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Jesus: I AM the Resurrection and the Life



Part 11 (010923AM)

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Twelve days ago death got closer to all of us.

Twelve days ago we saw for the first time in most of our lifetimes - death from war in our own country.

Twelve days ago about 6,818 fellow human died in the WTC attack on September 11th 2001.

Twelve days ago we saw fire, explosions, implosions, debris, smoke, dust, crumbling concrete, and twisted steel.

The loss of life in such a violent manner, and so many thousands was a horrific scene for all of us who watched.

The amazing thing in all this was that on the day before September 11th **151,323 fellow humans also died.**

In fact every day over 150,000 people die in alleys, roads, slums, mansions, fires, hospitals, beds, and planes. In no way to lessen our shock, dismay or horror, but to help us in gaining a perspective, every[1] year 55,233,000 people die across our planet.

That is, over 55 million humans will enter eternity in 2001. Some will perish through starvation or murder, others through disease and accident. Some painlessly and others painfully, but all 55 million plus will DIE. Is that a result of a catastrophic tragedy? No it is daily life and death on planet earth! What's the real tragedy? Not death - all will die, some quietly, some slowly, and some violently as perhaps many thousands did in the terrorist attacks. But being unprepared - that's the ultimate tragedy.

Death is the ULTIMATE ENEMY, not Osama Bin Laden or any of his henchmen. Death is the real enemy. All humans rich or poor, armed or unarmed, weak or powerful, known or faceless - ALL ARE HELPLESS!

This morning as we open to John 11, reflect with me upon the agony we as humans experience when we see death's hopelessness and our helplessness to avoid it. Our predicament is captured[2] well in the words of Paul Hoon:

- Technology has freed humanity from the confines of earth and into space to travel at 25,000 miles an hour, but even there death can find us.
- Industrialization has freed humanity to move to a new job or a new home, or from a lower to a higher income tax bracket, but even there death can find us.
- Electronics has freed humanity to turn a dial and enter into a multitude of experiences quite foreign to his own, but even there death can find us.
- Education has freed humanity's mind and conscience; Medicine has freed humanity from diseases; Psychiatry and chemistry has freed humanity's emotions; Music and art has freed humanity's imagination; but no matter where humans have gotten death can find us.

A thousand advances may be made, yet, people are rightly called "homo perturbatus," restless man, intoxicated with such freedom as he has never known before.

- For all his gains, the man who travels at 25,000 miles an hour has a nervous breakdown.
- Affluence and poverty, each in its own way, lock him in.
- Television captures his sensitivities and homogenizes his tastes.
- Education becomes a treadmill.
- Vogues in art fasten upon the public consciousness, and 3 million people buy the same novel.
- Drugs enslave.
- And then wherever man may be death can find us.

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The legend that surrounds the Death of Alexander[3] the Great from history reminds us of our universal helplessness before death. It is also a powerful testimony of what we truly have, who possess and who know Jesus as our Resurrection and Life.

After conquering the known world by the age of 33, Alexander engaged in a drinking bout with his generals while he sat in the magnificent hanging palace gardens of Babylon. This binge led to one of his generals dying that night and Alexander becoming so ill that he never regained his strength.

As he lay dying in his tent outside Babylon Alexander crawled on all fours to the River Euphrates intending to drown himself. His hoped his body would be lost and that men would believe that he was, in truth immortal. His wife dragged him back and put him in bed where he died. Posterity now remembers the man who conquered the world but was helpless at death.

Jesus declares to those facing inevitable death – and that means all humans, much more than a fuzzy[4] hope in a future resurrection. He stuns Martha and all of us readers with a double-barreled "I am" statement: "**I am the resurrection and (I am) the life.**" This is the fifth great "I am + identifier" statement in John. He is not like all the galaxy of Old Testament prophets, merely a prophet awaiting the final resurrection. Jesus here claims that He *is* the living resurrection.

This morning our text is the last of Christ's Seven Great Sign Miracles and the next of the Seven Mighty I AM statements of Jesus. Please open with me to [John 11:17-27, 38-44](#) and reaffirm the great possession you and I have in Christ our Resurrection and Life!

