

The Resurrection and Life

John 11: 17-27

Our text today is likely a familiar account for most of us. It deals with a very difficult moment in the lives of those who were very close to Jesus. As the Lord ministered in the area of Jerusalem, He often visited the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, their brother. These three had developed a close and endearing relationship with Jesus.

Although these were very close to the Lord, their lives were not free of heartache and despair. In fact, Lazarus had suddenly died while Jesus was away. Through the death of a dear friend, Jesus would perform one of His greatest miracles while teaching eternal truth in the midst of this season of pain for the family.

As we examine this passage, we will discover the Lord working in a miraculous way to meet an immediate need, but the greater lesson revealed is of eternal value and implication. Jesus has the ability to provide for our immediate needs, but He also has the ability to secure our eternal destiny. Of the I AM statements we have considered thus far, this one is the greatest for me. I want to discuss the [aspects](#) of this encounter as we consider: [The Resurrection and Life](#).

I. The Devastation Experienced (17-20) – The opening verses of our text reveal the devastation Mary and Martha had experienced, and the despair they felt. Consider:

A. The Context (17-18) – [Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.](#) ^[18] [Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.](#) We know from the preceding chapter that Jesus had spent some time near the Jordan River prior to the death of Lazarus. Having received the news Lazarus was sick unto death, Jesus stayed where He was for two more days. It seems apparent that Lazarus had died the same day news came to Jesus of his sickness. After two days had passed, Jesus told the disciples to prepare to return unto Judea. He affirmed that Lazarus was dead, before they departed to return to Bethany, [V.14](#).

- While the situation was very desperate for Mary, Martha, and particularly Lazarus, Jesus had purposely waited to return. After it seemed all hope was lost, Jesus started toward Bethany to deal with their situation. There are times in our lives when it seems we have passed a point of no return. We assume our situation will never improve, and may even think that the Lord has chosen to do nothing for us. We will soon find out that Jesus is never late, even after four days following a situation as extreme as death.

B. The Concern (19) – [And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.](#) It is evident that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were loved by many. We find that many who knew them came to comfort the grieving sisters and offer their condolences. There was nothing they could do to bring Lazarus back, but they were there to offer comfort.

- Clearly, we are limited in our ability to bring about a solution to many problems our friends and family face. The majority of us have faced a similar situation, having lost a loved one in death. While we are unable to change the situation, or even remove their grief and pain, we can be there for them and offer comfort in these most difficult of times. One of the greatest acts of kindness we can offer is simply our presence in a time of despair. Being there means more than you realize.

C. The Confusion (20) – [Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.](#) Here we find an interesting, and somewhat confusing detail. As word came to the home that Jesus was on the way, Martha went to meet Him as He came. This is not unusual. Martha was hurting and grieving the loss of her brother. What is unusual is that Mary did not accompany her. Mary is the one who was always found at the feet of Jesus. She longed to be near Him as often as she could. However, in this moment of intense grief and pain, Mary chose to stay at the house instead of going to meet Jesus.

- This reveals a valuable truth for our consideration – even the strongest believers struggle at times when faced with a devastating situation. This does not imply that Mary had abandoned her faith in the Lord, but it does appear that she had resigned to defeat. Her world was shattered and she is having difficulty coping with the reality of the situation. We all face times when our faith is tested and we are tempted to resign to defeat.

II. The Conversation Engaged (21-24) – Here we discover the conversation between Martha and Jesus as He made His way to Bethany. Notice:

A. The Complaint (21) – [Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.](#) I don't think Martha intended any disrespect, but her frustration and disappointment seem clear. She declared unto Jesus that Lazarus would not have died had He made it to Bethany sooner. While we do see her faith in the Lord, knowing He was more than able to provide, we also see her despair. She was hurting from the physical loss, and it also seems apparent that she is suffering emotionally. She wondered why the Lord had delayed and not come as she requested.

- We may tend to be critical of Martha, but I am certain we have all felt the same way at some point in life. We have been faced with a difficult situation, desperately needing the Lord's

help, and yet He doesn't seem to respond in the time or manner we desired. No doubt we all have complained in situations about the Lord's response and timing.

