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**Teaching: Carlon Tschetter**  
**Resurrection Sunday**  
**Message: The Last Great Enemy**

**Transcribed Message**  
**April 5, 2026**  
**John 11**

It was in 1789 that Benjamin Franklin wrote a letter to a French physicist, Jean-Baptiste Leroy, and it's a familiar line that you're going to recognize. In this letter, he said, in this world, nothing can be said to be certain except for death and taxes. So, I'm obligated to tell you April 15<sup>th</sup> is just ten days away. But it was in 1936 that a slightly different version of that statement was made in the novel *Gone with the Wind*. The writer said, death taxes and childbirth – there's never a convenient time for any of them. And you know, we can smile when we hear those statements, but the reality is there's real truth there, isn't there? Statistics consistently bear out one out of one dies. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us there is appointed unto man once to die and then comes the judgment. It's probably true that most of us are not terribly comfortable thinking about death. We're certainly not comfortable thinking and talking about our own. It's probably why it's in the top two or three categories of things people don't want to talk about.

There was actually a survey where people were asked the question, do you believe that as humans we have a soul/spirit in addition to our body? It was a rather amazing response to that question because 88% of people across all ages, socioeconomic, all the demographics across the whole spectrum, 88% of people said, yes, I think there is something more to us than just our physical body. There's an immaterial part of who we are as a person: soul and spirit. Now, in this day and age, I don't know what you could get 88% of people to agree on, so that's a rather startling statistic.

But then there was a follow-up question that was asked, and that question was, do you believe that there is a literal place called heaven or hell? And the numbers changed, as you might imagine. Only 55% of the respondents, so a little over half, said, yes, I think there's a place called heaven and I think there's a place called hell. 29% said they don't believe in either one. Almost a third of respondents said, no, I don't think either one. And

then 16% said, yes, I believe in one. I think I know which one they probably believe in, right? So, one or the other.

Well, on this Resurrection Easter Sunday morning, that's what I want to talk to you about. I want to talk to you about life. I want to talk to you about death. I want to talk to you about life after death. Because I'm convinced that we cannot live well if we don't know how to die well. And the only way we know how to die well is if we know the one who conquered death. So, I don't think we can live well. And I know we can't die well if we don't know the one who's conquered death.

On Sunday morning, we gather like this. Not quite as many of us because many of you guests are here, which we're grateful for. But we gather like this. And we sing songs like this. We read the Bible. We've been studying on Sunday morning in the Gospel of John. And in the providence of God, which I am a strong believer in the providence of God, that you're not here by accident. None of this is happening by accident. There is a divine design and sovereign God over the details of life. And so, it's just interesting to me. And I'm grateful that we're in John 11. And so, we're just going to step back into John 11, almost as if this was a normal Sunday morning. And we're going to invite those of you that are guests to join with us, because we've been in John 11 for a couple of weeks. And John 11, if you're not familiar, is one of the great chapters in all the Bible, because it includes one of the great stories in all the Bible. It includes the amazing story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

So, let me just remind you what's going on in John 11. Jesus, while he was on the earth, had, of course, many friends and acquaintances. But the gospel seemed to indicate to us that there were three that he was especially close to. There were two sisters and a brother. There was Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. The gospel accounts tell us that Jesus would frequently go to their home. It was very close to Jerusalem. He would find that to be a place of respite and refreshment, and he would go there often. So, he was very close to this family.

When you come to John 11, Jesus is literally stepping into the grieving, sorrowing process of this family. Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus has died. Jesus comes on the scene at that moment. In fact, as the story unfolds, it became apparent to Mary and Martha

that Lazarus was not just sick in the normal way of being sick. He was seriously ill. They sent word to Jesus, and they found him and they said, Lord, come quickly. That was the implied intent. Come as soon as you can, because, you know, in their heart of hearts, they believe that Jesus could do something about the sickness of their brother, no doubt heal him. But interestingly, the Bible tells us this story, and it says Jesus did not hurry there. In fact, he waited. He waited four days before he made his way to this little town of Bethany. By the time he got there, Lazarus had, of course, died. And so that's the story that we step into.

I want to read beginning in verse 17 of John chapter 11. You listen to this account unfold. "Now, when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So, when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him. But Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again and the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God who is coming into the world."

