

TRANSFORMING PRESENCE

Sermon Notes

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Published by Wesleyan Publishing House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

These notes are to be used in conjunction with *Transforming Presence: How Being with Jesus Changes Everything* by David Drury (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2016).

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ABOUT THESE NOTES

Transforming Presence by David Drury forms the basis for this sermon series. This book shows us the beauty of the gospel of John through the stories of those who encountered Jesus and were dramatically changed by his presence. Join Drury as he takes you on a journey through the life of Jesus seen through the eyes of those who needed him most.

Trust the Lord to enrich your life and the lives of those in your congregation as you explore the transforming presence of Christ and how being with him changes everything.



Week 1

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE

James 2:1–11

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the breakdown of it in today's culture, marriage is still considered sacred or at least special. Engaged couples look forward to their wedding day, and the father of the bride may spend thousands of dollars on his daughter's wedding.

The wedding in Cana of Galilee was a festive occasion. It may have lasted several days and included much entertainment, but it didn't end without a major social flaw. If you hosted or attended a wedding that ran out of refreshments, you will understand what happened at the wedding in Cana.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. A Wedding Celebration

A. The Place (John 2:1)

Cana was close to Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, so many believe the wedding involved close friends or relatives of Jesus. It seems Mary played an important role in planning and helping serve at the wedding.

B. The Special Guests (John 2:2)

Jesus and his disciples were invited. Marriage can be very stressful in today's fast-paced world. A husband and wife should be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and to each other for life. Their motto should be "Each for the Lord and both for each other."

II. A Woeful Situation

A. Mary's Report to Jesus (John 2:3)

Mary told Jesus, "They have no more wine" (v. 3). The wedding celebration may have been underway for most of a week, so understandably the supply of wine was getting lower and lower until there was none left. This was an awkward situation that Mary must have felt Jesus could solve, although she had not seen a previous miracle.

B. Mary's Confidence in Jesus (John 2:3–5)

Mary showed confidence in Jesus by presenting the no-wine problem to him and by telling the servants to do whatever he told them (vv. 4–5). She had many opportunities to witness Jesus' wisdom as he was growing up (see Luke 2:52), so she relied on him to formulate a plan that would remedy the woeful situation at hand.

Mary's instructions to the servants certainly would be appropriate for us. Obeying Jesus is a wise step in all of life's situations.

III. A Wonderful Solution

A. The Miracle (John 2:6–10)

Nearby stood six stone water jars. Each one had a capacity of about twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus instructed the servants to fill each one with water. They did so, filling each one to the brim.

Next, Jesus told the servants to draw some of the water out and take it to the master of the banquet. As was his custom to taste all the wine and food, the master of the banquet tasted the water—but it had been turned into wine—and he was delighted with its quality. He told the bridegroom he had kept the best wine until then.

By his supernatural power Jesus had performed a miracle that solved the crisis of an exhausted supply of wine. It was his first miracle. Jesus is concerned with every crisis we face, and he has the power to provide a wonderful solution in each situation (Eph. 3:20).

B. The Message (John 2:11)

The miracle at Cana was intended not only to solve a problem but also to send a message; namely, that Jesus was more than just a man. It revealed his glory as the Son of God. Seeing Jesus' glory, the disciples put their trust in him.

CONCLUSION

According to John 20:30–31, Jesus performed miracles to elicit faith in him as the Savior and Son of God. Have you believed in him?



Week 2

A NIGHTTIME CONVERSATION

John 3:1–21

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps there should be a Nobel Prize for a really good bumper sticker message. Granted, the writing can't compete with great literature, but it often entertains us when we wait for a traffic light to turn from red to green. Here a few:

- “Don't laugh! At least it's paid for.”
- “Fight poverty! Get a job!”
- “Tithe if you love Jesus. Anyone can honk.”
- “My car insurance costs more than my car.”
- “You're driving a car, not a phone booth.”
- “Don't follow me. I'm lost too.”

That last bumper sticker would not be funny on a car owned by a religious leader, but even a religious leader may be lost. He or she may get lost in unfamiliar surroundings, but if this leader doesn't know how to get to heaven, being lost is extremely tragic. He or she and all who follow face eternal peril.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Nicodemus's Need (John 3:1–2)

A. The Sanhedrin

The third chapter of the gospel of John presents the dramatic story of Nicodemus, a religious leader who didn't know how to get to heaven until he met Jesus. The meeting took place at night. Perhaps Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, did not want his fellow members to know he was visiting Jesus. Or perhaps he felt Jesus would be too busy during the daytime.

