

THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE

Friday, March 24

Reading: John 11

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

When Jesus hears that His friend Lazarus is sick, He delays for two days before going to Bethany. He states two reasons for Lazarus' death: (1) It would bring glory to God. Jesus' delay was not out of lack of concern. It was part of God's plan. In Jewish thought, a spirit hovered around the body for three days before permanently departing. By waiting for the fourth day, Jesus was proving that Lazarus was irreversibly dead. (2) It would strengthen the disciples' faith as they witnessed the power of Christ.

When Jesus arrives, Martha goes out to meet Him. Jesus' question was an attempt to get Martha to look past the situation and focus on the Savior. Martha, however, took Jesus' words as a statement of comfort one gives to those who have lost a loved one – 'You will see him again at the resurrection in the last day.' Martha had expressed her faith in the resurrection as a principle, but Jesus now reveals the resurrection as a Person. When Jesus asks, "Do you believe this?" it was an invitation for Martha to respond with a statement of faith in Christ as the Son of God.

Though her question to Jesus is the same as her sister's, Mary's attitude is different. There is no mention of Martha falling at Jesus feet, yet this is the first thing Mary does. It is interesting that each time we meet Mary she is at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:39; John 11:32; 12:3). There is also no mention of Martha weeping, yet Mary's weeping is seen to touch the heart of Jesus. While Martha needed Jesus' words of comfort, no words could console the grieving Mary so Jesus does not attempt to do so. He weeps with her.

At the tomb, Jesus orders the stone be removed and then He prays. Jesus' prayer was for the benefit of the people. He prayed that this miracle would bring glory to the Father and recognition that He was sent from God. The tension reached its climax as Jesus cried out, "Lazarus, come forth!" The 4th century bishop Augustine commented that if Jesus had not specified that Lazarus come out every corpse in the graveyard would have come out! The power of death had to surrender in the face of the command of Christ!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Jesus Wept." These two little words give us great insight into the heart of Jesus. When He saw the pain and grief of Mary He grieved with her. We usually feel that we have to say something to those who have lost loved ones to "comfort" them. But often the best comfort we can give a grieving person is to simply be there and weep with them. Do you weep with those who are grieving? Do you let them see your care by just being there?
2. "Stench of Death." Death is not pretty. In fact, some Bible teachers believe that Jesus was as upset by the presence of death as He was by the unbelief of the people. Martha's concern over the stench of death was real. Today we try to make death as pleasant as possible. But all the funeral trappings cannot hide the fact that death is an awful thing. It entered the world as a result of sin and spreads through all humanity (Romans 5:12). However, we have the wonderful promise that Christ was victorious over death (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; 2 Timothy 1:10). How does this truth help a Christian face death with courage?

READING THE STORY: John 9-12