

I Am the Resurrection and the Life, Part 1

Scripture: John 11:17–36

Code: 43-58

We return to the story of Lazarus in the eleventh chapter of John, the eleventh chapter of John. As I told you, this is the final public miracle that Jesus did, and it is the capstone of all His miracles because of the nature of the situation. This is a remarkable miracle done at a very strategic time just prior to the Passover done in a place called Bethany, which is two miles east of Jerusalem on the road from Jericho that was literally filled with pilgrims heading to the Passover. So everybody coming that way would have heard the story about Lazarus. It circulated through the whole city.

The raising of Lazarus strengthened, in a measure, the faith of the disciples. It was not enough to cause them to fully believe in our Lord's resurrection, but I hate to think of what they'd have been without this resurrection because it moved the needle a little bit. The resurrection of Lazarus gave a preview of the resurrection of Christ, which helped them to believe that it could happen because they had seen His resurrection power in the case of Lazarus.

The resurrection of Lazarus also was a monumental widespread evidence of His deity. And the resurrection of Lazarus was so monumental, so widespread, so well-known that it forced the powers in the temple and the leaders of Judaism to press the issue of the execution of Jesus because He was just having way too much influence. So that's kind of behind the scene as we arrive at chapter 11. The whole chapter basically is about this miracle and its results. So we'll be looking at that for another couple of weeks.

I want you to focus in the beginning of our message this morning on two verses in the chapter, verses 25 and 26. This is really kind of the high point. This is the essence of what is being conveyed in this miracle. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Believing that Jesus is the resurrection and the life is aided by this immense miracle, and that's why there's so much detail here and all of the detail is vitally important. There are a lot of other elements to it as we have been learning and will continue to learn. But the main focus is to demonstrate that He who is the resurrection and the life is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in His name brings everlasting joy in heaven.

That's the whole point of the gospel of John. "It is written that you might believe and that you might receive eternal life." This past week we were again focusing on 9/11 back in the year 2001, something we will not forget in our country. And as people were talking about 9/11, I was thinking about the first time that I went to visit with Larry King on *The Larry King Show* immediately after 9/11. I will never forget out of nowhere the question that he asked me. There's no preparation. There are no preliminary questions that are sent to a person being interviewed, at least they never sent any to me. I sat down with that camera about 18 inches from my face and looking off the side at Larry, and he fired this question at me. "What does this mean? What does this mean?" All of the

holocausts perpetrated by the Islamists on that day, "What does this mean?" And with no preparation or forethought to this, I immediately blurted out a line that has continued to be repeated. I said this: "You're going to die and you're not in charge of when."

This doesn't have anything to do really with international politics. This doesn't have to do with nations coming and going. It really doesn't have to do so much with religion. It doesn't have to do so much with terrorism. The message that you need to get here – there are messages about all of that, but the primary message that you need to get is you're going to die and you're not in charge of when. You're not in charge of where, and you're not in charge of how. Even if you decide to kill yourself, you're not in charge of the circumstances and exigencies that led you to that bad decision in a moment of time, which is irrevocable. You're not in charge of your death, and you better be ready when it happens.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 puts it this way, "No man has authority to restrain the wind, so also no man has authority over the day of death." Job 18:14 says, "When that day comes, man is torn from the security of his tent, and they march him off before the king of terrors." King of terrors is death. "Job 14:1-2, "Man who is born of woman is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain." Moses says in Psalm 90, "As for the days of our life, they contain 70 years or if due to strength 80 years, and yet their pride is but labor and sorrow for soon it is gone and we fly away." 1 Timothy 6, "We brought nothing into the world so we cannot take anything out of it either."

So is that it? Is that where evolution has brought us after supposedly billions of years, to this kind of non-existence called death, memory-less non-existence? If that's all there is, then all of us are stupid for not being hedonists literally sucking everything out of this world that our lust and pleasure desires. The problem is that's a lie. You are more than protoplasm waiting to become manure. Every human being will live forever. Every human being will live forever. That is the word from the Creator. That is the word from God. And not only will you live forever in spirit, but you will live forever in a resurrected bodily form, both in heaven and in hell. In one place, a body to absorb eternal punishment. In another place, a body to enjoy eternal bliss. You will live forever. You will be raised from the dead. Every human being will. In fact, Jesus is the one who will raise everyone.

You remember earlier in the gospel of John in the fifth chapter, our Lord made it explicitly clear when He said this, "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come forth; those who did the good to a resurrection of life and those who committed the evil to a resurrection of damnation or judgment." Everybody will be raised from the dead. There will be a resurrection body for hell and a resurrection body for heaven. Death is not the end of anyone.

There are only two possible places, two possible existences after this life; one without God and the horrors of remorse and punishment, and one with God and the joys of blessing and reward. So how does one come to heaven? Only one way, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why John wrote this gospel, "That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life in His name, eternal life."

Here our Lord not only says He will be the judge and the one who raises the dead, but He is, in fact, the resurrection and the life. It's not just something He does to give life. It is who He is, and that's how the gospel of John began. "In the beginning was the Word - " meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, "

– and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life."

He is the source of everything that lives. He is the resurrection and the life because He is life. He has the power to create out of nothing, and He has the power to raise the dead because He is life. He doesn't draw His life from anyone else or anywhere else. Life itself exists in Him. He is life. This is His nature, and He is eternal life, who has been alive eternally and that life He granted to His creation. Everything that exists, everything that exists in the spiritual and physical world, He made. The inanimate things He made and the animate things that live, He made. From the smallest cell to the most complex human being, He gave life to everything that lives.

He is the Creator of life, and because He is the life, He will raise all the dead and give them a body suited for their eternal dwelling. Death is not the end. Death is a split second transition.

Here in the resurrection of Lazarus, our Lord Jesus puts on a display of the power of life that He possesses. Now, when I told you we have a record already in the gospels that He raised two people, one was the daughter of Jairus, a young girl who was sick at home. By the time Jesus got there, she was dead. It might be argued since there were no clinical ways to determine actual death; nobody was doing an EKG or an EEG to read the brain or the heart or whatever, some might have said, "Well, maybe she was only in some kind of swoon," as they used to call it, because the miracle happened at the very moment that she died or a little bit after that.

And then there the case of the widow who was taking her son to be buried with the procession of people who were mourning, and Jesus stopped the procession, raised the dead young man. Some might argue that since there was no way to be certain someone was dead, perhaps this was just a resuscitation of someone who was temporarily in that condition. But in the case of Lazarus, that's not possible because this is someone who's been dead four days, four days. Now, that really does matter. I mean it matters a lot.

And just to help you know how much that matters, I did a little research this week to find out what happens to a body in four days. Very interesting. This was not a theological resource, but as I opened up some research material, I was amazed to find out that all of the bad stuff happens by 72 hours. What happens in four days?

The Jews did not embalm. The Jews did nothing to stop the decay. They wrapped the body and sprinkled spices on it to mitigate the smell. That's it. Here's what happens in four days, pretty grisly stuff. The heart has stopped beating. The body cells are then deprived of oxygen, and they begin to die. Blood drains from throughout the circulatory system and pools in the low places. Muscles begin to stiffen in what is known commonly by the Latin, rigor mortis. That sets in after three hours.

By 24 hours, the body has lost all its heat. The muscles then lose their rigor mortis in 36 hours, and by 72 hours rigor mortis has vanished. All stiffness is gone and the body is soft. Looking a little bit deeper, as cells begin to die, bacteria go to work. Your body is filled with bacteria, but that's another subject. The bacteria in the body of a dead person begin to attack, breaking the cells down. The decomposing tissue takes on a horrific look and smell and emits green liquids by the 72nd hour. The tissue releases hydrogen sulfide and methane as well as other gases. A horrible smell is emitted.

Insects and animals will consume parts of the body if they can get at it.

Meet Lazarus. That's the condition he's in when Jesus arrives. That's important. Everyone knows he is dead. As Martha says in verse 39, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench," or as the King James said, "He stinketh," because he's been dead four days.

Look, they lived in a world of death. They didn't live in a sterile world of mortuaries and undertakers and embalming fluids and all of that where the body disappears and you never see anything but somebody in a casket who looks like the horizontal member of a cocktail party with a suit and tie and dressed up and make up.

People lived with death. They lived with the realities of death. They lived with the horrors of death. That's very important. It's also very important to understand that there was a certain expectation, and it became a reality in this case of what a funeral was like. When someone died, family, friends, neighbors, even connected strangers poured into their life. Everybody showed up. In the case of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, they must have been a very prominent family. They must have been well-known because we read, as the story begins – let's pick it up in verse 17.

"So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother." There is a huge crowd there, which again speaks to the prominence of this family. So we're going to come to verse 17 today, to the arrival of Jesus, but let me back up a little bit and kind of work our way to this point.

In chapter 10, Jesus concluded His public ministry. He was in Jerusalem and they wanted to kill Him. In fact, as chapter 10 closes, two times in the conflict, they wanted to just let violence take over and execute Him on the spot. And He escapes to protect His life because it's not the time to die. They have rejected Him as a nation. They have rejected Him as leaders. The Son of God, the Savior of the world, the promised Messiah, they have turned on. And in order to save His life until the appointed time, chapter 10 ends with Him leaving Jerusalem, leaving the surrounding area and the heart of it all, the temple. And He goes away across the Jordan to a place called Bethany, interestingly enough, because the place right next to Jerusalem where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived was also called Bethany, meaning "house of the poor."

So He takes His disciples, and He goes to a place across the Jordan where John the Baptist kind of launched his ministry. John the Baptist's influence is still there and Jesus shows up. What John said is proven to be true, and He is exactly who John says He was and many people believed. Chapter 10 ends with, "There were many who believed in Him there."

So the disciples and Jesus are in this place called Bethany, and they're having great effective ministry. People are believing. Now, remember in the opening 16 verses, it's in this environment that Jesus says, "I just got word." A messenger comes, "Lazarus is sick," and Jesus says, "He's not just sick, he's dead. We're going back. We're going back. We're going back to Judea." And, of course, they all say, "That's suicide. They want to kill you there. You don't want to go back. Look at the success we're having. Look at the response we're having. They're loving everything. John the Baptist laid the groundwork. You can come right in and there's a harvest to be had here. Let's stay." Jesus says, "We're going."

Thomas resigns himself to the inevitable in verse 16. Thomas says, "Let us go that we may die with Him." They actually believed this was going to be it, but they had watched Him get them out of those kind of brink of death experiences, but to walk right back into it seems certainly to be fatal. That's not what Jesus had in mind immediately, but it is what He had in mind ultimately because He was going back soon to die.

Then this miracle takes place when He returns. It's juxtaposed against His own death. He gives life to a dead man and gives up His life in the same place. It's an amazing story. We've looked at some of the detail. I want you to see even more of the detail. So let's just begin where it begins with the coming of our Lord in verse 17.

Never preoccupied with His own agenda, He comes because He's sympathetic. He humbles Himself. He comes. He walks away from this ministry. It's not just that. It's not just sympathy. It's not just this compassion for them. It is the purpose of God that He would raise this man from the dead in a public place, as it were, on the very road from Jericho. You go right by the village of Bethany when you take the road from Jericho to Jerusalem where the pilgrims would come.

In a very public place, this miracle will take place with a massive number of eye witnesses because the funeral has attracted this huge crowd of Jews. Everybody there is going to become an eye witness to a resurrection, and they're going to tell their story far and wide. There are literally going to be dozens and dozens, if not hundreds of eye witnesses to this miracle. This is very important to strengthen the faith of the disciples, very important to put the capstone on miracles that demonstrated His deity, and more important to force the Jews to kill Him because He's having way too much impact. So that's the scene as He arrives.

Now, we can just go back quickly to note that He comes to Bethany near Jerusalem, two miles to the east, over around the Mount of Olives. Many of the Jews had come to console them concerning their brother. This is what was the custom. This is the tradition. People came to console. Let me give you kind of a picture. When someone died, as I said, they put them in the ground right away. Burial followed death immediately. As a result of the death, people would be notified. They would come to the house. There would be a procession, a procession to wherever they were going to place the body. They're not necessarily digging a hole, but like Jesus who was buried in a cave. There were many caves in the Bethany area as well as around Jerusalem. Many believers were buried this way all over the ancient world around the Mediterranean.

So it's very likely they put Him in some kind of cave on some kind of shelf, which is typically what they did in catacombs kind of places. He would be placed there. The procession would then go back to the house and mourners would stay for seven days, seven days. This is how long the initial part of the funeral lasted. For seven days, people would be sitting in the house. Now, they couldn't eat until the body was taken to be buried. They didn't want any kind of levity. They didn't want any kind of joy being expressed. They didn't want any kind of normalcy until the body had been buried, and then they would serve a meal. They actually had designed a meal of bread, hard-boiled eggs and lentils, kind of a traditional meal to feed the people who were going to stay.

Then they would continue to have to care for those people or others would bring food as the mourners stayed for seven days. What they did was not just sit quietly like Job's friends and say

nothing. They wailed out loud. They mourned. They wailed loudly. Women led this, so it was kind of a screaming, wailing situation. They saw this as comfort because of the sympathy behind it. It was traditional. They expected it. For seven days, this wailing went on.

So when Jesus comes and Lazarus has been dead four days, this is still in full bloom. Sympathy was everybody's duty. It was really a beautiful custom. By the way, at the end of the seven days, the wailing, sort of the formal wailing – and by the way, they were hired mourners as well, people who were professional wailers who sort of led the rest. They embraced that family for seven days, and then after the seven days of really intense wailing, they would also carry on mourning for 30 days. There would be some expressions openly, publicly of mourning for 30 days as those friends and those people came around. During the time of wailing and mourning, there would be reminiscences and eulogies and remembrances. There would be the sharing of stories and whatever was necessary to comfort. It really was a beautiful custom.

I think so often of how we do funerals. First of all, we don't know much about death because the body disappears and that's the last we know. Then we go to a funeral and it lasts an hour or maybe two hours, and we're gone, and there's a little bit of comfort of that event, but it's mostly an event rather than an interaction. It's all over, and we kind of go on with life. They didn't do that.

By the way, I might say as a footnote, we've had a funeral here at Grace Church every weekend for the last three weekends. But I was thinking so much yesterday that the measure of a church, the character of a church is not made known by how well it entertains young people. The character of a church is made known by how well it embraces old people. The character of a church is not how well it can capture the lighthearted who are alive and young; it's how well it can capture and hold the heartbroken, the grieving. How does it deal with the suffering? How does it deal with old age? How does it deal with cancer? How does it deal with love, loving people at the worst times of life? That's the measure of a church.

Anybody can draw a crowd. Anybody can put on an event. Anybody can do a rock concert and attract young people who are just looking for the next gig. The measure of a church is how does it sustain relationships with people all the way to the grave, fully embrace them, love them right unto death? That's the measure of a church. There may be churches that do it with more love and affection than this, but I've never seen one. The measure of this church cannot be known by sitting here on a Sunday and listening to this that's going on up here.

The measure of this church is seen in the hardest time of life, the most grievous times of life, the agonies of life, long drawn-out slow deaths or terrible, accidental deaths and how this church embraces people at the low points, the hard points in life. That's the measure of a church.

There's a lot of superficial things going on, but how well do we do genuinely under the power of the Holy Spirit these kinds of things, which they did traditionally? That's so absent from the contemporary approach to the church, which is to sit in the dark and watch a show.

So Jesus was coming to a very crowded scene and there were all these people there, dozens if not hundreds who are all being set up. They don't know it, but they're being set up to be eye witnesses of a resurrection. Amazing. There is here a kind of microcosm, a kind of analogy to the incarnation. He is away with His own. He humbles Himself, condescends, comes back to a scene of death.

That's essentially what the incarnation is. He comes back to a scene of death, announces that He is the life, and gives life. That's like an analogy of the incarnation.

So Jesus comes and makes His great claim. The first thing we saw was His coming; then His claim, verse 20. "Martha, therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming," and maybe the messenger who came with them ran ahead. Do you remember the messenger who went to tell Jesus that Lazarus was sick? He must have come back with them. Maybe he waited the two days they waited, and then came back with them and maybe ran ahead a little bit. We can't be certain about that, but somebody informed her that Jesus was near, but not quite at the village.

She heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. Now, here we come to these two sisters again, and they perform kind of according to their personality and their temperament. If you go back to Luke 10 for a minute, this is where we meet them earlier in the ministry of Jesus, quite a bit earlier in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus and His disciples are traveling along and He enters a village. By the way, it's Bethany, that same village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She knew about Him, must have known about Him. We don't know at this point how much. She welcomed Him into her home. "She had a sister called Mary who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word."

He comes into the home. He starts doing what He always did: teaching divine truth. She's listening, but Martha was distracted with all her preparations. And she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?" I mean that's a pretty bold lady. "Then tell her to help me." Whoa. "But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha.'"

