

**The Word Became Flesh**  
**Week 33**  
**John 11:17-44 (CSB)**  
**“I AM The Resurrection and The Life (Part 2)”**

**Introduction**

***If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that He raised up Christ — Whom He did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins. Those then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.***

**1 Corinthians 15:13-19**

A recent survey taken among the overall US population revealed that 44 percent of the respondents did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And shockingly, among professing Christians, 28 percent do not actually believe that Jesus rose from the dead! Think about that for a moment. Almost a third of the people who claim to be Christian, do not even believe in the resurrection!

The resurrection is not just a central component of the Christian faith, it is an essential doctrinal truth. For it is impossible to obtain salvation apart from accepting the reality of the resurrection. As the Apostle Paul has so eloquently stated:

***If you confess with your mouth that “Jesus is LORD”, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.***

**Romans 10:9**

So you see, any who would claim to be Christian, and yet do not believe in the resurrection, are merely deceiving themselves.

In the **Eleventh Chapter of John’s gospel**, we see the most powerful of Christ’s miracles ever performed during the course of His earthly ministry; the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. This miracle was done in a very public fashion, so that those who were witness to it would be able to know for certain that Jesus was not only God incarnate, but as such, He is the final authority over life and death.

In The Gospel of John, Jesus fifth “I AM” statement proclaims:

***...“I AM The Resurrection and The Life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”***

**John 11: 25b-26**

To believe in Jesus is to acknowledge that He has the power to call us out of the grave and into everlasting life. If we do not believe in this truth, then as Paul has said, “we are to be pitied more than anyone.” The Christian faith is pointless apart from the resurrection. It is for the resurrection, and the hope of everlasting life that we have placed our faith in Jesus. And our faith is not in vain, for He has demonstrated that He is able to deliver that which He has promised. The resurrection of Lazarus is proof that Christ is in fact, “The Resurrection and The Life”.

As we study this wonderful passage today, we see a foreshadowing of the rapture and the resurrection of the dead that is to come. For just as Jesus called Lazarus up from the grave with a loud voice, He shall also one day return to call those who believe with a mighty shout, so that we will be with Him forever (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**). So let those who are living with the expectant hope of a glorious resurrection, look to this story as a preview of what is to come, as we see ***Christ’s Return, His Reception, and the Resurrection*** of the dead!

**The Return (vs. 17-18)**

**When Jesus arrived, He found Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). John 11:17-18**

As we have previously discussed, Jesus had left Jerusalem and had gone across the Jordan river to minister there. Mary and Martha had sent word to him that Lazarus was sick. A careful viewing of the timeline proves that Lazarus was already dead, when the messenger arrived to give Jesus the news. The LORD waited two more days before returning. His mission; to raise Lazarus from the dead. But no one but He, and the disciples that returned with Him knew of His coming, nor His intentions. He had explained to His disciples that He was returning to Jerusalem to “wake up Lazarus” (**vs. 11**).

I find in this narrative a foreshadowing of things to come, for this same Jesus will one day return to this earth to “wake up” those who have fallen asleep in Him. And not only that, those of His followers who are alive and remain will also be caught up to be with The LORD forever (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**). So the story of Lazarus should serve as a reminder to every Believer that Jesus will also one day “cross the Jordan” in order to raise us from the dead. We believe in the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ, Who is the “Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”. This simply means that because He rose from the dead, we too have the promise of the coming resurrection. Because He rose, we will also rise. Just as He returned to Bethany to raise Lazarus, Jesus will soon be returning to raise us!

**The Reception (vs. 19-38)**

**Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” “Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her. Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.”**

**Having said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” As soon as Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw that Mary got up quickly and went out. They followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to cry there. As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died!” When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. “Where have you put him?” he asked. “Lord,” they told him, “come and see.”**

**Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Couldn’t He who opened the blind man’s eyes also have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.**

I have heard this passage taught so many times in my life, by many wonderful *Bible* teachers. But I must say, their interpretations of it, for the most part, I find a bit hard to fathom. The interactions between Jesus, Mary, Martha, and the mourners who had gathered to comfort them are not as they may seem to

be upon first glance. Two times in this narrative Jesus is said to be “deeply moved” (or “groaned in His Spirit” KJV). And at one point the Savior breaks down in tears.

Many times I have heard it said that these things represent a very “human reaction” of sorrow coming from Jesus, because although He knew that He was there to raise Lazarus from the dead, and that this entire event had been foreordained by God, His human emotions got the best of Him as He saw the grief of His friends. While I do believe that Christ is well acquainted with our sorrows, and He cares about us in our times of need, I do not believe what we are seeing here is accurately described as expressions of grief.

First of all, we must be reminded of the message that Christ had sent back to Mary and Martha from across the Jordan River.

**...“This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that The Son of God may be glorified through it.”** **John 11:4b**

Jesus had sent them this message to be accepted by faith. Now Lazarus was already dead, when the messenger had returned to Bethany with the promise from the Master. And no doubt, the two sisters had thought that Jesus had somehow been mistaken, when He said the **“sickness would not end in death”**. But Jesus never makes mistakes, and the sisters should have known that He always keeps His Word. After all, they had seen for themselves His power on display several times. They knew that He was from God, and yet, they doubted Him.

Let me be perfectly clear today. Unbelief breaks the very heart of God. After He has shown us time and again that He will do everything that He has promised, He expects us to BELIEVE. It is our faith in His Word that spares us from His wrath. It is our belief that saves us.

