emotional, whether you have family who's going through a trial, and it's tearing you up inside, or just weighing you down, if work seems hard, if life seems mundane, remember that our lives are crafted by the Lord, are governed by the Lord, solely for his glory, for the good of others, so that Christ may be glorified someday.

Secondly, remember that God's timing is often not our own. Mary and Martha, if they had had their way, would have willed Christ there in their home at that moment when Lazarus got sick to keep him from dying, to put a band-aid over death.

God's timing is different than our own. We go through trials, we go through suffering, we go through good times and bad times, and the Lord knows his own plan.

[36 : 09] We do not. So trust the Lord whether you're waiting for something, whether you are praying for something, whether it's as small as something temporal, whether it's as large as a friend who needs Christ, keep praying.

God hears you, but his timing might not be your own. Lastly, Jesus is the only path for resurrection and eternal life.

Remember that nothing else can save, only Jesus can save. So believe in him and commit your life to obey him. If you want to turn with me to 2 Timothy 1, I'll close with this.

2 Timothy 1, 8-11. 2 Timothy 1, 8 says, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

So brothers and sisters, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Proclaim the gospel, believe in Jesus, and wait for his appearing at the end when he will save us finally from death and sin.

[38 : 02] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. I thank you for this church here and their kindness, their faith, and their love.

Father, would you continue to increase them in obedience to your word? Would you raise up from them people who proclaim the gospel? Would you strengthen them when they are beat down? In the trials of life going on right now, things that seem heavy, whether it's home life, work life, family life, would you please encourage their hearts through your Holy Spirit with your word and through the family of God?

Lord, I pray that their faith and love would increase and abound, that the community of Hampton Roads would know the church, the Grace Church of Williamsburg to be a faithful church, a church of love, a church who loves Christ and his word.

Father, I pray as we go into this week that you would encourage our hearts and strengthen us for the tasks ahead. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.