



**Sermon Series:** ALL SIGNS POINT TO JESUS

**To be used with Session:** The Sign of His Power Over Death

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

**Scripture:** John 11:25-27;38-44

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study “All Signs Point to Jesus” this sermon demonstrates that Jesus offers the hope of new life. Jesus previously stated that *“An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live...do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice, and come out”* (John. 5:25, 28-29). Most people who heard and believed Jesus, attributed His statement to the end times (John. 5:29, 11:24). Who could have anticipated that Jesus would fulfill these words in part with the raising of Lazarus from dead. Martha certainly didn’t (John. 11:29). Jesus doesn’t just offer the hope of eternal life. Jesus offers the hope of new life right now (John. 11:25).

**Introduction:** Webster’s dictionary describes hope as *“to cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true”* (merriam-webster.com). The world’s hope is a desire, want, or chance, not a guarantee. However, faith is the substance of the things we hope for, the evidence of things unseen (Heb. 11:1). Since our faith is in Christ, our hope is assured. Fanny Crosby, the renowned hymnologist wrote, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, oh what a foretaste of glory divine.” There are times when Jesus will give us a foretaste of glory so that our hope is certain. The hope of our resurrection from the dead is assured by Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, evidenced by an empty tomb. In our context, Martha’s assurance of “the resurrection at the last day,” was reassured by Jesus raising her brother Lazarus from the dead. What God did for Martha He will also do for you. Hope does not come from wishing it, wanting it, speaking it, or claiming it. Hope comes from the Lord. When has God given you a foretaste of what you’ve hoped for, reassuring you that it would happen? Has God brought to fruition enough of your hopes that His Word is sufficient? “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?”

### **JESUS DECLARES HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (11:25-27).**

Jesus received word from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus was sick (John 11:1-3). Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:5). So, the message was sent in the hope that Jesus would come immediately. But Jesus stayed two more days (John 11:6) and Lazarus died (John 11:14).

Our hope is not in prayers answered, but in the God who answers prayer. He answers, not according to our timing, but for His glory (John 11:4). God often delays until a situation becomes hopeless so that the only hope we have is Him. Delay is not denial, but it's for our good, because it's used to strengthen our belief in Him (John 11:15).

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus was four days in the tomb (John 11:17). Jewish tradition taught that the soul hovered around the body for three days, attempting to re-enter. But on the fourth day, as the body started to decompose, the soul departed permanently. However, Jesus told Martha that her brother will rise again because He is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:23-25). Although Martha didn't understand exactly what Jesus meant, she expressed her faith in Him (John 11:27). We don't have to understand a situation to express our faith in God and leave the outcome to Him because not only what's impossible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27), but all things are possible to them that would believe (Mark 9:23). Maurette Brown Clark declared, "It ain't over until God says that it's over."

### **JESUS UNDERSTANDS OUR SORROW (JOHN 11:38-40).**

"Deeply moved" (*John. 11:33, 38*), is the idea of being angry. "Troubled" (*John. 11:33*) means to be agitated. It implies that Jesus was angry at death and agitated about the toil it had taken on those who were left behind. Jesus may have also been angry and agitated at those who in an accusatory way, implied that Lazarus death was His fault (*John. 11:37*). Being both angry and agitated, it moved Jesus to tears (*John. 11:35*) because He also loved Lazarus (*John. 11:36*).

Isaiah said that He was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (*Isa. 53:3*). Jesus was made like us (*Heb. 2:17*), to be merciful and faithful and He is also able to sympathize with our weaknesses (*Heb. 4:15*).

No one knew this better than Joseph Scriven. Poor health forced him to give up a military career. On the eve of his wedding, his fiancé died in a drowning accident. Eleven years later, a second fiancé died after a short illness. He seldom had a regular income, was often homeless, and rejected by those who mistrusted his eccentricities and his work with the underprivileged. And yet, Scriven wrote: "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear...can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share, Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer" (Public domain). Because He understands our sorrow and sympathizes with our weaknesses, sickness and death no longer have the final say!

### **JESUS SENT BY THE FATHER (11:41-44).**

Jesus's command to remove the stone is a reminder that if we want to see God move in our lives, we need to obey Him. Jesus's praise and prayer to the Father is also a reminder that just as Jesus was dependent upon the Father (*John 5:19*), we need to be dependent upon Jesus, which not only speaks to the equality that exist between the Father and the Son (*John 5:18*) but also demonstrates that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing (*John 15:5*).

The work of God is to believe in the One He sent (John 6:29). The works that Jesus performed was to the glory of God and a sign so that people would believe He was sent by the Father with the goal of people believing in the Son, which after He raised Lazarus from the dead, many people did (John 11:45). It is belief in resurrection, specifically the resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the key for people believing in Him for eternal life because the resurrection proves that not only was His death on the cross sufficient to cleanse humanity's sin but validates His claim as the Son of God.

When Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave, He proved that He is the author of new life (John 11:43). However, His charge to "unwrap him and let him go," is a command to us as His disciples that we are charged to help people live that new life (John 11:44).

**Conclusion:** After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, not only did many people come to believe in Jesus, but Lazarus's life and witness was so powerful that people came to see him. As a result, not only did Jesus's enemies plot to put Him to death, but they plotted to put Lazarus to death as well (John 12:9-11). What about you? Have people come to believe in Jesus because of what He's done in your life? Is your witness so powerful that people are attracted to you? The apostle James said that friendship with the world is enmity with God (Jas 4:4). Jesus said that it's not a good thing when all people speak well of you, it may mean that you are not a true believer (Luke 6:26), are at the very least, you may be a false witness. Let us be "Lazaruses," where are witness causes so many people to believe in Jesus that we become a threat to the enemy!

**Bio:** Dr. Jerome F. Coleman is lead pastor of the First Baptist Church of Crestmont, Willow Grove, PA, shepherding God's flock for 16 years. He has been happily married to his wife Kim for 28 years and is currently vice-president of the National African American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention.