

I Am: Part 14

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Pastor James Bell

John 11:25 NLT

25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.

John 11:1–7 NLT

1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. 2 This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. 3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick." 4 But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." 5 So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, 6 he stayed where he was for the next two days. 7 Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

If we could bring our attention to verse three we can see that there were two individuals that sent a message to Jesus. And if we could put that in today's vernacular it would be understood this way, Mary and Martha had prayed to Jesus making their petition known. And their plea was for a family member's life to be spared. How many of us have interceded for a family member to be spared. And while we may view this as the aspect of healing we must view this in a spiritual sense. Many of us have cried out for our loved ones to be saved before death occurs. And just as Jesus received the message sent to Him, He has also heard our hearts cry. And if we are honest with ourselves we will see the same thing happen with them as we witnessed with Jesus. It seems like our loved ones created a greater distance between Jesus. Their continual actions delay the work that Jesus wants to perform. But Jesus makes a powerful declaration that His disciples didn't understand. "Lazarus's sickness will not lead to death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son will receive glory." Jesus did not delay His intervention to be cruel. Jesus was always teaching and the faith to believe was no different.

John 11:8–14 NLT

8 But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?" 9 Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can

see because they have the light of this world. 10 But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.” 11 Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.” 12 The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” 13 They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. 14 So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.

Just days before Jesus and the disciples were threatened with being stoned by the Jewish people because of His proclamation of being one with the Father. Jesus didn’t flee for His safety but He knew that His time had not yet come. So He reassures the disciples that God’s work would prevail because as He had told them back in John 8 that He was the light of the world.

But then Jesus lets the disciple know what He had known all along. But the way He phrases it is phenomenal. Jesus said Lazarus was simply sleeping. I want to encourage each of us that is pleading for our lost loved one. They may seem to be dead but they are only sleeping. They may seem to be dead the spiritual things of God but God is declaring to each of us they are only sleeping. God sees the bigger picture and He knows the end from the beginning.

John 11:17–29 NLT

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. 18 Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, 19 and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. 20 When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.” 23 Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.” 25 Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” 27 “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” 28 Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” 29 So Mary immediately went to him.

Lazarus had been dead for four days. If we look at a map we would be able to know that Jerusalem is approximately 25 miles from Bethabara and Bethany is 2 miles from Jerusalem. This would make it a one day travel just to get the message to Jesus and that is if Mary and Martha knew where Jesus was. Then Jesus lingers there 2 additional days, then has to make a 27 mile journey to get to the home of Lazarus. Now we know why the text tells us that Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. This means

that at the least, that Lazarus was already dead by the time Jesus got the message but yet Jesus declares that Lazarus sickness will not result in death.

If Jesus would have left as soon as He got the news this would not have changed the situation with Lazarus. This is why Jesus said in verse 4, this happened for the glory of God so that the Son will receive glory. Jesus knew and was not caught by surprise. Jesus knows where we are and how far we may be from Him.

Notice the tone of Martha's words, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that God will give you what ever you ask. And Jesus replies that your brother will live again. But Martha shows the limits of her faith by quoting the belief of tradition. That everyone will rise again on the last day. Martha spoke with hurt and and her hurt came across as dishonor

John 11:30–34 NLT

30 Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. 31 When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. 32 When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. 34 "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."

But notice the response of Mary. She posed the same statement that if Jesus would have been there then her brother would not have died. But what set her apart from Martha? Mary fell at His feet. She honored him even though she didn't know Jesus as he had just proclaimed to Martha. "I Am the Resurrection and the Life". Martha confessed with her mouth but not with actions. She focused on what she could see and not what Jesus was declaring. Mary didn't have to hear this proclamation because she had actions. Mary is mentioned within three different occasion within the gospels and every time she is found at the feet of Jesus.

The actions of her honor moved Jesus! And Jesus became angry! The translation of angry implies that He was angry in Spirit. Why would he become angry in spirit? Because the peoples emotions were based off of what had happened and not what could happen. Jesus wept because His heart broke for the people, not because Lazarus died. If Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus then why would he weep for him? Jesus's heart was heavy because the people accepted what they saw as reality and not His proclamation of being the resurrection. They limited him because

He didn't move the way that they wanted Him to. But Jesus had already declared that this was so that God would be glorified.

John 11:35–37 NLT

35 Then Jesus wept. 36 The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” 37 But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

Just so you know...the people thought they knew but they could only speculate.

If we could be real for a moment. People that enjoy life don't want to die. But we must die if we are to be resurrected. There is not resurrection if we don't die. Resurrection simply means to return to life. But to return we must first go there....to death. We have to die. And the death we are speaking about this morning is the death to self.

Matthew 16:24–26 NLT

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”

The very thing that we hold on to is the very thing we will lose. But what we surrender is what we will gain. People want to be resurrected but they don't want to die. They want to go to heaven but they don't want to die. And the proof is that they continue to hold on to the lives they have. They have allowed sin to define who they are. If we would allow the word of God to define us then we would understand why we must die.

John 11:38–44 NLT

38 Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. 39 “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.” 40 Jesus responded, “Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?” 41 So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. 42 You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.” 43 Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

So now the situation gets a little stickier. Death took place but now something stood between death and newness of life. Jesus gave one command...Roll the stone away. It was no longer the people's lack of faith that kept Lazarus in the tomb. It was the stone. The stone stood between Lazarus's death and resurrection. As we think about the magnitude of stone that was in the way I want you to ask yourself the question... What stone is standing between us and being resurrected.

Jesus is willing to do what man says cannot be done but now we have a choice. If we will only believe that He will resurrect us to new life.

Lazarus was wrapped in a graveclothes and Jesus spoke to them and commanded that Lazarus be loosened. If we will remove the stone then Jesus will do the more! The everything else that is holding us will remove if we remove the stone. The very thing that is preventing us from being resurrected.

Everything that Jesus stood for was so that the Father could be glorified. Jesus declared I Am the resurrection and the life. When we allow Jesus to be this in our lives then the Father is glorified.

Let me pray with you!