You know, when anybody repeats your name twice, you know you're in trouble? My mother was just, "Johnny, Johnny." "Martha, Martha, you're worried and bothered about so many things." They don't matter. "Only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." No way I'm going to tell her to go to the kitchen and fuss around. She's chosen the right thing. So there's the initial characterization. Mary is the pensive, thoughtful, inward, melancholy kind of personality and Martha is the busy one, the active one, the aggressive one. So we see that again.

Go back to John 11. The word comes. She gets the word that the Savior is on the way, and as soon as she gets the word that He's on the way, she charges in that direction. Verse 20, Mary stays back. She's melancholy. She's broken hearted. She's sad. She's pensive, in deep sorrow. She doesn't even know Jesus is coming. She doesn't even know that because she doesn't find it out until verse 28 when Martha comes back and tells her. She's just caught up in the loss of her brother, the agonizing loss of this brother that she loved.

But as Martha reached Jesus, the thought that had no doubt plagued her brain and she had shared it with Mary for the four days, was that Jesus should have been there; and if Jesus hadn't left, this wouldn't have happened. So Martha says to Jesus, "Lord." Now, that's a great confession, "Lord." Then what follows is a little incongruous. "If you had been here my brother would not have died." Here she is telling Him what to do again. This is definitely her. This is her. The first time she said anything to Him, she told Him what to do. The second time, she scolds Him again and tells Him if He'd had done what He should have been doing, He would have been there, and this never would have happened.

"If you had only been here, my brother would not have died." Did she know He had healing power? Sure. But what about the healing of Jairus' daughter, the raising of her from the dead? What about the raising of the young man in the funeral procession? Again, maybe the speculation was that they weren't really dead because for whatever reason, she has no confidence that He can deal with dead people. She has no question about His ability to heal the sick because He did that virtually His entire ministry. She did believe that not only could He heal the sick, but He would definitely have healed Lazarus from His sickness because He loved Lazarus. That's what she said in verse 3, "Him whom you love."

But Jesus healed strangers, strangers to whom He had no connection, no relationship. Surely, His love would have compelled Him to heal Lazarus, but instead of being there and being able to do that, He had left. So she knew He loved him. She knew He was capable of healing his illness, but her faith comes short of believing that He could raise him from the dead. That was because, if nothing else, as she declares in verse 39, "He's been dead four days." Clearly, this is death, and this is death verified physically.

If Jesus had only been there. She and Mary talked about that. In a sense, they are sitting in judgment on Jesus. There's doubt, questions about His wisdom and even about His power, but then there's kind of a little window of hope in verse 22. "Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." What's that? Listen, Martha knows who she is talking to. She says, "Lord," in verse 21. Go down to verse 27, "Yes, Lord," she says again, "I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

Well, she has a pretty full Christology. She's got some sound theology. She understands the lordship of Christ. She understands that He is Messiah. She understands that He possesses the nature of God, He is the Son of God. She understands that He came from heaven into the world. That's the incarnation. She also understands by the testimony that she gives in verse 22 that He in His incarnation has submitted Himself to the will of the Father, and only does what the Father shows Him to do, and what the Father wills Him to do; but what He asks the Father consistent with His will, the Father would give Him the power to do.

This lady got a solid Christology while she was in the kitchen overhearing what He was saying to Mary. She got it. By the way, Jesus no doubt stayed at their home many times, but somehow with all that she knew, there was this pain that testifies to a faith that comes short of believing His power to raise the dead. She says, "I know you can ask the Father and you can do that now, and God will give you if it's His will."

Verse 23, Jesus responds. Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." She shows off a little more of her theology. Verse 24, Martha said, "And I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." She's not only got a full orb Christology. She's pretty good eschatologically. She's got a fairly good eschatology. She's got the resurrection in her panoply of doctrine. She knows there's a future resurrection. How does she know that? She knows the book of Job. What did Job say in chapter 19:25-27, "Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh will I see God, whom I shall see for myself and not another." Job was confident of a resurrection.

She knew Daniel 12:2. Daniel 12:2 is the promise that the saints will rise, that not only will the saints

rise to everlasting life, but others will rise to everlasting contempt. She had a doctrine of last things, resurrection in the future. This is in a real sense, a very disciplined woman because all of this had to come from Jesus. She understood her Old Testament promises of resurrection. She had no doubt heard the Lord say that He would raise the dead as He says in John 5:27-29, "And He would raise some to everlasting life and some to everlasting condemnation." She knew what He said in John 6, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me. I will lose none, but raise him at the last day." From John 6:37-44, He talks about raising people the last day, verse 54.