- The Greek word the Holy Spirit leads John to use for resurrection is *anastasis* meaning, literally, to "stand up."
- At this momentous event Jesus stands beside the depths of Lazarus' burial cave, Jesus goes far beyond this common Jewish belief in future resurrection and assert that the power of resurrection exists in his very person ([Phil 3:10](#)).
- God's Word clearly affirms, only through Jesus' own victory over death that we have access to a future resurrection of our own ([1 Cor 15:21-22](#)).
- God's Word sets forth the doctrine of bodily resurrection. That is, although we will all die, we will receive new, resurrection bodies ([1 Cor 15:44](#)).
- This gives purpose and hope to life and to eternity because of our Lord Jesus who is "**the resurrection and the life.**" C.E. Warner put this doctrine into one of his poems many years ago:

And Death's not the end—'neath the cold black sod—

'Tis the Inn by the Road on our way to God.

Our future existence[5] is not in the hands of doctors, nor in the hands of disease, nor in the hands of the drunk who runs into our car along the highway, or even the terrorist who slams 350 ton airplane fuel bombs into our office towers.

Our life is in the hands of the Almighty , who can use any means He wishes, including the above, to have us brought into the heavenly gates.

Perhaps today our name will be called. And to be ready we need to KNOW HIM!

To meet Jesus we are looking at John's 5th noted name on Christ's 7-part calling card.

I AM ALL YOU NEED is how He introduced Himself seven times.

We are looking at the 5th of His Seven I AM statements this morning.

Each one is a way that He says to us, I AM all you need.

Trace them with me again:

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE (6:35, 41, 48, 51) – Jesus is all I need to feed my STARVING SOUL; apart from Him is only unsatisfied hunger.

- Jesus alone feeds our soul and satisfies our hungers, all else is emptiness, hopelessness and empty mirages.
- Jesus said I am your food that satisfies; I am the Bread you need. I have settled the longings of your soul, I can satisfy all the hungers of your life. What do you really hunger for?
- Believers are **huNGERING FOR JESUS AS MY BREAD OF LIFE.**

I AM THE LIGHT OF WORLD (8:12) - Jesus is all I need to LIGHT my DARKENED SOUL; apart from Him is only impenetrable darkness.

- Jesus said I am the Light, I have settled the darkness of fear, the darkness of death, the darkness of dying, it is all settled by Me!
- Believers are **WALKING WITH JESUS WHO LIGHTS MY PATH OF LIFE.**

I AM THE DOOR OF life to my SHEEP (10:7,9) - Jesus is all I need to enter into God's Family, apart from Him is only hopeless exclusion.

- Jesus said I am the Door of Life, all your security and access needs are settled, by Me! We can't wander out without stumbling over Him and no predator could slip in without stirring Him. So Jesus says I keep you safe from harm and secure from wandering away from my salvation!
- Believers are **ENTERING THROUGH JESUS WHO IS MY DOOR TO LIFE.**

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD (10:11, 14) - Jesus is all I need to make it through life and get to my heavenly HOME, apart from Him is only aimless wandering.

- Jesus said I am the Good Shepherd who died; I have settled the issue of the unknown.
- I am your companion through life and death.
- Jesus gives us the perfect example of how to live and how to die!
- Believers are **FOLLOWING THE GOOD SHEPHERD WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF MY LIFE.**

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE (11:25) - Jesus is all I need to live the endless LIFE, but apart from Him is only endless dying.

- Jesus says I am the Resurrection, I am the Life so I have settled the issue of Hope.
- You can count on me, hope in me all through life and into death!
- Believers are **RESTING IN JESUS WHOSE RESURRECTION ASSURES ME ENDLESS LIFE.**

Just as a reminder, the seven signs of John not only unfold a glorious picture of salvation.

They also show the complete powerlessness and helplessness of humanity to ever be able to come to God.

Here are the signs:

The first three signs show salvation's reception by the believer;	The seven signs also show man's pitiful condition and hopelessness.
1. HE TURNS water into wine (2:1-11) — Christ's salvation is always Miraculous ;	We have no wine (2:3) which points to us as total strangers to the Divine Joy of God.
2. he heals the nobleman's son (4:46-54) — Christ's salvation is only by faith ;	The sickness of (4:46) the son points to our disease that has made us incurable ill.
3. he heals the paralytic (5:1-9) — salvation is by grace alone ;	The helpless man by the pool (5:7) is a stunning picture of our helplessness to better our condition in God's sight.
The last four signs show salvation's results in the believer;	
4. he Feeds the 5,000 (6:1-14) — salvation brings inexhaustible satisfaction ;	The multitude without food (6:5) is a graphic reminder that we are destitute of anything that can truly feeds our souls.
5. he Stills the storm (6:16-21) — salvation brings complete peace ;	The disciples in danger of life on the storm (6:18) tossed sea is a reminder that we were all born on the "broad road" leading to destruction.
6. he heals the blind man (9:1-7) — salvation brings light to our souls ;	The man blind from birth (9:1) is a picture of us who are incapable of seeing either our own wretchedness or the only One who can save us.
7. he Raises Lazarus (11:38-45) — salvation brings the power of an endless life ;	Dead Lazarus (11) is a solemn declaration of our worst enemy – death. Nothing is more hopeless than the fact that no one, rich or poor, wise or foolish, powerful or powerless, are all utterly helpless to stop death. No one has survived death except ONE!