The Sanhedrin was a Jewish tribunal of seventy religious leaders who decided issues related to religious and civil matters. Its officers could order arrests and judge cases not involving capital punishment. This prestigious tribunal included scribes and Pharisees.

B. Scribe and Pharisees

Scribes were experts in the law of Moses. They preserved the Old Testament Scriptures in written form and served as teachers of it.

The Pharisees held vast authority over the religious practices of the Jews. They rigidly applied Old Testament laws and many of their own to daily life, but they did not demonstrate genuine love for God or others.

Jesus often exposed the Pharisees' pride and condemned their hypocrisy and also the scribes' hypocrisy (Luke 11:42–44).

C. Religious but Unknowing

Possibly, Nicodemus had seen the miracles referred to in John 2:23 and therefore understood that Jesus was a teacher sent by God. But Nicodemus had a big problem. He was extremely religious and a teacher of the Jewish religion, but he did not know how to enter the kingdom of God.

II. Jesus' Response (John 3:3–15)

A. By Water

Some religious teachers believe “water” in verse 7 indicates baptism. However, God saves us by grace alone; that is, his undeserved favor saves us. According to Ephesians 2:8–9, we are saved by grace through faith.

What, then, did Jesus mean by “water”? Possibly, he was referring to the Holy Spirit (see Isa. 36:25–27; 44:3). Since the Greek word translated *and* in John 3:5 can be translated *even*, we can translate what Jesus said to Nicodemus as, “No one can enter into the kingdom of God unless born of water—even the Spirit.” This interpretation seems to be supported by Jesus' next words: “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6). In other words, there is a physical birth and a spiritual birth. The physical birth is of the flesh; the spiritual birth is of the Spirit.

B. Rebirth

Nicodemus was dumbfounded by what Jesus said to him. As a Pharisee, he had believed and taught that strict adherence to religious rules earned God's approval. But Jesus insisted he must be born again (or from above) to enter God's kingdom.

Observing Nicodemus's great surprise, Jesus said, “You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again’” (v. 7).

Jesus told Nicodemus the Spirit performs the new birth in a mysterious way. No one can see how he gives spiritual life, just as no one can see the wind. However, the wind's effects are observable, and so are the effects of the Holy Spirit's “birthing” a person into God's family (see v. 8).

III. Nicodemus's Response (John 3:16–21)

Undoubtedly, Nicodemus thought carefully about Jesus' words, and he may have become a born-again believer (John 7:45–53; 19:39–42).

CONCLUSION

Because we are sinners by nature, choice, and practice, we need a new birth. We need to receive spiritual life. When the Holy Spirit births us into God's family, he doesn't simply refine our old sinful nature; he gives us a new nature and the power to honor our heavenly Father. If you have not been born again, the right time to be born again is right now.



Week 3

THIRST NO MORE!

James 1:1–11

INTRODUCTION

When have you experienced extreme thirst? After toiling outdoors? On a hike? While fishing? At the beach? On a golf course? Our health requires that we drink adequate amounts of water. Spiritual thirst is evident in the human pursuit of such things as pleasure, popularity, fame, material prosperity.

John 4 presents the story of a woman who needed the water of life but was unaware of her need until Jesus showed it to her.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Jesus' Compassion (John 4:1–8)

A. Going through Samaria

The Jews despised the Samaritans, so when they traveled from Judea to Galilee, they would avoid Samaria. They would leave Judea, cross the Jordan, go through Perea on the east side of the river, and then cross the Jordan again to enter Galilee on the west.

But “Jesus had to go through Samaria” (v. 4). Why? Because a woman there needed forgiveness and eternal life.

B. Jacob's Well

Evening was the usual time to draw water. Noon was blistering hot! Undoubtedly, the woman chose this time of day because she wanted to avoid the insults and sneers of the village women. They would choose a more comfortable time of day to draw water.

C. Sacrifice

Jesus' real humanity shows in the tiredness he experienced from his journey. Here, we must avoid two dangers. The first is to deny or minimize Jesus' deity. He was truly God in the flesh in order to be the perfect representative on our behalf. The second danger is that of failing to recognize Jesus' true humanity. As a real man, he experienced all the trials and temptations we do, and yet he did not sin (Heb. 4:15). Also, as a true man, Jesus died on the cross as our perfect substitute for sin (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4).

