

## A Matter of Life and Death

### John 11:17-44

**vs. 17-19**, Narrative details

**vs. 21**, if you had been here...

If only...

This would have happened then this would / wouldn't have taken place.

We don't like the circumstances of the present and therefore we want to change the past.

We start to live in the moment that might have been.

Our lives start to get consumed with fantasy.

**vs. 22**, Martha is a woman of faith. She believes and trusts in Jesus.

**vs. 23**, Your brother will rise again.

**vs. 24**, Knowledge can stubbornly replace experience.

This was orthodox Pharisaic belief, along with most Jews, and a belief shared by Jesus.

**Acts 23:8** For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, and neither angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees affirm them all. The Sadducees were the exception.

**vs. 25**, I am the resurrection and the life. (Statement #5)

**5:21, 25-29** And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. **25** "Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. **26** For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted to the Son to have life in himself. **27** And he has granted him the right to pass judgment, because he is the Son of Man. **28** Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice **29** and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.

**6:39-40** This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Moving from the abstract belief (this is what will happen in the future),  
to a personalized belief (in the here and now) in the one who alone can provide it.

Neither resurrection or eternal life can take place apart from Jesus.

**vs. 26**, Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

**8:51** Truly I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

Do you believe this?

Are you willing to go deeper in your understanding?

Are you willing to trust me?

Martha approaches Jesus according to her wiring.

Her approach is accepted.

You too can be quick to ask Jesus questions.

Why Lord?

His response might be unexpected, but it will be filled with hope.

**vs. 27**, Yes, Lord

• I believe. I have confident trust.

- I know you are God's promised Messiah.

**vs. 28-31**, Martha tells Mary that Jesus has arrived. Mary goes to see Jesus.

**vs. 32**, Lord  
Remember...

- Acknowledging His deity
- Understanding His authority
- Expressing humility

If only...you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!

**vs. 33-35**, Grief is real. (Deeply moved in his spirit and troubled).

**Genesis 3:19** You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust and you will return to dust."

Death is separation.

Death is a sign of the disease of sin.

John is describing a complex set of emotions that are on display in Jesus.

- He is grieved.
- He is angered (pure, holy, righteous)
- The world is filled with sin, sickness and death.
- The flesh, the world, and the enemy are wreaking havoc in this lost world generating so much sorrow.
- Why is there so much unbelief? Can the people of God grieve in a way that doesn't degenerate into despair? Why act as if there is no resurrection?

The subject of *Empathy*

- On one side you have this who are quick to label any form of empathy as sinful.
- On the other side you have those that so embrace empathy it creates sub groups which create revolving biases. These biases are then used for emotional manipulation and cultural influence.

**Empathy** - sharing and understanding the emotions of others

- To be a person of empathy does not mean nor has it every meant a wholesale and indefinite surrendering of your mind to the emotions of others.
- To be empathetic does not mean you blindly approve of their emotions and surrender your own value system.

To love is to share in sorrow.

**Romans 12:10** Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another.

**2 Peter 1:7** godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. **4** He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **5** For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

We have emotional sharing that we must do on multiple levels: with our families, our brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as our neighbors (our world).

To be a narrow path follower of Jesus one must navigate cultural land mines.

- Empathy (grief and compassion) without truth is at best sentimentality.
- However outrage without empathy (grief and compassion) leads immediately to the hardening of ones heart, arrogance, and self righteousness.

**vs. 35**, Jesus wept.

The Word through whom all things were created (1:3), wept at the grave of his friend.

The creator of the universe can cry with the world's crying.

This is the image John wants us as the reader to ponder, grasp, internalize, and be changed by!

**Isaiah 53:3** a man of suffering (sorrow) who knew what sickness was.

Mary approaches Jesus according to her wiring.

Mary is moved by her emotions. (More will be said in chapter 12).

**vs. 38-44**, Jesus demonstrates he is the source of life.

Jesus overcomes decay.

Jesus has been sent by God.

There is power in the words of Jesus (Jesus is the Word).

It is through the death of Jesus that the world can be saved.

It is because the Word became flesh (sharing in the fate of humanity) that the disease of death is cured.

Where are you staying?

**1:39**, "Come and you'll see," he replied

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

**1:46**, "Come and see," Philip answered.

**Matthew 11:28-30** "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Like children are we willing to run into the arms of Jesus?

With all of our tears, fears, deepest grief and sorrow?

He is the resurrection and the life!

He leads us through the sorrow to the place where he now dwells.

**21:12** "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them.

His mercies never end. They are new every morning (**Lamentations 3:22-23**)

Even when the darkness is beyond dark and the tears are joltingly bitter, there is light and joy to be found in Jesus!