I want to take just a few minutes and have us consider three things. What it was that Jesus said, what it was that Jesus asked and what it was that Jesus did. So, let's just take them in that order. And we'd start with what it was that Jesus said and what he said in that 25<sup>th</sup> verse. It starts off and Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. Now, we could hurry right by those first two words. I am. But they're really intended to startle us. They're intended to stop us in our tracks when we're reading that part of the verse. They're really intended to say, slow down, listen to what Jesus just said. When Jesus says I am, we, of course, use that language all the time, don't we? I might say I am Carlton. Introduce myself to you. I may say I'm on staff here at Covenant Community Church. I may say I am the

husband of Bonnie. I am the father of four adult children. You're supposed to say it this way in our family – I am the father-in-love of four of our adult spouses who've married our children. I am a grandfather to 16 grandchildren. I am a great... No, you stop right there. I'm not that old. But we do that all the time, don't we? We introduce ourselves with I am.

There's a lot more going on in this verse than just that, because what this is communicating to us is when Jesus uses the language of I am, he's actually borrowing from the very words of the Bible for how God often introduced himself. It is literally Jesus stepping into the very way that God introduces himself. It's clearly in Exodus chapter three, in verse 14. God's getting ready to send Moses down to Egypt to bring the children of Israel up out of slavery. Moses is unsure what this is all about. And so, he says to God, who am I supposed to say has sent me to these people? And God answers back to Moses in that declaration that is forever establishing who he is. And he says, you simply tell them I am who I am has sent me unto you. That is the transcendent one, the self-existent one, the eminent one, the God of all creation is sending me, Moses, to you.

When Jesus in John and the Gospels speaks of himself in this way, he's basically claiming deity. He's claiming to be God. He's already done it four other times in the Gospel. He said in the sixth chapter, I am the bread of life. I'm the bread of life. I can satisfy your every need. There isn't anything in your life that I can't fulfill. I'm the bread of life. I am the light of the world. Just think of the darkness of our world. The promise of our Lord is I can be the light that you need. I am the door, Jesus said. I'm the point of entry into a relationship with God. And then in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, he says, I am the good shepherd. Well, all those statements are declarations that Jesus is making to those who are listening to him to say, I'm more than just a man. I look like I'm just a man, but I want to assure you that I'm way more than that. I am very God of very God. I am the son of God. I am the promised Messiah. I am God incarnate. That's what Jesus is saying. He's taking away the option that he's just a good moral teacher. He's taking away the option that he's just an example for us to follow. No, he's not. He's declaring to us that he is God himself. And so, he makes this statement. This time he fills in the blank and he says, I am the resurrection and I'm the life.

Now, again, step back into the story. He's saying this to a family that's grieving for four days now the death of their brother. Jesus is basically coming to this family in the midst of their grief and their pain and their sorrow. He's saying to them, you know what just happened to your brother. You know the sorrow that you're walking through. You know the grief that you're experiencing. I simply want to say to you, I am the resurrection and the life. I am the one who will defeat and conquer death. I am the one who will overcome all this pain that you're experiencing because I am the giver of life. That's what Jesus is saying.

He is not saying there is a resurrection somewhere. He didn't say that. He said, I am the resurrection. He didn't say, you know, go find it. It's out there somewhere. I hope you come up with it. No, he said it's found in me. I'm the solution. I'm the one that can do all that needs to be done. I'm the resurrection and the life. I'm the one who raises the dead. Death has been conquered. There is life right now. There is life that is yet to come. Death is not the last word in this story. So that's what Jesus said. I am the resurrection of the life.

Now, notice what Jesus asked because he asked the question in verse 26. Martha came out to greet him when she heard he was coming. She ran up to him and has this exchange with him in which Jesus says to her, I'm the resurrection and the life. And then Jesus asks her in verse 26, Martha, do you believe this? Do you, Martha, do you believe this? I'm not asking you what you think your brother might have believed. I'm not asking you what Mary, your sister, believes. I'm not asking you what your parents believe. I'm not asking you what you're hearing on social media about me. I'm asking you, Martha, what do you believe about the words that I have just said? I have just said to you, I am all that you need. I am a death conqueror. I am the resurrection and the life. Martha, I'm asking you, what do you believe personally? Do you believe this?