D. His Request

Often, the best way to “break the ice” and begin a meaningful conversation is to ask a favor. Jesus used this approach in his meeting with the Samaritan woman

E. Spiritual Satisfaction

The disciples' interest was in satisfying their hunger, but Jesus' interest was in satisfying the spiritual thirst of the Samaritan woman. Do we invest too much time, money, and energy in trying to satisfy our own needs to the neglect of investing ourselves in meeting the spiritual needs of others?

II. The Woman's Conversion (John 4:9–29)

A. Jesus Changed Her View of Him

Her perception of Jesus progressed. First, she recognized that, unlike other Jews who refused to speak to Samaritans, Jesus spoke to her. She perceived that he was a different kind of Jew (v. 9). Second, he gained her respect. She called him "Sir" (v. 11). Third, she believed he spoke God's message. She viewed him as a prophet (v. 19). Fourth, she came to the conclusion that he was messiah. She asked him directly whether he was the Messiah, and he answered that he was (vv. 28–29).

B. Jesus Changed Topics

Jesus sparked her interest in spiritual matters by offering her living water. She responded, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty" (v. 15).

C. The Woman Saw the Messiah

When the woman perceived that Jesus was the Messiah, she became so excited that she left her water jar at the well (v. 28).

III. The Disciples' Challenge (John 4:30–38)

The disciples needed to get their minds off physical needs and see the fields that were ripe for harvest. When Jesus told them to look at the fields, he must have pointed to the villagers who were coming to see him. Our mission fields are people.

IV. The Samaritans' Conversion (John 4:39–42)

The villagers opened not only their hearts but also their homes to Jesus (vv. 39–42). They were convinced Jesus was the Savior. How can we show we have believed in Jesus? Is there anything we have withheld from him?

CONCLUSION

What are you thirsting for: pleasure, wealth, popularity, fame? Nothing satisfies the thirsting of the soul except Jesus. Take the water of life he offers today.



Week 4

JESUS' SECOND MIRACLE IN GALILEE

John 4:43–54

INTRODUCTION

Often today, the word *miracle* is used loosely. A student may say, “It’s a miracle I got a B in Spanish.” A traveler may say, “It’s a miracle that jet with two blown tires landed safely.” Someone may comment, “Joe and Cheyenne have been married two years. It’s a miracle their marriage lasted more than two months.” A miracle is a divine intervention in life that cannot be explained by natural causes and occurs to demonstrate God’s power and to authenticate his messenger’s credentials.

Jesus’ first miracle took place in Cana of Galilee—turning water into wine. His second miracle in Galilee was the healing of the nobleman’s son. Capernaum was about twenty-five miles north of Cana. When Jesus arrived in Galilee, the people received him because of works he had performed at the Passover Feast (John 4:43–45).

SERMON OUTLINE

I. A Father’s Concern (John 4:46–49)

A. Powerless

A Gentile official was powerless to save his son. Sometimes it’s difficult to remember that authority and money cannot restore or sustain life. (Naaman the leper discovered this truth in 2 Kings 5:1–16.)

B. Jesus Holds the Keys to Life and Hades

The official tried to hurry Jesus, but Jesus is never in a hurry. He is, however, always on time. We may try to rush him into ending a trial or saving a loved one or meeting a need, but we need to wait patiently on the Lord. Jesus has the power to do whatever is necessary. The fact that he holds the keys to death and Hades proves his omnipotence. Nothing is too hard for him to handle for our good and God’s glory.

II. Jesus’ Compassion (John 4:50)

Jesus knows all about our concerns and cares. He is able to help. Hebrews 4:14–16 encourages us to seek his help, knowing he is compassionate. And 1 Peter 5:7 offers similar encouragement because Jesus cares for us.

III. The Boy's Cure (John 4:51–54)

First the official believed that if Jesus could reach his son, his son would be healed. Then he believed Jesus' words. Then he believed in Jesus. His son was healed at the exact moment Jesus told the official, "Your son will live" (vv. 50, 53). Don't just believe what Jesus says, believe in him.

CONCLUSION

What do you feel powerless about today? Your health? A family crisis? Your job? Do you feel as helpless as the official whose son was gravely ill? If so, do what the official did. Beg Jesus. Trust in him. Nothing is too hard for him to handle.



Week 5

LOST IN THE CROWD

John 5:1–9

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever feel insignificant in a big crowd? Do you question why the Lord would be interested in you? He showed interest in Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nicodemus, a woman in Samaria, and now a disabled man. There should be no doubt of his interest in you.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. The Man's Hopelessness and Helplessness (John 5:1–5)

A. Human Plight Contrasted with Human Artistry

Thirty-eight years of paralysis. The man tried to enter the water (self-effort cannot enable us to walk before God). But the crowd got in his way, and the crowd may often get in our way. It will use us and abuse us and then discard us. What is the most unselfish thing someone has done for you?