**Abram BELIEVED The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”**

**Genesis 15:6**

and

**For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who BELIEVES in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Anyone who BELIEVES in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not BELIEVE is already condemned, because he had not BELIEVED in the Name of The One and Only Son of God.** **John 3:16-18**

Bearing this important truth in mind, let us take a closer look at the interactions between Christ and the cast of characters gathered for Lazarus’ funeral service.

Martha was the first to run to Christ, when she heard that He was returning to Bethany. She didn’t wait for Him to arrive in the village, but instead ran to meet Him on the outskirts of town. We know Martha to be a woman of action from various descriptions of her in *The New Testament*. Mary on the other hand was more docile and contemplative. She remained at home when she heard that the Master was coming.

When Martha met Jesus, she immediately said to Him, that had He been there, He would have saved her brother’s life. This is understandable to anyone who has watched a loved one suffer and die, knowing full well that God has the ability to relieve their pain with just a single word. Martha couldn’t understand why Jesus had not intervened. How could Jesus love Lazarus, and yet, allow such a thing to occur. To her mind it was a contradiction. We have all been there, if we are being honest. However, it is important for us to understand what Jesus had previously said. This had been allowed to happen to bring glory to God and to His Son.

Sometimes, God can receive glory through the suffering of His people. Just ask Job! As a matter of fact, look at Martha’s response to Christ! She still believed in Him, in spite of the fact that He didn’t do as she wanted. She was extremely disappointed in her circumstances but her faith remained.

**“Yet even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give You.”** **John 11:22**

What Martha needed to learn was not only that Jesus always got a positive answer *from* God, but Jesus in fact IS God! Her faith needed to be strengthened, and this was why all this had been allowed to occur in the first place. Mary, Martha, the disciples, and all the witnesses who were present that day were about to see just how much power that Jesus truly wields. The LORD had waited four days in order to prove to all of them that neither Jewish custom (the Jews believed a person's spirit hovered around its body for three days before it abandoned it for good), nor death and decay itself can hinder His mighty working power.

Jesus told Martha that Lazarus would in fact be raised from the dead. Her response showed that although she believed there would be a resurrection of the dead in the last days, she still did not grasp the power Christ has to raise the dead whenever He so chooses. Jesus told her:

***"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"***

**John 11:25-26**

Martha "thought" she understood what He was saying, but she still didn't quite comprehend His words. Still confused, she left to go bring her sister to Jesus.

When Mary came to Jesus she broke down and cried, saying the very same thing as Martha had earlier, "LORD if you had only been here..." She too expressed her disappointment in The Savior. When He saw her tears, and her lack of faith, along with the wailing of the paid mourners, He responded.

***When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled.***

**John 11:33**

As we have discussed earlier, this on the surface seems to be a human emotional response from the Savior Who is acquainted with our sorrows and griefs. However the Greek word translated here as "deeply moved" does not agree at all with this sentiment. The word is "*embrimaomai*", and it literally means "*to snort with anger*". It is used twice in this passage. And both times it occurs following a statement that displayed a lack of faith and trust in The Savior. The first time is when Mary shows the weakness of her trust. This woman who had sat at Jesus feet and heard His teaching showed that she still did not fully comprehend just Who He is.

The second time that Jesus snorted in anger was when the Jews questioned His love for Lazarus and His supposed inability to save his life. When they saw Jesus crying in quiet frustration, because of their lack of faith, they completely misinterpreted His tears as helpless human weakness.

***But some of them said, "Couldn't He who opened the blind man's eyes also have kept this man from dying?"***

**John 11:37**

These words once again caused Jesus to respond with anger. So you see, the shortest verse in all of Scripture, "**Jesus wept.**" (**vs. 35**), has nothing to do with human emotion. It is rather, a verse that shows us how our unbelief breaks the very heart of a loving God, Who has done so much to prove to us that we can trust in His Word. I am convinced that this is why Jesus was so frustrated that He cried at the tomb of Lazarus. And when we do not trust His Word, He cries for us still. When our LORD returns to get His Church, let Him find in us a welcome reception of faith in action. Let us live like we truly BELIEVE.

### **The Resurrection (39-44)**

***"Remove the stone." Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me." After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go."***

Martha was still showing her doubt when Jesus commanded the people to roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb. He prayed aloud for the benefit of those who were there. He once more was intending to bolster their faith with what was about to take place. He cried out in a loud voice for Lazarus to come out of the tomb. His words in the literal Greek actually say, "**Lazarus, Here, Outside!**"

Immediately, the voice of The One Who is The Resurrection and The Life was recognized and obeyed by the man who lay sleeping in his grave! In fact, I am convinced that if Jesus had not called Lazarus by name, every last person who had died since the beginning of time would have risen when He shouted. He is The One Who has total authority over life and death, and His command to rise cannot be ignored or disobeyed.

The people were amazed, when they saw Lazarus struggling out of the entrance of the tomb still bound in his grave cloths. Jesus commanded them to unwrap the man and let him walk in freedom. Lazarus wasn't the only one that day who had had their earthly grave cloths removed so they could see to walk in newness of life. Many were delivered from death to life that wonderful day. They like Lazarus had heard the word of The LORD and responded in faith. We too are delivered from death unto life, when we hear and obey.

**"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. BUT GOD, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us ALIVE with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!"**

**Ephesians 2:1-5**

And just as He returned from across the Jordan to raise Lazarus, He is soon returning to raise us who believe. When He comes will His heart be broken because of our unbelief, or will He find us faithful? Even so come LORD Jesus. He is, and always shall be, The Resurrection and The Life!

And let the Believers say... TRUTH!!!