

Living After Resurrection: Unwrapping the Grave Clothes

Text: *John 11:1-44* | **Key Verse:** *John 11:25-26* — "*I am the resurrection and the life*"

I. Introduction: A Word That Confirms the Word

- A. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever — He is not changing, and neither should His believers
- B. What God says, He means
- C. A recap, not a verse-by-verse reading, of the Lazarus story in **John 11**

II. Lazarus: The Only Named "Friend" of Jesus

- A. Jesus had many close relationships (Mary, Martha), but only Lazarus is called His friend
- B. Friendships change with seasons of life, but this one marked a special closeness
- C. Bethany was home to Jesus — a place of comfort and familiarity
- D. Closeness breeds freedom of speech
 - 1. Those who know you well can speak bluntly without offense
 - 2. Mary and Martha felt free to question Jesus directly

III. Martha and Mary: Two Responses to the Same Crisis

- A. Jesus delayed on purpose so God's glory would be revealed
- B. Martha ran first
 - 1. "*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died*"
 - 2. Her boldness came from a personal relationship, not her brother's
- C. Mary ran next
 - 3. Unrehearsed, she spoke the identical words
 - 4. A daily relationship with Jesus — not a once-a-week one — is what carries us through crisis
- D. Both trusted Him, yet both questioned Him in the moment

IV. The Command and the Declaration

- A. "*Where have you laid him?*" — the question we must each answer for ourselves
- B. "*Take me to him*" — not take me to the grave, but take me to the person
- C. "*Roll away the stone*" — a command spoken in faith despite warnings about the smell
- D. Jesus spoke life over death, over what was crushed and decaying

V. Jesus Wept (John 11:35)

- A. The only record of Jesus weeping in all of Scripture
- B. He did not weep at the whipping post, at the cross, or under false accusation
- C. He wept not merely over loss, but because the sisters did not fully trust Him
- D. Trust matters to the heart of God

VI. "*Loose Him, and Let Him Go*"

- A. Lazarus came out still bound in grave clothes
- B. Jesus did not unwrap him Himself — He instructed the people around him to do it
- C. The church's responsibility: take the grave clothes off one another
 - 1. Not with judgment ("you did this to yourself")
 - 2. With compassion — Lazarus died of sickness, not sin
- D. The same Spirit that raised Christ dwells in us and quickens our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11)

VII. I AM — Present Tense, Not Past

- A. "I *am the resurrection and the life*," not "I was" or "I will be"
- B. What He was for Martha, is for Mary, He can be for you today
- C. A call to examine: what in you feels dead, tired, or out of whack?
- D. "Quicken my mortal body" — a daily, moment-by-moment surrender

VIII. The Rest of the Story: Living as a Witness

A. Scripture records nothing further about Lazarus' life — his purpose was fulfilled in being a witness to resurrection power

B. A resurrection experience needs witnesses

1. People who remember who you were
2. Counter-testimony: those who saw the transformation

C. Jesus still loved His disciples though some would deny, curse, or betray Him

D. We serve a relational God who shares our joys, sorrows, and burdens

IX. Measuring Truth and Building the Kingdom

A. Not everyone rejoiced at Lazarus' resurrection — some plotted against Jesus because it threatened their position

B. Truth test: does it build the kingdom or tear it down?

C. Your story does not end at the grave

1. Train the next generation (*Proverbs 22:6*)
2. Your investment outlives you

D. Five-fold ministry exists to build the kingdom, not to criticize — love, compassion, and empathy must be present

X. Call to Unity and Advancement

A. This year's word: Advance

B. Some have grown; some are still waiting for conditions to be "safe" before moving

C. No "I" in team — the church grows through believers working together

D. Invitation: let brothers and sisters help remove your grave clothes

1. You don't have to disclose details — only ask for prayer
2. Trust your pastors enough to let them help carry the load

XI. Closing Challenge

A. Homework: read **John 11:1-44** this week and listen for what God speaks

B. He wants the church to move, advance, and come out of the box

C. Don't let Calvary's story be hindered in building the kingdom