

LAZARUS RAISED — IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

The title of my message is **LAZARUS RAISED — IRRESISTIBLE GRACE**. Oh, may he whose voice awakes the dead speak to you this day by his Word!

In order to introduce my message to you, and in order to prepare our hearts for the message, I want to show you four things that God has taught me by his Spirit.

1. **It is my responsibility to preach the gospel to all men as the Lord gives me opportunity** (Mark 16:15-16).

(Mark 16:15-16) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
(16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

I recognize that the greatest privilege that has ever been bestowed upon a man is the privilege of preaching the gospel to men, to speak to men on God's behalf. The highest calling in the world, the greatest privilege that can be given to a mortal man, is to be sent of God to proclaim the gospel of redeeming grace to perishing men. But, while this is the greatest privilege in the world, it is also the greatest responsibility in the world. It is an awesome thing to speak to men with immortal souls on the behalf of the

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eternal God. In fulfilling this responsibility, basically, three things are required of me.

- Sincerity
- Simplicity
- Steadfastness

2. **It is your responsibility to repent and believe the gospel** (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”

“God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” — I rejoice to declare to all men everywhere, that any sinner in all the world who will call upon Christ in true faith shall be saved. It is written, — **“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** — I know that you are responsible before God to believe that which is plainly revealed in his Word. — And I know that if you will believe on Christ God will save you (Acts 16:31). Indeed, if you will believe, God has saved you! — **“He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life!”**

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3. **Yet, I know that no man by nature can or will come to Christ.** You have neither the desire, nor the ability to trust Christ in yourself (John 5:40; 6:44).

(John 5:40) “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

(John 6:44) “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

It is not within the realm of man’s power, and it is not within the scope of his heart’s desire to come to Christ. Unless God does for a sinner what that sinner cannot and will not do for himself, he will perish. I know that you cannot believe, except God himself create faith in you and cause you to trust his Son.

4. **And I know that true saving faith is the gift of God** (Ephesians 2:8).

(Ephesians 2:8-9) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

(John 6:37-40) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to

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do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

This is our Savior's doctrine. — No one can come. — Anyone may come. — Someone shall come! — "**Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power!**" — "**Blessed is the man whom thou chooset and causet to approach unto thee.**"

If any man comes to Christ, believing on Christ unto life everlasting, he does so because God has drawn him to Christ by the effectual power and irresistible grace of his Spirit. **True faith is the result of, not the cause of, divine grace.** Saving faith is created in a man's heart by the mighty, sovereign operations of God the Holy Spirit in omnipotent, saving grace We who believe, believe "**by the greatness of his power**" and "**according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead**" (Ephesians 1:19-20). — That faith that we have and exercise in Christ is performed in us by "**the operation f God**" (Colossians 2:12).

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This creation of faith in the heart, by which a person is drawn to Christ, is what we call “Effectual Calling,” or “Irresistible Grace.” The effectual calling of the Holy Spirit is that sovereign, gracious, irresistible work and operation of God the Holy Spirit, which changes a man’s heart and will, causing him to come to Christ and be saved by faith in him.

Proposition: Effectual calling is the tender influence, overpowering love, compelling grace and irresistible power of God the Holy Spirit which causes a man to gladly and willingly receive Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who by nature, if left to themselves, would not come to Christ, are made willing to come to him in effectual calling.

There are many, many pictures of this effectual calling and irresistible grace in the Scriptures, pictures that beautifully illustrate this blessed act of God’s grace by which chosen, redeemed sinners are made to experience that grace that was given to them in Christ Jesus before the worlds were made, many pictures of grace, by which God illustrates the gospel message of salvation by grace alone..

- The Calling of Abraham
- The Calling of Saul of Tarsus
- The Calling of Zacchaeus

One of the most instructive of these pictures is the resurrection of Lazarus. In the 11th and 12th chapters of

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John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit tells us five things about Lazarus and his call from death to life that picture God's irresistible grace in the salvation of his elect.

HIS CONDITION

First, Lazarus' condition is plainly declared in verse 14. — Lazarus was dead. — “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” That is the state of all human beings by nature, spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of either knowing or changing their condition (Romans 5:12).

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

The dead cannot move toward God. The dead have neither will nor ability to come to Christ. The dead do not desire God's salvation. The dead cannot see. The dead cannot understand. The dead must be raised from death to life by the power of God. That resurrection is the new birth, the first resurrection (John 5:25; Ephesians 2:1-10; Revelation 20:6). — As Lazarus' sickness and death was “for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (v. 3), so our sin and death in our father Adam was “*for the*

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glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

(John 5:25) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”

(Revelation 20:6) “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

(Ephesians 2:1-10) “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the

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exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

HIS CALLING

Look at verse 43; and you will see Lazarus’ calling. That is the *second* thing I want you to see. **Lazarus’ calling was a picture of our calling**, the effectual, irresistible call of God’s omnipotent grace by which all who are saved are saved. — “**And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.**”

When the Lord Jesus cried, “Lazarus, come forth,” the dead man arose to life.