B. The Confidence (22, 24) – *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* ^[24] *Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.* Although Martha was grieving and struggling with her faith, she remained confident in the Lord. She knew Jesus had power with God and could secure whatever He desired. She was also confident of the truth of the resurrection – knowing death was not final for the believer. In the midst of her sorrow, she remained confident in the Lord.

- Most of us have walked through valleys and faced great difficulty at some point in life. I don't want to be the bearer of bad news, but we must realize that these difficult seasons will continue as long as we live. There will be times in life when it seems the Lord has failed to respond; we will face grief and sorrow; we will stand at a crossroads in life, unsure of which direction to take. These struggles accompany life, and we will have to endure them. However, we must be like Martha and remain confident in the Lord, even when faced with great difficulty. If you are saved, you are secure in Him. We face nothing that our Lord is unaware of or unable to handle. He loves us with an everlasting love and has promised to never leave or forsake us. In your moments of doubt and despair, remain confident in the Lord, even when it appears that He is not near at that moment. *Psalm 121:1-2 – I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.* ^[2] *My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.*

C. The Confirmation (23) – *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.* Jesus assured Martha there was nothing to fear; Lazarus would rise again. They had yet to make it to the tomb, and Martha assumed Jesus was referring to the resurrection, but there must have been comfort in these words. Death had invaded their home, but it would not be final.

- We are unable to comprehend the power and provision of our Lord. Like Martha, those who are saved believe in the resurrection, but we can rest in His sovereign care today. The Bible is filled with promises from the Lord. We can rest assured in each of them. The Lord overcame every enemy we will face, and because of His glorious resurrection, we enjoy victory in this life and the life to come!

III. The Resurrection Promised (25-27) – In the closing verses we discover the hope promised through Jesus' power and resurrection. Consider:

A. Jesus' Preeminence (25a) – *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life:* Death had come to their home, but Jesus revealed abounding hope. Death seemed final and brought great despair, but Martha stood in the presence of one who had the power to provide resurrection life. Death was strong, but even it was unable to overcome the power of Christ. She had focused on an event that would transpire in the end times, but Jesus revealed that He was the resurrection. She didn't have to wait until then. She needed to focus on the Lord, not anticipate a future event.

- We tend to respond in much the same way. We are settled and confident of the power of the resurrection in the future, and yet often fail to recognize that our Lord is the Resurrection and Life. We don't have to wait for something to transpire in the end – we can enjoy and rest in His grace and provision today! Heaven will definitely exceed our wildest dreams, but we can have abundant life today!

B. Jesus' Promise (25b-26) – *he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:* ^[26] *And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* Jesus offered a great promise while challenging Martha to believe. Those who believe in Christ may die, but death will not be the end, they will live again. In fact, those who believe in Christ will never die; they will merely change places of residence. To depart from this physical life is to enter the glorious presence of the Lord for those who have received Christ as Savior.

- I am thankful to know the Resurrection and Life in a personal way. He is my Lord and Savior. Physical death may come to this body, but I have the assurance of eternal life in Christ. Those who are saved by grace are promised life, not death! The saved by grace will live throughout eternity with Christ. Those who deny and reject Him will face eternal death in the lake of fire. Jesus gives life today and forever!

C. Martha's Profession (27) – *She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* Martha professed faith in the one who provides eternal life. She confessed that she believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. She had placed her faith and trust in Christ unto salvation, bringing eternal life.

- Here we find a gracious example of saving faith. Martha had a conversation with the Resurrection and Life, knowing Him as Lord and Savior. This reveals the path to salvation and eternal life in Christ. We must believe and confess that Jesus is Lord, knowing He alone can forgive sin and provide eternal life. When we come to that place in life, we are able to receive salvation. Jesus came to give life and save us from our sin!

Conclusion: As we close, I want to consider the next verse in our text. [John 11:28 – And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.](#) Having spoken with Jesus, Martha went to tell her sister, Mary, that Jesus had come and He called for her. This is given in a physical setting, but it has a spiritual application. The Resurrection and Life had come, and He was calling for Mary. Jesus came and died on the cross for our sin. He defeated sin, death, and hell. Those who are saved by grace are promised eternal life and a glorious inheritance. Have you done as Martha, confessing Jesus as the Christ and believing in Him by faith? He alone is the Resurrection and Life. If you are yet unsaved, come to the Resurrection and receive life today!