



**July 24, 2022 - Pastor Rafael Aristy**

I Am Series: Resurrection and the Life

As we move through this series, one of the purposes we have is to understand and explore how the New Testament and the life of Jesus connect to the Old Testament.

**Background:**

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> week of our message series "I AM"

We have been looking at the 7 I AM statements of Jesus found in the book of John.

So far, we've covered:

I AM the Bread of Life

I AM the Light of the World

I AM the Gate

I AM the Good Shepherd

"I will be whoever I will be to you"

Today we look at **John 11** (The death of Lazarus)

**Lazarus is sick**

- Jesus receives report that his friend Lazarus is sick
- After that report Jesus stays where He is for another 2 DAYS! (v6)
- God's timing is not our timing...**His delays are not His denials!**
- You've been praying, you've been fasting, you've been seeking,
- AND NOTHING seems to be happening

God's *delays* are  
**not**  
His *denials*.

Somebody needs to hear today that **just because you haven't seen the answer YET, doesn't mean it's not coming...**

- He tells them in v4 that this illness is not going to end in death BUT "It is for God's glory so that God's son may be glorified through it"

May I propose to you that what you're going through RIGHT NOW could be the thing that BRINGS God GLORY...This is not always easy to understand or appreciate in the moment.

In such a difficult place, how do you process this statement and move to a place of trust, of hope?

After the 2 days Jesus tells the disciples "Let us go back to Judea" (v7)

- They didn't like the idea much...They were frightened!

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

- Tension has been growing between Jesus and the religious leaders.
- By this point they have tried to arrest him (8:44, 10:39), rumors that they wanted to kill him (7:25), They tried to stone him (8:59, 10:31)
- Can you imagine being them? "Jesus, this is a BAD idea! Why are we going back there?"

Jesus had an assignment in Judea. He was **not going to forfeit His assignment** because of the opposition. He was **not going to abandon His PURPOSE** because of FEAR...

*Has God given you an assignment that frightens you?*

I understand. I've been there before. It's NOT EASY...

This was Thomas' response: 16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "**Let us also go, that we may die with him.**"

May THIS be our response to our assignment...to God's PURPOSE for our lives.

Somebody needs to hear today that you can't see God's glory manifested...you can't experience the POWER of resurrection UNLESS you're willing to FOLLOW Jesus NO MATTER where He's LEADING!

What is holding you back?

Do you have past experience with Him and an understanding of Him that can help you step out in obedience and trust? If not, how do you build that experience, build that faith?

### **Jesus' Arrival**

Jesus shows up and by this time Lazarus is dead. He has been IN THE TOMB for 4 days.

- The fact that Jesus shows up 4 DAYS LATE has great significance.
- Rabbis held to the belief that the soul hovered over a body for 3 days in hope of returning to the body. One the 4<sup>th</sup> day all HOPE WAS GONE!

Somebody needs to hear that the "4<sup>th</sup> DAY" has come. You have no hope...there's no way...but....  
**Jesus is the God OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> DAY!!!**

Martha, one of Lazarus' 2 sisters (Mary was the other) hears Jesus is coming and she goes out to meet Him. Her first words to Jesus are so profound...

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "**if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**"

Jesus, IF ONLY you'd been here!

How many times in life do we go to a place in our minds where the word IF holds us captive?

- IF ONLY I would've been born in a different family
- IF ONLY we had a different president
- IF ONLY I had a different spouse
- IF ONLY I would've treated her as she deserved
- IF ONLY I could've remained faithful
- IF I didn't have that last drink/taken that pill
- IF I didn't have sex with that guy/girl
- IF ONLY I would've gone to college - IF I wasn't brownskin - IF I was more talented

Have you ever had an "if only" discussion with God?

That's not where Jesus lives. He answered Martha, **23 "Your brother will rise again."** She tells Jesus **24 "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."**

Martha thought she knew what Jesus was talking about. She was like, "yea, yea I know. We are all going to be resurrected on the last day."

- This was standard Jewish teaching and most Jews believed this around this time (Daniel 12:1-3) except for the Sadducees.

Some of us have *destroyed our capacity* for HOPE and JOY because we live in a *perpetual state of regret...* in a constant, permanent state of IF only...

Sometimes we ASSUME we know...

- Jesus, IF you would've been on time, heal my brother...All will be good
- Jesus, I know what you need to do. Here it is...

Have you ever assumed you knew what was best for your life? What God's will is? What His plans are for you?

Jesus responds to Martha's knowledge with something she had no context for:

**25** Jesus said to her, **"I am the resurrection and the life.** Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. **26** And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Martha *thinks* she knows what resurrection is, but Jesus tells her **"I am the RESURRECTION"**

Resurrection is not an event BUT A PERSON.

Whenever God REVEALS Himself in a new way, He is INVITING us into a dimension of Himself previously unknown to us before. He is INVITING us to know Him as **the resurrection and the life**

The 2nd part of Jesus' statement is so insightful: there is a HUGE difference between LIFE and LIVING...

- Life: living and existing for what was planned for you before you were born. Fulfilling your purpose.
- Living: simply surviving

Jesus doesn't ONLY want to bring you back from the DEAD. He wants to give you LIFE! See [John 10:10](#)

**John 11:33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. **34** "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. **35** Jesus wept.

