

The Resurrection and The Life – John 11:17-27

John 11:17-27. Two weeks ago we started chapter 11, and found some life-changing truths for God's glory and our good. Unexpected truths. Amazing truths.

And this week is no different. Covering the *ultimate* truth; the *ultimate* reason for this event. That Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and it's ours, ours to have, if we believe.

[17] *Now when Jesus came* [to the town of Bethany that is; where Lazarus lived], *he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days*. (ESV) Time enough to remove all doubt that he wasn't really dead, and all speculation that Jesus didn't really raise him. A view sometimes held by those who *don't* believe. But it's irrational, like all unbelief in the things of God, because the facts speak for themselves. He had 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*. Because there's nothing like the presence of close friends and family in times of loss. But *more* pertinent, is that *many* would witness the miracle. *Many* had come.

[20] *So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him* [the word *So*, indicating that Martha wanted to see Jesus *apart* from the crowds], *but Mary remained seated in the house*. Probably because she *hadn't* heard. (29)

Whatever the case – [21] *Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”* As if to say, “What have you been doing? Like we often do when things don't go our way. Failing to trust God's sovereignty, God's love, and God's timing. It was *understandable* on Martha's part, but it wasn't good.

What was good, is her faith. *Also* expressed in her statement. “*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*” That's faith. That's confidence. That the presence of Jesus would have changed everything. And it didn't stop there. Saying in v22 – *But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.*”

She not only had faith that his *presence* changed everything, but his *petition*, and God-given *power*. *Whatever* he asked of God. And it wasn't like, “I think” or “I hope” he will give it, but “*I know.*” *I know that whatever you ask* God will give it. It's the epitome of faith.

The point is this:

If you want to see God work, put your faith in Jesus (v21-22)

If you want to see God do something in your life, put your faith in the one who already did. So many people put their faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, and then stop. As if the presence, and power, and *petition* of Jesus stops. As if he forsakes us. Or doesn't care.

But the Bible is clear. He *never* leaves us or forsakes us. (Heb 13:5) He's *always* present. His power *never* wanes; the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb 13:8)

And he constantly *intercedes* on our behalf before the Father. He petitions for us. **Romans 8:34** – *Christ Jesus is the one . . . who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us*. Right now.

So the presence, and power, and petition of Jesus continues.

But if you want to see God work through him, you have to put your *faith* in him. Just like Martha.

So many people want to see God work in their lives, but never do because they have no faith. No conviction. No confidence that he's at work. No certainty that he acts on behalf of those who wait for him. He's there. He's active. But they're oblivious.

They walk around with blinders on and completely miss it. All the things he orchestrates. All the doors he opens. All the divine appointments. All the protection. All the poignant conversations. All the beautiful moments. They lack a firm conviction that God's at work, and therefore miss out when he does.

You have to put your faith in Jesus. And keep it there. The one whose presence, and power, and petition never wanes and never fails. That's the first takeaway.

The second comes from v23-25. [23] *Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”* [He assured her of his work that she had such faith in.] But missing it – [24] *Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day* [when God brings this age to a close]. For sure. Completely agree.”

After all, Lazarus was a God-fearing Jew. And that's what the Jewish Old Testament taught. Daniel 12 (2); Job 19 (25-27); Isaiah 26 (19); Ezekiel 37 (1-14).

Not only that, but *Jesus* had taught there would be a resurrection. And Martha had presumably heard it. **John 5:28-29** – [28] *Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice* [29] *and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment*. Lazarus would rise again. She agreed.

But she wasn't tracking. And to her credit, how could she? Not a single one of us would have thought he meant *right now*. *Your brother will rise again* in a few *minutes*.

So Jesus cuts to the chase and gives her the bottom line. The point of the entire event. The entire Gospel. V25 – *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Stop! Stop!*

Martha just said, “*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.*” And Jesus says, “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” As in, right here right now.