So she had heard Jesus teach this, but she says, "That's not good enough. I know there will be a resurrection in the last days." I just want to affirm to you, folks, there will be a resurrection. This is not a misinterpretation of Scripture because Martha got the same thing from Jesus. It is the truth. You will rise to life or damnation. You will receive a body for eternity. Then our Lord says, "Martha, look, I am the resurrection and the life." Listen, not, "I will be." I - what? "I am." This is the fifth of seven I am's in the gospel of John.

I AM\\am. That's the Tetragrammaton, the name of God. I am the resurrection and the life. He doesn't say, "I can raise the dead." I am the resurrection. I can pray the Father to give life. I am life. "He who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" So here is this great claim, this claim to be the I am, to be the one who is the source of life. I am the embodiment of life. I am the life.

Just as in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Not in the future, "I will be." In the present, "I am." Here is the I am. Jesus is the life itself. He is everlasting life. That everlasting life, by the way, that resurrected life in heaven is for anyone who believes. Do you believe? That's the compelling question. Do you believe? If you do not believe, you are without excuse. If you do not believe that He is the resurrection and the life, you are without excuse. Why? You must believe He is the life. He created everything that lives. You must believe He is the resurrection because He not only raised the dead, but He himself was raised from the dead; and because He lives, we live also.

He is the first fruits of all who slept. He is the primary one who has come through the grave and out the other side and won the triumphant, glorious resurrection to eternal life for all who believe in Him. Do you believe? Do you believe? There's plenty of evidence to believe. You have Him as the Creator, and if He can create out of nothing everything that lives, then raising bodies out of nothing is just what He does, just who He is.

Do you believe? That is the question, friends, that I ask you. Do you believe that He is the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that He is the Messiah who came down from heaven, the Son of God, the Savior of the world? Do you believe He is Lord? Do you believe? She believed all of that. She believed all of that. Do you believe? And she gave testimony, yes.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life." He said, "Do you believe this?" Verse 27, she said to Him, "Yes Lord, I have believed - " I've already believed " - that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world." I do believe. That's the path to salvation. She didn't even know about the cross yet because He hadn't died. She didn't know about His resurrection yet because it hadn't happened, but she believed everything that had been revealed up to that point. She is an Old Testament saint. She is an Old Testament believer. I do believe. I do believe.

That's the question for everyone here. Do you believe? If you don't believe it's not because there's no evidence. The evidence is massive. The testimony of His power about to be displayed before these myriad eyewitnesses in the case of Lazarus as well as the testimony to His resurrection. After His resurrection, He appeared to the apostles. He appeared to 500 brethren at once in one place. There's so much evidence. Do you believe? If you do not believe, it is not because there is not evidence. This entire gospel is written, "That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing you might have eternal life in His name."

If you do not believe, then you're like the Jews. You do not believe because you hate righteousness and love sin. You do not believe because you love your evil deeds. The evidence is in. She believed. "So when she had said this she went away - " after her confession, " – and called Mary her sister, whispering to her, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him."

So Martha goes back, whispers a secret in Mary's ear that Jesus is there, and they rush to the place where He would be waiting. Here we get a little picture again of this kind of comfort that was provided by friends. Verse 31, "Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there."

She's inconsolable. This is four days in, and they're still there around her consoling this sad, weeping Mary, but she jumps up and goes. They just think she's transferring her sadness to the tomb, like people visiting a grave. This is more eyewitnesses. Get them out of the house. Get them all to the grave. Get everybody to the grave. Don't leave anybody behind. Let's get everybody there to see this miracle.

"Therefore, when Mary came to where Jesus was – " in verse 32, " – she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'" Where'd she hear that? Oh Martha, Martha. Martha passes on her discontent to her poor, melancholy, quiet sister. She drinks the Kool-Aid that Martha is preparing. She just parrots the line of her sister. This is beautiful. "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." You could have stopped it all. This didn't even need to happen. I didn't need to be in this condition. This whole event needed not to happen.