When Jesus SAW her weeping! He was DEEPLY moved in spirit and troubled...Jesus WEPT!

The creator of all things. The one who set the boundaries for ocean. The one who placed the stars in the heavens. The one who causes ALL of nature to work in harmony. The one who counts the hairs on your HEAD...**WEPT when he saw the pain and grief of His people**

- Jesus didn't show up and say, "why are y'all weeping? You can stop now. I'm here and I'll take care of it."
- He was MOVED when He witnessed their pain, their grief...and grieved and wept with those who were crushed in spirit...with those who experienced overwhelming grief
- JUST LIKE JESUS, we are CALLED to do the same; to WEEP with those who weep

**Romans 12:15NAS** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and **weep with those who weep**.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus...

**Isaiah 53:3-4 NIV**

**3** He was despised and rejected by mankind, **a man of suffering**, and **familiar with pain**...**4** Surely **he took up our pain** and **bore our suffering**, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

Jesus, the man of sorrows...acquainted with GRIEF...took up OUR PAIN...bore OUR suffering.. the pain of every ABUSE, every DEATH, every LIE, every DISAPPOINTMENT, BETRAYAL

Somebody needs to hear that if you find yourself in a SEASON of weeping, you need to know that JESUS weeps with you!!!

After Jesus makes this statement, He asks Martha in verse **26** **Do you believe this?"**

**What was her response?**

**27** "Yes, Lord," she answered, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

What a beautiful response! She is declaring that Jesus is the Messiah (the ONE sent from God to deliver His people). She still believes regardless of the loss of her brother.

In verse 39 Jesus asks them to move the STONE.

- This is the moment where what Martha says she believes comes FACE TO FACE with **having to ACT on that belief**.

Jesus said, **39** "take away the stone. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

Jesus asked them to take away the stone **before He even prayed...**

**You want to see a miracle? Roll away the STONE!**

God can do it ALL on his own, but He is asking you to put your faith TO WORK. He is asking us to engage in faith in the miracle.

We can have a logical argument to what God says/asks, but if we want to see a miracle, we have to be willing to walk in faith and obey.

What "stone" is God asking you to roll out of the way so that He can get to work on your miracle?

More happened back before verse 39. Mary has also made her way to where Jesus was...and basically said the same thing her sister said.

32 "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

### **Jesus At The Tomb**

Jesus asked for the stone to be removed...

**41** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." **43** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

This is the moment when everyone holds their collective breath...Is it going to happen?

I don't want us to miss this: **Jesus THANKS the Father that He has HEARD Him.**

- This is incredibly important because **Jesus DID NOT pray in this moment!**
- This implies Jesus made the request/PRAYED at a different time (Theologians believe it could've been when he received the news that Lazarus was sick)

The ANSWER got there before Jesus did!

- Jesus PRAYED and BELIEVED it was done before He physically saw the prayer answered!
- ALL that was left to do was to COMMAND Lazarus to come out.
- It is by faith we call the things that are not as though they were
- It is by faith we THANK the Father for something we have NOT YET seen with our natural eyes

What do you need to thank Him for EVEN before it has even happened?

*Faith is the currency of heaven, prayer is the key that unlocks the door, and our WORDS activate that which heaven has preordained!*

**We pray because we believe. Not in the outcome but in the Good Shepherd, our resurrection and life.**

**44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "**Take off the grave clothes and let him go.**"

He has proved that He is "**The resurrection and the life**" by bringing Lazarus back to life

- Now He makes a final statement ***“Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”***

This is a remarkable statement!

Why didn't Jesus just cause the “grave clothes” to fall off Lazarus before he came out?

Jesus did His part and now He is asking them to do their part.

### ***Why does this matter?***

It is a community effort!

- It is all of us, who have experienced the resurrection POWER Jesus, getting our hands dirty to help people take off the stench of death
- It is all of us committing to make disciples

*Jesus resurrects  
people and we of  
remove the grave  
clothes.*

Jesus is inviting us into the miracle of lives resurrected.

We are being asked to help remove the stench of death from those who He has brought back to life.

A person who is bound can't follow. A person who is bound can't breathe. We must help them be set free.

### **RESPONSE**

1. Jesus has declared “I AM the resurrection and the life.”

- You're not in a physical tomb but you know you're spiritually dead
- You are in that dark, cold, and lonely tomb
- Jesus is calling you out, telling you that you no longer have to stay there...

Will you respond to Him with your life today?

2. Be encouraged: He is “LIFE”

- Maybe you have experienced the resurrection power of Jesus, but that seems long ago
- You are “LIVING” because you're breathing BUT you're not experiencing the LIFE that Jesus is offering
- **John 10:10 I came so that they would have life and have it abundantly.**
- He wants to move you from just living to FULLY ALIVE!

Do you need to be refilled with His life, His power, to start living a free and abundant life?

3. Our Challenge: Help “take off the grave clothes” and put our faith in action

- The Lord wants us to be **committed to unbind** those who have stepped out of the grave.
- Just like Martha, she said she believed but **had to demonstrate** her TRUST in Jesus by removing the stone...We must ACT in our trust.

Who is Jesus calling you to help remove the grave clothes from so that they may begin to breathe in and walk out new life?

What cost is He asking of you to obey? To believe?