What a statement. The *fifth* such statement. “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” Another reference to a particular aspect of his deity. And not some nebulous resurrection or imaginary life, but *the* resurrection and *the* life. Our *future* resurrection. And *eternal* life.

And Jesus says, *I am* those things. Meaning he's the embodiment of them. The source of them. The essence of them. So that *we* can rise again because *he* rose again. *We* can have life because *he* has life. *We* can live because *he* lives. It's all found in Jesus.

And the key to receiving it, the key to receiving the future resurrection and eternal life he offers, is belief. V25b – “*Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.*”

Whoever *believes* in Jesus as the resurrection and the life, whoever *believes* in him as the source and embodiment of those things, will live again, even though they die.

Bottom line?

If you want to rise again, believe in Jesus (v23-25)

If you want to rise up out of the grave someday, believe in the one who did. If you want a glorified body just like his, *believe* in him. (Romans 8:30; Rev 21:5; 1 John 3:2; John 6:39-40)

If you want to hear the trumpet call, believe. (1 Thess 4:16-17) If you want to be changed *in the twinkling of an eye*, believe. (1 Cor 15:51-52) If you want to be there when the roll is called up yonder, believe. “*Whoever believes*” shall live.

But don’t miss the other two words. Starting with *me*. “*Whoever believes in me*,” Jesus said. Indicating that it’s not a *vague* sort of belief that guarantees our resurrection. Or belief in something imaginary; like people believe in karma or good luck. Or belief in an idol; or ideology. At all.

Nor is it belief in a set of propositions or *facts* that leads to our resurrection. That’s *part* of it. That’s part of biblical Christianity, but that’s definitely not all of it. You have to believe in *Jesus*. The person. *Whoever believes in me* shall live.

The other two-letter word is equally instructive. *In*. “*Whoever believes in me*,” Jesus said. Which is a common phrase in the Gospel of John. A common phrase from the mouth of Jesus. From John 3:16 onward. (3:18, 36; 6:35; 7:38; 12:44, 46; 14:12; 1 John 5:10)

But it was very *uncommon* in the Roman Empire of that day. And unheard of in 1st century Greek; the language John wrote in. They just didn’t talk that way. That you would believe *in* someone.

What’s more, the word for “in” in Greek, most often means “into.” So that the phrase, “believes *in* me” carries the sense of so completely accepting and embracing Jesus for who he is and what he’s done, that we enter *into* him, and thereby live through him. So that what he experiences, we experience. What he has, aka life and resurrection, we have.

That’s the idea of believing in Jesus. And that’s why it’s necessary to rise again.

Third, and closely associated . . .

If you want to live forever, trust in Jesus (26a)

V25 again. “*I am the resurrection and the life* [Jesus said]. *Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die*. Wait a minute. Did Jesus just contradict himself? Saying we will die, and then *never die*?

Not at all. The first instance refers to our *physical* death, and the second, spiritual death. So when you put it all together, v25-26 read this way; a kind of amplified version.

“*Whoever believes in me, though he die* [physically], *yet shall he live* [both spiritually and physically; he’ll rise again someday]. *[26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die* [never die spiritually]. Because the moment we breath our last, we go to be

with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:6-8) Spared from hell to enter heaven. Spared from the ill-effects of death, and given life. Forever.

And it’s yours, if you believe. It’s yours if you trust. Everyone who *lives and believes in* Jesus, *trusts* in him, shall live forever.

And who doesn’t want that? Nobody in their right mind wants this to be it. Especially with a sense of *eternity* in our heart. A *longing* for life. The question is, are you willing to humble yourself and *trust* him in order to have it?

If you want to live forever, put your hand in the hand of the man who made you, and keep it there. Through thick and thin. Trust that he has you and won’t let go. Trust that he loves you and won’t stop.

Trust that *his* eternity is your eternity. His home, your home. His glory, your glory. His blessing, your blessing. His future, your future. And his *life*, your life.