B. Human Plight Takes Many Forms

Those who awaited the stirring of the water included “a great number of disabled people . . . the blind, the lame, the paralyzed” (v. 3). An invalid of thirty-eight years was among them (v. 5).

We are surrounded by crowds, but their needs vary. We must see them as individuals who are helpless. Some are victimized by drugs; some suffer abuse; others carry heavy emotional burdens. We must have compassion on them, and see them as individuals whom Jesus loves.

II. The Man's Healing (John 5:6–9)

A. Jesus' Compassion

Jesus doesn't pose complex questions. He asked the invalid a simple question: “Do you want to get well?” (v. 6). Spiritually needy people do not need to be bombarded with an array of theological questions, but one simple question is essential: “Do you want to be saved?”

B. Jesus' Command

The disabled man transferred his faith from a pool to a Person. What are you trusting in? Church membership, sacraments, good deeds?

C. Obedience

The disabled man's healing involved obedience (v. 8). It involved taking a step of faith “at once” (v. 9).

CONCLUSION

If you need salvation, don't procrastinate. Romans 10:13 promises, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."



Week 6

A MIRACULOUS MEAL

John 6:1–15

INTRODUCTION

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle described in all four gospels. Although this parable has been told by many teachers and preachers, there is still some valuable information to be learned from it.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Jesus' Compassion (John 6:1–9)

A. Jesus Had Compassion

Jesus and his disciples had gone up a mountain where they sat down (vv. 1–3). Perhaps Jesus taught his disciple about the Passover Feast that was near. When Jesus looked down upon the gathering crowd, he was moved with compassion (Mark 6:34). He saw the people in the crowd as sheep not having a shepherd. They had traveled ten miles around the sea to be with Jesus.

B. Jesus Was Tired

In spite of his hectic schedule and little time to rest and teach his disciples, Jesus was not irritable. He was tired, but his concern for the crowd compelled him to minister. He questioned Philip where they could buy bread for the crowd (John 6:5). But he knew what he would do (v. 6). Philip looked at the situation and saw the impossible. He said eight months wages could not buy enough bread for the crowd. Jesus looked at the same situation and saw the supernatural.

C. The Boy in the Crowd

Andrew, the people-person told Jesus that a boy in the crowd had a lunch of five small barley loaves and two small fish (vv. 8–9). This story is recorded not to teach sharing but to teach Jesus' deity! The feeding of the five thousand is another of the eight miracles John recorded (John 20:30–31).

II. Jesus' Creativity (John 6:10–13)

A. Organization

Organization is not something a church should shun but embrace.

B. Recognition of the Father's Provision

God set a bush on fire without consuming it. He used a slingshot to slay a giant. He used ravens to sustain a prophet.

C. Jesus Satisfied the Hungry

Jesus supplied bread and fish for the massive crowd, and he did so miraculously. But just as miraculously he provides eternal life to satisfy those who long to be satisfied spiritually. If you are spiritually famished, trust in Jesus as your Savior. Only he can satisfy the longing of your soul.

D. Jesus Compensated His Servants

Jesus rewards faithful service. In response to his command, the disciples gathered the leftovers and filled twelve baskets. Twelve baskets and twelve disciples, one basket of food for each disciple! Jesus always rewards faithful service (1 Cor. 3:10–14).

E. He Revealed His Messiahship

Although the feeding of the five thousand is often taught to encourage sharing, its biblical purpose was to reveal Jesus as the Messiah. The people who saw the miracle concluded that Jesus was “the Prophet [the Messiah] who is to come into the world” (John 6:14).

CONCLUSION

Only the Son of God could satisfy the desperate need of the multitude by taking what was available and multiplying it. He can take what you consider small and use it in a big way. Will you offer him whatever resources you have regardless of their size? Just watch what he will do with them.



Week 7

THAT SINKING FEELING

John 6:16–21

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a sinking feeling? Perhaps you were stuck in a blizzard and felt your heart sinking. You feared for your life. You might have experienced a financial crisis and felt like you were sinking in debt. Even Jesus' disciples experienced a sinking feeling. They were in a boat late at night on the Sea of Galilee when a powerful storm threatened to capsize their boat.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Caught in a Vicious Storm (John 6:16–18)

A. The Setting

At evening the disciples got into a boat and headed toward Capernaum on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. It was dark, and Jesus was not with them. It was a recipe for a disaster because storms often rose up without warning on the Sea of Galilee.

