

“Resurrection and Life”

John 11:17-27

INTRO:

It is hard to describe the agony of grief that we encounter when someone we love dies. We find Martha and Mary in the throes of this kind of pain in the second paragraph of **John 11**. Mary and Martha do not understand what God is doing. All they know is that they had called out to Jesus. They told Him that Lazarus was sick. Why didn't He drop everything and come? Why didn't He heal Lazarus from afar? Why didn't He do something? Why did He just let Lazarus die? Did He not love them anymore? Didn't He care what was happening to them? All these questions and a million more cascaded over them. They don't recognize Jesus waited because He did love them. ***“Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Therefore, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.”*** (John 11:5–6).

As our text opens, Jesus finally arrives and He finds Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. When Martha hears that Jesus has come to Bethany she leaves Mary and the many mourners who have come to console Mary and Martha in these tough days and she goes to Jesus. ***“So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now 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 of God, God will give You.’”*** (John 11:17–22).

I. Martha's Encounter with Jesus (v. 17-22)

II. Jesus' Question for Martha (v. 23-27)

I. Martha's Encounter with Jesus (v. 17-22)

A. John is very careful to point out several important details at the beginning of his account of this miracle.

1. **(v. 17)** John wants us to understand that when Jesus arrives in Bethany Lazarus has already been dead a while. This was not the Lord resurrecting a man who has just died leaving Himself open to the suggestion that Lazarus has just swooned. No, the funeral is over and Lazarus has been buried four days already when Jesus arrives on the scene. You can't get any deader than Lazarus was when the Lord resurrected Him. This is the only recorded time in the Gospels where Jesus actually resurrects someone from the tomb after four days.

2. (v.18) John wants us to be aware of both the risk to Jesus and the reason why this miracle stirred up such a reaction among the Jewish leaders. Jesus did His miracle in the very suburbs of Jerusalem only a mile and three quarters from Jerusalem itself.

3. This miracle took place before a large crowd of folks, no doubt from Jerusalem, who came to Bethany to console Mary and Martha. They were not a people who were easily deceived.

B. The therefore that begins **verse 20** reaches back to the arrival of Jesus in Bethany reported in **verse 17**. When Martha hears that Jesus has come to town, her first response is to go to Him and to pour out her disappointment and pain at the death of her brother.

1. Although we know the end of the story, Martha and Mary do not. In **verse 21** the dam of her emotions breaks and she dumps her pain all over the Savior.

“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

2. In spite of intense suffering Martha never let go of her faith. There is a major lesson here for all of us. When we can't understand what God is doing, do not allow doubt to take over your thoughts. Take it to the Lord.

C. I love the simple expressions of Martha's faith. In **verse 22**, in the midst of her hurt, she asserts her faith.

“Even now I know that whatever You ask of 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 in the resurrection on the last day.’”

We find here that even when her heart speaks in confusion and pain, it holds fast to what it knows to be true, that Jesus can do all things.

II. Jesus' Question for Martha (v. 23-27)

A. The Lord said in **verse 23**, *“Martha, your brother will rise again!”* Immediately, Martha's thoughts went to the resurrection at the end of the age (v. 24). Martha believed the resurrection was a date in history. To her mind the day in time that the final resurrection would happen, that was Resurrection Day. Resurrection is not a time. Resurrection is a person.

B. The Lord Jesus said in **verses 25-26**, *“I am the resurrection and I am the life.”* Resurrection is the ability to bring a dead person back to life. Jesus said, *I am the One who is the embodiment of that ability.* The Lord Jesus is the One who can bring resurrection to the dead. He, who has the Lord, has the resurrection in him. He has that ability in Him because, He, Himself, is the life! This is an ego eimi statement. He can be the resurrection and the life because He is God. When the LORD said to Moses in the burning bush, *“I am that I am”* He was saying that He is the self-existent One. We exist because He

exists. We draw our life from Him. He exists all from Himself. He draws His existence from nowhere else. He has life in Himself. He gives life to others who need it. The Reason Jesus is the Resurrection is because He is the Life. He gives both physical and spiritual life to all who have it.

C. This truth has a two-fold application.

1. Jesus said about those who believe and who have died physically. ***“He that is believing in me, even if he should die, he will live.”*** Some see this as a promise of future life. Notice Jesus uses the present tense here. He who believes in me. The implication that they did believe and are still believing even if right now they are physically dead, they are still alive in God’s presence. ***The Amplified Bible*** puts it this way: **(John 11:25)**

“Jesus said to her, I am [Myself] the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on) Me, although he may die, yet he shall live.”

D.L. Moody said once, *“One day you will read that Dwight Moody of Northfield, Massachusetts has died. Don’t you believe it? At that moment I will be more alive than I am right now!”* That is true because Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

2. There is an application for those who are still alive.

“And everyone living and believing in me shall never (ou mh) die eternally.”

This does not say we will not face physical death. We will all face physical death if the Lord does not return first. It says that we will never spiritually die. ***The Amplified Bible*** says,

“And whoever continues to live and believes in (has faith in, cleaves to, and relies on) Me shall never [actually] die at all.”

D. Finally, the Lord asks Martha the key question that we too need to ask ourselves today. Do we believe this? I hope we do.