If you want to live forever, trust in Jesus. That’s the third takeaway.

The fourth comes from v26b-27. Where Jesus says – [26b] “*Do you believe this?*” It’s the third time in two verses he uses that word. “Believe.” Only in this case, it’s used in the sense of, “Do you accept what I say as true?” Indicated by the word, “this.” *Do you believe this*? Referring to his claim of being the resurrection and the life. And his promise of rising again and living forever.

Which goes to show that believing *in* Jesus means believing his claims and promises as well. The facts about him. And Martha did. *She said to him* [v27], “*Yes, Lord. I do believe it. I do accept the truth about you. It’s crucial.*

But she didn’t *stop* there. She confirmed her answer, she sealed the deal, by *confessing* Jesus. Proclaiming who he is to her. “*I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.*”

If you want to seal the deal, confess Jesus (v26b-27)

That’s the idea. If you want to rise again and live forever, be *overt* with your faith. Be *open* with your belief. Be *blatant* with your trust. Instead of keeping it to yourself, confess it. Not just *what* you believe, but the one in *whom* you believe. Confess *Jesus*.

Because **Romans 10:9** says – *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead* [having paid the full and complete price for your sins; if you confess him and believe], *you will be saved*. If you don’t, you won’t. No deal.

Because *secret* belief is akin to *no* belief. Unconfessed belief just lets you straddle the fence and avoid accountability. And gives no glory to God whatsoever. Nobody even *knows* he saved you and raised you. Plus, the Bible says that if you’re ashamed of Jesus now, he’ll be ashamed of you when he returns. Mark 8:38. No deal.

But if you confess him, if you openly proclaim him, you’ll *seal* the deal. Just like Martha. Who confessed him as Lord, and Savior, and God in the flesh. The one who *came* to be

believed in and confessed. Just like he came to Bethany.

If you want to seal the deal, confess Jesus . . .

- **As your Lord**

Notice that Martha didn't stop at *yes* when Jesus asked the question, "*Do you believe this?*" She said, "*Yes, Lord.*" A confession in and of itself. That he was her leader. Her authority. The one she followed.

If you want to make sure you're the recipient of his promises, confess him. "Jesus is Lord of my life." Confess him as the one you love and serve. The one you follow and obey.

Second, confess him . . .

- **As your Savior**

Or as Martha said it, "*I believe that you are the Christ.*" The Messiah. The one God promised, to save and deliver his people from their sins. If you believe it, confess it.

Take a minute at your next Small Group gathering, or Bible Study table, or dinner table, and say it out loud. "Jesus is my Savior." Get over the hump of your hesitation and seal the deal. Remove all doubt.

And third, seal the deal by confessing Jesus . . .

- **As God in the flesh**

Or as Martha said it – "*I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God.*" Meaning he's of the exact same *essence* as God. That's how that phrase and idea was used in the days of Jesus. A son was considered to be the same as his father. So Jesus, born as a man, but still fully God, is God in the flesh. It's true.

The question is, do you *believe* it? Because if you don't, you're not saved. If you don't confess the true Jesus, the biblical Jesus, you're not saved by Jesus. Otherwise you can believe anything you want and still be saved.

If you don't confess Jesus as he is, you're just following a figment of your imagination and practicing idolatry. Like religions and churches that say he was a really good man and a great example, but just a man. Or those who think he was a man who *became* God. The only thing that leads to is death.

How much better to seal the deal by confessing the *true* Jesus? The one who came into the world as God in the flesh, to be your Savior and Lord.

Summary

If you want to see God work, if you want to rise again and live forever, if you want to seal the deal, believe in Jesus. Make your entire life about him. The *Resurrection* and the *Life*.

Prayer – God, we believe. Help our unbelief. Awaken faith in those who don't know you, and more faith in those who do. Instill trust; and more trust. And find us faithful to confess your Son as Lord and Savior. That we might see you work, and rise again and live forever.

You are loved