B. The Storm

Conditions were poor for rowing. A storm arose, as storms often appeared at evening. A strong west wind was blowing, and the waters were swelling. The disciples were heading right into the wind. It was a hopeless situation.

II. Caught Sight of Jesus (John 6:19)

A. They Saw Jesus Walking on the Water

Caught in the storm, the disciple found themselves over three miles from land in the middle of the sea. But then they saw Jesus. Don't we often see Jesus when we are helpless and in the midst of storms?

B. They Were Terrified

The sight of Jesus terrified them. The stormy conditions blurred Jesus' appearance. The disciples wondered if they were seeing a ghost.

III. Calmed by Jesus (John 6:20–21)

A. Jesus Calmed Their Fear

Jesus told the disciples not to fear. He assured them, "It is I" (v. 20).

B. Jesus Stilled the Storm

Assured by Jesus' words, the disciples received him into the boat. Immediately the boat reached its destination. The presence of Jesus can quiet life's most vicious storms. Will we trust him to enter and calm our storms?

CONCLUSION

Perhaps you feel like the disciples—trapped in a violent storm and almost swamped. Will you look in faith to Jesus and see him approaching? Will you receive him into your storm? He can calm your fears and drive away the storm.



Week 8

WRITING IN THE SAND

John 8:1–11

INTRODUCTION

We all sin, but should we be quick to judge another person without first examining our own lives? Jesus was confronted with the issue of judging a woman caught in the act of adultery.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Jesus' Preparation for the Confrontation (John 8:1–2)

A. He Prayed

Jesus brought his concerns to his Father, just as we are instructed to do: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7).

B. He Taught

We must avoid the tendency to avoid the teaching of God's Word. The Scriptures are able to make the lost wise unto salvation and to develop mature Christians (see 2 Tim. 3:15–16).

II. The Plot Detailed (John 8:3–6)

A. The Perpetrators

Isn't it ironic that religious leaders tried to trip Jesus and make him appear to contradict the law of Moses? Even today many religious leaders oppose Jesus and deny his sacrificial death and bodily resurrection.

B. The Purpose

What was the purpose of this encounter? To trap Jesus? To test him? Would he reject the law of Moses or reject a sinner who needed help? Would Jesus violate the law that required the Romans to sentence a person to death? If he passed judgment on the woman as a sinner deserving death under the law of Moses, Jesus would be guilty of allowing the death sentence with Roman approval.

C. The Problems

Was this encounter a setup? One by the woman's husband to get her property? If she owned property when her husband wrote a bill of divorce, the property would stay with her. But if she had committed adultery, the property would go to her husband. Where was the husband? Had an escape been arranged? Why wasn't he there to face Jesus? Is the punishment here a

misapplication of Scripture? Was stoning an appropriate response? Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 say “put to death” and “must die.” These verses say nothing about stoning. Stoning was the punishment for a couple involving a man and an engaged virgin (Deut. 22:23–24).

III. The Plot Dismantled (John 8:6–11)

A. Jesus Responded Wisely

Jesus exercised forgiveness (vv. 10–11). He forgave the woman. No one has sinned too greatly to position him- or herself beyond the ability of Jesus to forgive. The apostle Paul had received forgiveness in spite of viewing himself as the worst of sinners (see 1 Tim. 1:15).

B. Jesus Changed the Woman’s Life (John 8:11)

Jesus can transform all of our lives: “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

CONCLUSION

Are we too quick to see sin in another person’s life and rush to judgment? Shouldn’t we be quick to examine our own lives, confess whatever sin we find, and offer forgiveness to the person we have judged?



Week 9

WHO IS REALLY BLIND?

John 9:13–14

INTRODUCTION

Millions of people are blind or visually impaired. Physical blindness affects people's lives on Earth, but spiritual blindness affects life for eternity if it is not corrected.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. The People's False Confidence (John 9:13)

The people who knew the blind man brought him to the Pharisees. They honored the Pharisees, although the Pharisees were committed to law keeping as a way of salvation. The people were religious, but they lacked genuine faith.

II. The Pharisees' Argument (John 9:14–16)

A. Sabbath Breaker

There was a divided opinion of Jesus (v. 16). Some of the Pharisees thought Jesus was not of God, because they felt he violated the Sabbath. However, others felt he must not be a sinner because he did such wonderful signs.