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping." This is quite a scene. This is kind of a strong weeping, wailing. "He was deeply moved," deeply moved. Literally weeping is *klaiō* in the Greek. It means to sob. And when He sees all this sobbing, He was deeply moved. That is a very interesting word, deeply moved. It can mean being emotional. It can mean being angry. It can mean being indignant. It can mean groaning, feeling inner pain and turmoil. This is deep emotion. This is a word that sort of grabs everything. There is sorrow, sadness, indigence, anger, suffering. It's just every emotion grips Him in His spirit, in His inner person, His person, and He was troubled, reflexive verb, troubled in Himself or He allowed Himself to feel the trouble. He let Himself feel everything.

This is like what Hebrews says, "He is in all points tempted like as we are." He's been touched with the feelings of our infirmities as our great High Priest. He's sad because He's lost His friends. Now, He loved Lazarus. It says that back in verse 3, and it's *phileō*. It's, He had an affection for him,

human. He lost His friend.

He loved Mary and Martha. There's no question that He loved them. Everybody recognized how much He loved them. But there's more there than that. It's not just the pain that He feels in the loss of a friend. It's not just the pain that He feels as He identifies with these two sisters. He feels a far more transcendent pain. He feels a cosmic pain. He understands that He is surrounded by unbelievers, who are representative of a nation of unbelievers who are all being catapulted into eternal judgment because they will not receive Him. He understands that looking down through human history. He understands the pain and suffering of all humanity that faces the same inevitable hour of human loss. He understands that how severe this loss is when you know you're losing one to hell forever.

I mean this is a massive moment of agony. Maybe a little bit like His agony in the garden as He anticipates the sin-bearing. He deeply enters in, not only to the wounded hearts and sorrows of people who are broken because they've lost the one they love; but He sees way more than that. He understands what sin has done to the world and what unbelief has done to these people who are gathered around Him.

By the way, the Greeks described their Gods by one word, *apatheia*, *apatheia*. We transliterate that into English into the word "apathetic." Pathos with an alpha privative means to have no feeling, no feeling. The deities were *apatheia*. That meant they had no ability to feel pain, no ability to feel emotion, no ability to care. Well, that might be pagan deities invented by Satan, but that's not our God.

He felt every pain, not only the pain of the loss of His own dear friend, His own pain; not only the pain of Mary and Martha, not only the pain of all the rest of the people who had lost their friend, but the pain that will literally be imposed on every human family yet to live on this planet that faces the same reality. And worse, the pain of unbelief and its horrendous result. Feels it all.

So He said, "Where have you laid him?" Where did you place him? "They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept." Shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." Different word here than *klaiō*. Not that word, not the word for weeping and sobbing. This is another word. These are not the mourners tears, the sustained kind of sobbing tears. This is a verb in its form here that means a sudden outburst into open tears, open crying. He literally can't hold it in. This is the "man of sorrows acquainted with grief," as Isaiah said, and He can't contain it because He sees what's going on and His own loss and the loss of the sisters, and in the unbelief of the crowd, and in the coming generations of people who will feel the same agonizing separations that sin has produced.

These are not sentimental tears. These are not professional tears. These are not prolonged mourners tears. This is literally a shocking outburst of our sympathetic High Priest, and the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" They were right. They were right. His tears stood out from everybody else's. "See how He loved him!" That was true. They used *phileō*. "See how much affection He had for him," but they didn't see the whole picture. They didn't know that what led to that outburst was far more than His affection for Lazarus. It was all the reality of sin and death and unbelief and judgment in hell that was behind that scene, and there He stands at the edge of the tomb, sobbing. What happens next is astounding. Let's pray.

What an adventure for us today. What a privilege to be in Bethany and experience all of this. Lord, thank you for the richness of your Word. What an incalculable gift it is. How our Christ lives through it, and we through Him. Thank you for making Christ real to us. We believe and we are sure that He is the Christ, the Son of God, He who comes into the world. We call Him Lord, and we believe that He is the resurrection and the life, and that He will one day raise all the dead. But even now, as the resurrection and the life, He can give life to dead sinners who believe.

Open hearts and minds to respond positively to the question, do you believe this? Do you believe? Do you believe? Do you believe that He Himself not only raised Lazarus, but having died was Himself raised from the dead to become the first fruits of all who slept. And because He lives in eternal glory, we shall live there as well. Lord, open hearts to that faith.

Father, we thank you for what you have accomplished today. We know that your Word never returns void, but always accomplishes the purpose to which you send it. Therefore, we know that it did that even today. Send us on our way with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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