FIRST, Jesus by His life gives a perfect example of the right[6] way to die.

Jesus Died at the Right Time: God's Appointment.

- Christ died young, but His work was finished.
- Jim Elliott, who himself was killed at a young age while doing missionary work among the Auca Indians, said, "God is peopling Heaven; why should He limit himself to old people?"
- **Isaiah 53:10** Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, **He shall prolong His days**. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
- **John 2:4** Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? **My hour has not yet come.**"
- **John 7:30** Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because **His hour had not yet come.**
- **John 8:20** These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for **His hour had not yet come.**
- **John 13:1-4** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when **Jesus knew that His hour had come** that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.

Jesus Died with the Right Attitude: Trusting God through suffering.

- Christ died with a mixture of grief and joy.
- **Matthew 26:38** Then He said to them, **"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.** Stay here and watch with Me."
- **Hebrews 12:2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for **the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus Died in the Right Way: Glorifying God.

- **Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- **John 21:18-19** Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He

spoke, signifying by what death he would **glorify God**. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

Jesus Died for the Right Purpose: Home to God's Presence.

- [John 17:11](#) I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and **I am coming to you**. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.
- [John 19:30](#) When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and **gave up his spirit**.
- [1 Peter 1:4](#) and **into an inheritance** that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,

Jesus Died with the Right Focus: Resurrection Hope.

- [Psalm 16:10](#) because **you will not abandon me to the grave**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
- [Luke 23:43](#) Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, **today you will be with me in paradise**."
- [Luke 23:46](#) Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, **into your hands I commit my spirit**." When he had said this, he breathed his last.
- [Acts 2:27](#) because **you will not abandon me to the grave**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

SECOND, as Christ's servants we share this HOPE!

Before his death, John Calvin had the same confidence when he said, "Thou, Lord, bruise me. But I am abundantly satisfied since it is from Thy hand." Death can steal nothing from a Christian. Health, wealth, and joy—all of these come in greater abundance when the spirit goes to God.

William Cowper who struggled with assurance of salvation for much of his life, combined both the story of redemption and the story of the penitent thief in his song when he wrote:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in His day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.*

*When this poor lisp'ing, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I will sing Thy pow'r to save.*

D. L. Moody at death caught a glimpse^[7] of heaven. Awakening from sleep he said, "Earth recedes, Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me and I must go!"

Just before John Bunyan died, he said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves. I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will through the mediation of His blessed Son receive me though a sinner; there we shall meet to sing the new song and remain everlastingly happy, world without end."

THIRD, Jesus shows us why we must not dread death!

BECAUSE JESUS RESCUES US FROM THIS HIJACKED AND CRASHING WORLD.

[1 Corinthians 15:50](#)

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

[Death^{\[8\]} rescues us from the endlessness of this existence](#); it is the means by which those who love God finally are brought to Him.

BECAUSE JESUS OFFERS US SOMETHING FAR BETTER.

[Philippians 1:23](#)

I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

Paul was positively convinced that [heaven was better than earth](#). He was itching to depart and to be with Christ, which "is far better." Even our heroic^[9] attempts to live one day longer with respirators and other high-tech equipment would seem unnecessary if we could see what awaits us.

BECAUSE JESUS MAKES EVEN DEATH A VICTORY.

[1 Corinthians 15:55-58](#)

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Only on this side of the curtain is death our enemy. Just beyond the curtain the monster turns out to be our friend. The label "Death" is still on the bottle, but the contents are "Life Eternal."

BECAUSE JESUS KNOWS WE ARE FRAGILE.

[James 4:13-15](#)

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." Death is our friend because it reminds us that heaven is near. How near? As near as a heartbeat; as near as an auto accident; as near as a stray bullet; as near as a plane crash; as near as the next terrorist attack here or somewhere.

BECAUSE JESUS PROMISES US A NEW HOME.