B. Prophet

Some regarded him as a prophet. Some Old Testament prophets performed miracles. For example, Elijah withheld rain from the earth.

III. The Parents' Evasive Response (John 9:18–23)

They would not answer because they feared expulsion from the synagogue. This punishment was both social and religious. Obviously, the parents did not want to be kept away from their worship center and be shunned in public life.

IV. The Blind Man's Interrogation (John 9:24–34)

A. The Pharisees Gave Him a Chance to Repent

They really wanted the former blind man to agree with them that Jesus was a sinner.

B. Straightforward Answer

The former blind man did not argue; he simply told what he knew. He was no longer blind. No one ever wins an argument, but who argue against our testimony about the change Jesus has made in our lives.

C. Sarcasm

The former blind man used sarcasm in conversing with the Jews. He asked if they wanted to become Jesus' disciples.

D. The Pharisees' Action

Deeply offended by the sarcasm, the Jews accused the former blind man of being steeped in sin at birth. They said, "How dare you lecture us!" (v. 34). Often, religious people feel superior to others and look down on others as sinful.

V. The Savior's Involvement (John 9:35–41)

In verse 35, "Son of Man" is a Messianic term. Jesus labeled the Pharisees as spiritually blind (vv. 40–41). He came to pronounce judgment on the ungodly and to make moral and spiritual decisions. His judgment was that the unbelieving Pharisees had chosen to be spiritually blind.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual blindness is much worse than physical, because a physically blind person cannot see people, objects, and scenes that others see, but a spiritually blind person cannot see God's truth and the beauty of heaven. A spiritually blind person will spend eternity apart from God unless he or she believes in Jesus. If he or she repents and believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit will lift his or her blindness and give that person spiritual sight. Do you need to believe in Jesus? Why not believe in him today?



Week 10

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:1–45

INTRODUCTION

James said life is like a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes (James 4:14). Romans 6:23 tells us, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Death Is Sure

A. In Adam, All Die

It is a fact that every human being will die. Some will live to be one hundred years old, but they, too, will die. The young may die when they are young, and the old will die in spite of their longevity. Adam’s sin has affected the entire human race. When Adam sinned, we sinned in him. When God judged Adam with death, we died in Adam. The sentence of death is physical (Heb. 9:27), spiritual (Eph. 2:1), and eternal (Rev. 20:14).

B. Death Is No Respector of Persons

No one escapes death. It visits the famous and the unknown, the rich and the poor. Death ended the life of Jesus’ dear friend Lazarus. In physical death, the soul separates from the body. In spiritual death, the soul is separated from God. In eternal death, the soul is separated from God for eternity.

II. Life Is Short

A. Life Is Like a Mist

A mist appears and quickly vanishes. Doesn’t your life seem to be on a fast track? Doesn’t it seem like it was just the other day that you were in grade school?

B. Its Length Is Uncertain

A doctor or website may predict how long you live, but their predictions may be wrong. Even if you are healthy, you don’t know what tomorrow may bring. It is best to live each day doing God’s will.

III. Sin, the Cause

A. God Pronounced the Sentence of Death on Adam and Eve

Our first parents enjoyed beautiful and peaceful surroundings but they failed the test God gave them. They ate the fruit God put off limits. He had told them the penalty of disobedience was death. They did not die physically when they ate the fruit, but they died spiritually.

B. Generation after Generation Died

The fifth chapter of Genesis lists significant descendants of Adam and Eve. They lived long, but all except Enoch died.

IV. Christ, the Cure

A. He Is Sympathetic

Jesus traveled from Galilee to Bethany, near Jerusalem, because he felt Mary and Martha's sadness on the loss of their brother Lazarus (John 11:1–17). When he arrived at Lazarus' tomb, he wept (vv. 33–37).

B. He Is Sovereign

In Revelation 1:18, Jesus said, "I hold the keys of death and Hades." We don't have to fear death if we know Jesus holds the keys. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb. He called, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43). Perhaps, if he had simply said, "Come out," all the dead would have come out of their graves. Lazarus was wearing grave clothes until the sovereign Jesus commanded, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go" (v. 44). In saving us, Jesus frees us from our sins and gives us a new life. Witnessing the miracle of raising Lazarus, many Jews put their faith in Jesus (v. 45).

CONCLUSION

The miracle of raising Lazarus was another testimony to Jesus' deity and infinite power. If you trust Jesus as your personal Savior, you will experience the miracle of his transforming grace. He will remove your sin and give you a brand-new life.