

TONIGHT'S READING



THE NEED OF THE DEAD (3)

Scripture Reading:

John 11:20-26 ²⁰Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary sat in the house. ²¹Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You. ²³Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. ²⁴Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day. ²⁵Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live; ²⁶And every one who lives and believes into Me shall by no means die forever. Do you believe this?

John 11:40-44 ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God? ⁴¹Then they took the stone away. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴²And I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the crowd standing around, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. ⁴³And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! ⁴⁴And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with cloths, and his face was bound about with a handkerchief. Jesus said to them, Loose him and let him go.

John 5:24-25 ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life. ²⁵Truly, truly, I say to you, An hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 6:63b ...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

I Corinthians 15:45b ...the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

THE LORD JESUS BEING THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

When the Lord Jesus came to the place where the sisters of Lazarus were, everything was under the shadow of death. The people were despondent and full of despair. Lazarus had died! If he had only been sick, there would have been hope. But he had died. There was no hope. Under such a shadow of death and despair, the Lord said to Martha, the older sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Here the Lord clearly revealed that the dead need Him as the resurrection and the life. The Lord Himself can give resurrection and life to solve the problem of death. Not only does He give resurrection and life; He even enters into man to be resurrection and life. He is the resurrection that man needs, and He is the life that man needs. Only the Lord Jesus can meet the need of the dead. He wants to enter into the dead to be their resurrection life. When He enters into them as their resurrection life, He manifests the power of resurrection and the power of life in them so that they may pass out of death into life.

HOW THE LORD'S RESURRECTION LIFE ENTERS INTO MAN TO RESURRECT MAN

The Lord raised Lazarus from the dead by speaking to him. This indicates that the Lord's resurrection life enters into man and resurrects man by His word. His word is His voice. His resurrection life is contained in His word. His word is also the gospel, which is the words in the Bible and the words that He spoke. When His word meets the death in man, the power of resurrection life swallows up the death in man and enlivens man. Whenever the Lord visits us, His word will come to us. The Lord's resurrection life is in His word. When His word comes to us, His resurrection life will enliven us.

Unbelievers are enlivened by the Lord's word, and believers are also enlivened by the Lord's word. Initially, we were dead inwardly, but we were made alive when we touched the Lord's word. Now the Lord's word comes to us in our morning prayer, when we read the Bible or a spiritual book, or when we are listening to a message. Before the Lord's word comes, we may feel oppressed and inwardly dead, but after the Lord's word comes, we are enlivened. We may have been dead inwardly, but we are made alive by the Lord's word. When the Lord's word touches us, we are made alive. His words are spirit and are life (John 6:63).

Lazarus heard the Lord say, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43). The Lord's voice made him alive. The Bible contains many words of the Lord. If we read or listen to the words in the Bible, we will receive the Lord's resurrection life and be made alive. After hearing the Lord's word, Lazarus needed to come out. This shows that after we hear the Lord's word, our responsibility is to receive and believe the word. Moreover, those who hear the Lord's word need help from others. When Lazarus came out from the

tomb, he was still bound hand and foot with cloths. Hence, the Lord told others to loose him. This is to have help from others.

There are three steps here. The first step involves the Lord's speaking, which is the Lord's doing. The second step involves our coming out, which is our responsibility to believe the Lord's word. The third step involves help from others, which is to be released from our bondage.

THE ISSUE OF MAN RECEIVING THE LORD'S RESURRECTION LIFE

A person who passes through the three steps of hearing the Lord's word, believing, and being released from his bondage is not only resurrected inwardly but also released outwardly. By passing through these three steps, Lazarus came out of the tomb and was released from all bondage. Likewise, when someone is saved by the Lord's resurrection life, he will come out of his tomb—all kinds of sinful places. Furthermore, he will be released from bondage—eating, drinking, gambling, and all kinds of addictions. When someone is saved by the Lord's life, he is resurrected and released.

The ultimate issue of man's salvation is resurrection. The Lord does not correct man; He enlivens man inwardly. This is how the Lord saves an unbeliever, and this is the same principle of the Lord's resurrection work in believers. As believers, we should be resurrected daily. We are not being corrected daily but being resurrected daily. Every day we need to allow the resurrection life to operate in our being in order to deliver us from the tomb and from bondage. We need to be delivered by the operation of the resurrection life in us from what buries us and from what takes away our freedom.

If we consider the eight cases recorded in the Gospel of John, we will see that these cases constitute a full picture of the different aspects of the Lord's saving life. Man is in death. He is dissatisfied in his human life. He desires to do good but has no strength. He does not have the supply or the nourishment to live in the world. He is unable to overcome sins. He is blind and in darkness, and he is dead.

This was our condition. One day the Lord Jesus, in whom is life, came. He came that we may have life. He desired to enter into us in order to save us with His life. After we were regenerated, we were satisfied, and our human life became meaningful. Our impotence was turned into strength. We also ate the living bread and drank the living water, by which we live before God. We are also delivered from sins, our eyes are opened, and we are delivered from death. This is the way that we are fully saved. This is the full salvation that we received when the Lord Jesus came to be our life. This is also the full salvation that we should believe, receive, and enjoy daily. May we all thank and praise Him for His salvation.