[2 Corinthians 5:1-4](#)

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Death is not the end of the road: it is only a bend in the road. The road winds only through those paths through which Christ Himself has gone. This Travel Agent does not expect us to discover the trail for ourselves.

BECAUSE JESUS MEETS US AT DEATH AND TAKES US HOME.

[Psalm 23:4, 6](#)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Often we say that Christ will meet us on the other side. That is true, of course, but misleading. Let us never forget that He walks with us on this side of the curtain and then guides us through the opening.

We will meet Him there, because we have met Him here. The tomb is not an entrance to death, but to life. The sepulcher is not an empty vault, but the doorway to heaven.

BECAUSE JESUS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH

[2 Corinthians 2:14](#)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

When we die, nothing in God dies, and His faithfulness endures. Little wonder the pagans said of the early church that they carried their dead as if in triumph! Aristides, a first-century Greek, marveled at the extraordinary success of Christianity and wrote to a friend,

"If any righteous man among the Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby."

And so it is. At death believers set out from one place to another. There is reason for sorrowing but "not as those who have no hope." Such confidence makes the unbelievers take notice that Christians die differently. Christ assures us, "Where I am, there you may be also" ([John 14:3](#)).

Finally, is Jesus yours?

Jesus is all we need. He is our Good Shepherd[10], so we need no longer fear the outcome of our battle with evil. Christ has conquered! We have conquered! And we *will* conquer!

1. Have you **come to Christ for salvation**? If you are empty, call out to Christ. Do not let yourself go through another day without coming to him. Be born again, receive life, be filled, be delivered, and join the victory parade! If you are spiritually dead—without resurrection life—under sin—under guilt—empty, Christ invites you to come to him: Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. ([Isaiah 55:1](#), 2) The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. ([Revelation 22:17](#))
2. DO YOU **look only to Christ for satisfaction**? Cultivate human relationships, but do not look for ultimate fulfillment in them because they will disappoint you. Energetically pursue your career, but do not imagine that you will find transcending fulfillment in it. In Christ we have everything. May our prayer be: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. ([Philippians 3:10](#))
3. KEEP **filled with Christ's spirit**. Our lives can be victorious. Jesus has been there before us; He has met the worst Satan can give and has been victorious. The most

important factor in victorious Christian living is to be filled with the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:9**). Christ is the victor over temptation and sin. His very words to us are, "[T]ake heart! I have overcome the world" (**John 16:33**). When Martin Luther was asked how he overcame the Devil, he replied, "Well, when he comes knocking upon the door of my heart, and asks 'Who lives here?' the dear Lord Jesus goes to the door and says, 'Martin Luther used to live here, but he has moved out. Now I live here.'" When Christ fills our lives, Satan has no entrance. In response to each of the three temptations, Christ answered with Scripture (**Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13**). He knew the truth of, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (**Psalm 119:11**). Why is this so? God's Word reveals God's mind, and God's mind cannot be subject to sin. Therefore, if we fill our hearts with his Word, sin and temptation cannot dominate.

MAKING SURE Here is a prayer you can pray, a prayer that expresses your desire to transfer your trust to Christ alone for your eternal salvation. This prayer can be the link that will connect you to God. And if you pray it in faith, God will receive you.

Dear God,

I know that I am a sinner and there is nothing that I can do to save myself. I confess my complete helplessness to forgive my own sin or to work my way to heaven. At this moment I trust Christ alone as the One who bore my sin when He died on the cross. I believe that He did all that ever will be necessary for me to stand in your holy presence. I thank you that Christ was raised from the dead as a guarantee of my own resurrection. As best as I can, I now transfer: my trust to Him. I am grateful that He has promised to receive me despite my many sins and failures. Father, I take you at your word. I thank you that I can face death now that you are my Savior. Thank you for the assurance that you will walk with me though the deep valley.

Thank You for hearing this prayer.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

[1] http://www.prb.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Other_reports/2000-2002/sheet1.html per the Population Research Bureau.

[2] Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1990, p. 17.

[3] Drawn from Ravi Zacharias, *Deliver us from Evil*, p. 38-39.

[4] Adapted from Bryant, Beauford H.; Krause, Mark S., *The College Press NIV Commentary: John*, (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company) 1999, c1998.

[5] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 141-143.

[6] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 122-136.

[7] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 141-143.

[8] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 62-67.

[9] Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997, 62-67.

[10] Adapted, paraphrased and quoted from Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Colossians and Philemon—The Supremacy of Christ*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

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