- There is a general call which goes out to all men when the gospel is preached.
- But this was not a general call!

This was a personal, particular, powerful call, irresistible, effectual and distinguishing. The only way any sinner will ever be saved is if the Son of God, by the power of his Spirit, calls him from death to life. — And all who are called by him live by him, with him and in him (John 5:25).

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Your election and redemption are made manifest and made sure to your soul by this act of God's omnipotent mercy (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).

(1 Thessalonians 1:2-10) “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; ³ Remembering without ceasing **your work of faith, and labour of love**, and **patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; ⁴ Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. ⁵ For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶ And **ye became followers of us, and of the Lord**, having **received the word** in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: ⁷ So that ye **were ensamples to all that believe** in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ For **from you sounded out the word of the Lord** not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. ⁹ For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye **turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God**; ¹⁰ And to **wait for his Son from heaven**, whom he raised from the

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dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Read on. In verse 44, we see...

HIS CONVERSION

“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” — Once he was called, Lazarus was converted. His conversion was both immediate and gradual. He was immediately changed from death to life. But he was gradually freed from his “grave clothes”. And sinners saved by grace are immediately transformed into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). But throughout our lives we are being saved, gradually, from the “grave clothes” of sin and unbelief, legalism and self-righteousness and religious customs, traditions and rituals (2 Corinthians 7:1). — The Savior’s command is, “Loose him, and let him go!”

(2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement

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hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. ^{7:1 ¶} Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

HIS COMMUNION

Fourth, move down to chapter 12, and you will see Lazarus sitting at the table with the Lord Jesus in sweet communion.— “**Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him**” (vv. 1-2)

Soon after his resurrection Lazarus is found sitting at the table with his Savior. Do not miss this: — **The house and the table belonged to Lazarus; but the Master of the house was Christ.** Lazarus surrendered all to his Lord!

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(Luke 14:25-33). **The believing, surrendered heart is the heart with which Christ holds sweet communion.** I can almost hear Lazarus' heart, as he sat there at the table with the Lord Jesus...

“I am Thine, O Lord! I have heard Thy voice;
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee!

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the pow'r of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine!”

HIS CONFLICT

Fifth, in John 12:9-11 we find Lazarus in the midst of terrible conflict, with men trying to kill him.

(John 12:9-11) “Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; ¹¹ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.”

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Because of Lazarus many others believed; but the Jews sought to kill him. Why? Because he had been raised from the dead! That is all. He had been the blessed recipient of God's great grace, and they had not. Therefore, they sought to kill him. This is the last we hear of Lazarus. His life with Christ was a life of unceasing conflict in this world. And all who believe will find it so with them. That is the way it was in the beginning; and that is the way it shall be until the end (Genesis 4:1-8; John 16:33).

(John 16:33) “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

(Genesis 4:1-8) “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. ² And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³¶ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. ⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: ⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. ⁶¶

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And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? ⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. ⁸ ⁹ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”

In verse 7, the Lord God said to Cain, “If your worship is evil, sin lies at the door of your guilty conscience still, tormenting you. Abel’s love for you has not changed. He still desires you as his brother. He still respects you as his elder brother, as the firstborn of your father.” Still, Cain murdered Abel, for just one reason. Abel was accepted of God in and by Christ, Abel believed God; and Cain trusting his own righteousness was still guilty before God. — And he knew it.

- Abel was chosen.
- Therefore Abel was redeemed.
- Being chosen and redeemed, Abel was called.
- Because he was called, Abel believed.
- Believing on the Son of God, Abel was justified.
- Justified in Christ, Abel was accepted and his conscience was clear before God.

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Let me ask you the same question now I asked you when I began. — Do you know anything about the love-calls of our omnipotent Savior? How I thank God for that sovereign, free, irresistible grace by which I am called! How I praise him that when he calls, our God will not take “No” for an answer! O blessed Holy Spirit, call out chosen sinners, call these dead ones here today! O Lord Jesus, blessed Friend of sinners, let the dead now hear thy voice, that they may live!

“Am I called? And can it be?
Has my Savior chosen me?
Guilty, wretched as I am,
Has He named my worthless name?
Vilest of the vile am I,
Dare I raise my hopes so high?

Am I called? I dare not stay,
Cannot, must not disobey:
Here I lay me at Thy feet,
Clinging to the Mercy-Seat:
Thine I am, and Thine alone;
Lord, with me Thy will be done.

Am I called? What shall I bring
As an offering to my King?
Poor, and blind, and naked I,

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Trembling at Thy footstool lie;
Nought but sin I call my own,
Nor for sin can sin atone.

Am I called? An heir of God!
Washed, redeemed, by precious blood!
Father, lead me in Thy hand,
Guide me to that better land
Where my soul shall be at rest,
Pillowed on my Savior's breast."

Amen.