



John 11:25-26, 38-45

Lazarus, is that You?

Anger with God, and His representatives, often mingles with grief.

Lazarus had been dead four days and his sisters were upset. Why didn't Jesus come when they sent word? "Why did He delay? It would have been easy for Jesus to come to Lazarus in his time of illness. He wasn't that far away. He could have prevented Lazarus' death. But Jesus waited —on purpose.

The Son, Jesus said, does nothing of Himself, but whatsoever the Father does, that does the Son likewise. His will continually coincide with the Father's will, and there comes to Him the power to do all the Father does. His omnipotence is the Father's. As the Father has life, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself. "

Jesus Christ is the Lord over death and the giver of life.

Jesus received word of Lazarus' sickness (John 11:1-3). But when Jesus heard it, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it (v. 4). That is the key to the whole chapter. This sickness is not unto death. The ultimate goal of his sickness will be the glory of God, and the glorification of the Son of God.

Jesus did not say that Lazarus will not die but only that this sickness is not —its final result and outcome is not death. Lazarus was already dead by the time the messengers arrived which created an opportunity for the display of the glory of God. Jesus waited until the event should be absolutely supreme in its evidence of power.

Therefore the delay was not a question of love because John makes it very clear that Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus (v. 5). But Jesus stayed where He was two more days and Lazarus died (vv. 6-14).

Jesus stayed *because* He loved that little family. Christ's delays in our circumstances are delays of love. Nothing but the purest and simplest of profound transparent love sways Him in everything He does every day. God's delays are God-sized opportunities!

The highest blessing that any of us can obtain, is that our wills should be bent until they coincide with God's, and that takes time, observes Alexander Maclaren. Therefore, He delays, yet His timing is always perfect. His delay causes us to humble our hearts in submission to His perfect will. He can give us nothing better than the opportunity to bow our wills to His perfect will. The truest token of His love is to have the effect of bending us to submit to His will. Lord, what would you have me to do today. "

Just as in the life of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, the delay always accomplishes God's purposes. His delayed help comes at the right time. God's clock is different from ours, but it is always right on time. What seems so terribly long to us is only a second to Him.

Maclaren said, "God works leisurely because God has eternity to work in."

God's answer always comes at the right time and is punctual, though we most often think it is delayed. The best help we can ever receive is never delayed. It comes at God's perfect timing and is always so that you may believe (v. 15).

The love which often delays, is delayed for our good and God's glory, is swift as the lightning to answer every petition which moves with the circles of our spiritual life.

LORD IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE

It is only later that we come to the realization that He is always there with us. When the winds of life blow hard and cold He is always there in the shadows.

Like Martha we tend to fly in the face of our Lord the pain of our heart.

Lord, if you had been here Lazarus would not have died. The sisters lamented, "Oh, if only Jesus were here!" When Jesus did not arrive and Lazarus died, the sisters cried, "Oh, if only He had been here! Our brother would not have died. They had watched Jesus heal many sick, and yet their own brother had died. If only . . . if only . . . if only . . ."

What Jesus was teaching Martha and you and me is that "I being here your brother shall live though he had died. When Jesus is with His people none of them shall die forever because He is the resurrection and the life. The Resurrection and the Life was standing there talking to Martha. The Resurrection and the Life stands before us and speaks to us if we will but listen and trust Him. He comes to us at the open grave and says to us, "I am the Resurrection and the Life!"

Like Martha, we see with our tears and emotions what Jesus might have done if He had been there before Lazarus died. What He wants us to realize is what He *is* at the present moment. He speaks; I hear Him saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

"Could He not have prevented this man's dying?" asked Campbell Morgan.

"Of course He could! And yet He could not! If it is a question of power, yes. His power was unlimited. But it is not a question of power; it is one of purpose. What was that purpose? I was glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe. That was His purpose."

The darkest place in the world is when we have one eye on Christ and one on self. We need to get a new vision of Him with all of the soul's eye. Martha in her tears said, "Even now I know that whatever You will ask God, God will give You" (v. 22). "Even now"—even with my brother dead—I still believe.

John 11:25-26, 38-45 Lazarus, is that You?
give You (v. 22). Even now "even with my brother dead —I still believe.

Jesus told her, "Your brother shall rise again. "

Martha's response is, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day (v. 24).

Which would be more difficult, raising Lazarus at the end of the age, or after he has been dead four days? Obviously, neither because He is the "I am. "

In these words of Jesus we find a stream of hope, assurance, joy, and comfort for all believers.

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"

In John 11:25-26 there is recorded the great "I am" formula that Jesus used on seven occasions in the Gospel of John. Emphatically, Jesus says using the divine formula, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? "

John doesn't say simply that He will give resurrection and life. He says that He *is* the resurrection and the life. The life He brings is the life of the age to come. It is "eternal life" of which He speaks elsewhere (1:4; 3:15). The man who believes receives His kind of life.

The "I AM" is self-existence. He has life in Himself even as the Father has life in Himself (5:26). He that was alive and was dead, is alive forevermore. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. "I am the resurrection and the life. Only God can say that and it make any sense whatsoever. The resurrection and the life radiate from the one center "I AM. Jesus is the I AM, and as the I AM He is the resurrection and life.

