

I AM

The Resurrection and the Life

Participant Guide

¹⁷ So when Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ Many of the Judaeans had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went to meet him. Mary, meanwhile, stayed sitting at home.

²¹ 'Master!' said Martha to Jesus. 'If only you'd been here! Then my brother wouldn't have died! ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask him for.'

²³ 'Your brother will rise again,' replied Jesus.

²⁴ 'I know he'll rise again,' said Martha, 'in the resurrection on the last day.'

²⁵ 'I am the resurrection and the life,' replied Jesus. 'Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. ²⁶ And anyone who lives and believes in me will never, ever die. Do you believe this?'

²⁷ 'Yes, Master,' she said. 'This is what I've come to believe: that you are the Messiah, the son of God, the one who was to come into the world.'

Context

The early text indicates that when Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was gravely ill, he did not rush to Bethany to heal him, or even to see him. In fact, John seems to think that he was in no rush at all. When he arrives in Bethany, Lazarus' sisters were frustrated with Jesus' delay. Like many Jews in the early first century, Martha believed that on judgement day the dead will rise again and meet the Messiah in his kingdom. We know that later Lazarus came back to life when Jesus resurrected him as a sign of his status as the true Messiah. However, during this entire conversation Martha is not aware that this would or could ever happen.

1. 'If only you'd been here...' those are the words of Martha when Jesus arrives. In her mind, Jesus had failed her and her brother. Have you ever felt this way before?

2. According to verse 24, Martha's belief in the future resurrection and new life did not seem to help her in her frustration. That seems to be the case with us as well. How does Jesus respond to her in the beginning of verse 25? Why is this important?

3. In the remaining of verse 25, what kind of death and life is Jesus talking about?

4. How can we start to experience this full life today?

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living, just because He lives!

Gloria and William J. Gaither

If it's only for this present life that we have put our hope in the Messiah, we are the most pitiable members of the human race. But in fact the Messiah has been raised from the dead, as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Apostle Paul to the Corinthians

Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present.

N.T. Wright