What is it that she is supposed to believe? What is Jesus pressing for her to answer? He is pressing for her to answer the question. Do you in fact believe when I say I am that I am the son of God? Do you believe that when I say I am, I am the long-awaited promised Messiah that would bring salvation to God's people? That's what he's asking. Do you believe that without me, death is going to win? But with me, the grave will be conquered.

Death will be conquered. Within me, I am the resurrection and the life. In other words, do you believe I'm the solution to the greatest problem that you're facing right now?

You probably have heard, perhaps in the news over the last few months, the name Ben Sasse. I've mentioned this name to our people before. Ben Sasse was a United States Senator. He was the president of Florida University for a time. Just this last December, three months ago, he was diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer. The doctor said, you have 90 days to live. This is what he has written. He's been very public about his journey. When asked about the faith issues during this ordeal, Sasse said, "There's never been a piece of me that has doubted the question, is God surprised by the fact that Ben Sasse's torso is chock full of tumors? The God who'd be surprised by it is way too small to be interesting. God is not surprised by the fact that I'm going to die. We're all going to die. Pain is real. It seems like the first thing humans should do is acknowledge that a lot is broken in this world. The existence of death is surely not the way it's supposed to be."

And that's what Jesus is saying. That's what he's saying to Martha. That's what he's saying to us. Death is not to be the final answer. He is, in fact, the resurrection and the life. Death doesn't belong here. Death is an intruder. It's the result of sin. Sin brings death into our world, and Jesus has come to do something about it.

Which brings us to the third point, right? The last thing, what Jesus said, what Jesus asked. Now, look at what Jesus did, and we go back to the Gospel of John, the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, and we pick up at verse 38. "Then Jesus deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor for he has been dead four days. Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? So, they took away the stone, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with the cloth. Jesus said to them, unbind and let him go."

Jesus simply calls Lazarus out of the grave. Jesus is, in fact, acting out on the words that he had spoken when he said, I am the resurrection and the life. Now he's acting it out. He's living it out. He is the one who is the way, the truth and the life. He is the resurrection and the life. Death was no match for the Son of God. He overtook it. He crushed it. He conquered it.

We celebrate this morning that the last great enemy death has been defeated. It's been destroyed. Death is dead. Sin has been defeated. Listen again to these last words from Senator Sass. "Death is a wicked thief. It's an enemy, but it's pretty great that it's the last enemy. All the stuff that I regret for having been an inadequate husband, son, father, friend, worker, truth teller, all the stuff I've been weak on, I'm going to be freed from all of that.' Death is the last enemy. Jesus has conquered death. So, I say to you, my friends, we're really only ready to live well when we're ready to die well. The only way we could ever be ready to die well is if we know personally the one who has conquered death.

That is exactly what it is that God has called on us to believe. He has asked us to believe that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. I don't think there's a person here who would have any trouble saying, I've messed up. I've sinned. I've failed plenty of times. We all acknowledge that. But we have to go beyond that. We can't just say I messed up and I did some things wrong. No, we have to acknowledge that what sin does is sin is what has brought death into the world. Sin always separates. It has separated us from God. And that's why Jesus came. He came to bridge that gap again. He came to enable us to know this one who has conquered death. He came so that we could experience not just life now, but life that is forever. Life that is eternal.

So, we're to believe that we have sinned, of course, but we have to believe that when Jesus came as the perfect Son of God, he came and lived a perfect life, and he died a terrible death. And he did it for me and he did it for you. He did it for the world. John 3:16 – For God so loved the world (that's you, that's me) that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. If you believe this morning that Jesus is the death conqueror, if you believe that your sin has separated you from God and there's nothing you can do to repair that gap, because the only way is if you are 100 percent

perfect. And that excludes all of us. But if we will believe that what Jesus did, he did for us, God forgives our sins and he gives us the gift of eternal life because Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life.

Let's pray. Father God, we get to celebrate that Jesus is our death conqueror. Father, we get to step into life that is abundant. We get to step into life that is purposeful and meaningful because Jesus has made it possible for our relationship to you to be restored again. So, we thank you for that gift. We thank you for that life and we thank you for this opportunity to lift up your name and to celebrate in Jesus's name, amen.