There is no resurrection and no life exist except that they are embodied the person and work of Jesus. When Jesus Christ is absent the resurrection and life are absent. On the other hand, when Christ is present, resurrection and life are present. There simply is no hope of a resurrected body and eternal life without Christ.

If I am to live unto God, I must have Christ, and if I desire to continue in my life unto God I must continue in Christ. I must have Christ. Anything beyond the circle of Christ is death. "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," wrote the apostle Paul.

The presence of Jesus Christ with us means life and resurrection.

If Jesus comes to Lazarus, Lazarus must live. If Jesus comes to you and me, we, too, must come alive and live. Spurgeon said, "He virtually says, 'I am to Lazarus the Power that can make him live again; and I am the Power that can keep him in life. Yea, I am the resurrection and the life. He says to us, 'I am even now the resurrection and the life. "

LAZARUS SHALL LIVE AGAIN

Martha's response to Jesus is a settled, firm conviction. "I have believed and do so now. She said, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, even he who comes into the world (v. 27).

Let's go with Jesus and Mary and Martha down to the cemetery. Some along the way are saying, "Could not

Let's go with Jesus and Mary and Martha down to the cemetery. Some along the way are saying, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?" (v. 37). They believed in preventive medicine. Do they believe in the living God?

They came to the tomb which was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (vv. 39-40).

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go" (vv. 41-44).

Use your imagination for a few moments and see in your mind what was happening at the tomb.

Mary leaned on Martha's shoulder hiding her eyes from the horrid scene. She tried to dampen the sounds of death all about her. Martha held Mary tight and tried to prepare herself for the odor of death. People moved aside so Jesus could come near. Martha could see clearly now the entrance to the tomb. This is where she and her sister had directed the men to bury their brother. They could barely see through the shadows a figure sitting up. He rose from the stone bench and slowly moved toward the entrance of the tomb. Martha's heart pounded as she peeked through her fingers. Mary whispered, "Look!" "Look!" Everyone moved together closer to the opening not wanting to miss a thing. They could now see the white binding cloths, which wrapped the figure of a man. They watched in utter disbelief as the man begin trying to remove the burial wrappings. Instead of the repulsive odor they had expected, the air was filled with the fragrance of myrrh and aloes. Fragrance of heaven filled the air. Jesus saw Lazarus struggling with the wrappings and commanded, "Unbind him! Let him go!" Martha left Mary and grabbed the head napkin and asked, "Lazarus is it really you?" She could see the color of his hair, and his beautiful eyes clearly sparkled. The skin had lost its ashen color of death. His winsome smile teased, "Martha will you stand there all day, or will you get me out of this mess?"

Lazarus had been dead for four days and Jesus came and cried out, "Come out and he came out!" Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Lazarus was far away from the rock cave in which his body was buried. But, wherever he was in the realm of death, he could hear the voice of God, and must obey Him. The calm, clear voice of Jesus reverberated through the regions of the dead, spoke the simple command and he was freed from death. It was no wonder to Jesus that He could give back a life for He is the Resurrection and the Life. One day all who are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth.

Wherever Lazarus was he heard and obeyed the familiar voice of Jesus. Death has no power at all over those who know Him. Christ is the Life and the Resurrection, and the thing that we call death has no power to penetrate into the depths of the relationship between Christ and those who belong to Him.

Lazarus returned from death to a continuation of his mortal life. By contrast those who hear the shout on the last day are called out to resurrection life. But before resurrection life could be imparted to others, Jesus Himself must be raised from the dead. He triumphed over death! Because He lives we, too, shall live.

The omnipotence and the mercy of God are revealed when Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of God. The Father and the Son are equally revealed in the exercise of these attributes of Jesus when He raised Lazarus from the dead. The shining forth of the glory of the Son of God is the shining forth of the Father's own glory. We, too, will be glorified when Jesus returns. Moreover, all of this glory of the Father and the Son is connected with our salvation.

“HE THAT BELIEVES IN ME”

The natural world says, seeing is believing, but the Christian says, believing is seeing. ”

Jesus spoke the life giving word and Lazarus came alive. It was the acting of God's will. The Son is constantly and perfectly one with the Father that He is conscious of continual wielding of the whole divine power. He speaks and it is done. Lazarus, come forth (v. 43).

The central verity of Christianity is that Christ from above is the giver of life to all who put their trust in Him. I am the Resurrection and the Life ”—Do you believe this? ”We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God ”—Do you believe this? ”We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ”—Do you believe this? ”God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish ”—Do you believe this? ”The Son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many ”—Do you believe this? ”Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ”—Do you believe this? ”Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep ”—Do you believe this? ”I go to prepare a place for you ”—Do you believe this? ”Where I am there shall also My servant be ”—Do you believe this? ”So shall we ever be with the Lord ”—Do you believe this? ”I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me shall live even if he dies ”—Do you believe this? ”And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? (John 11:25-26).

That is Biblical Christianity. It is not some theory or philosophy of religion. It is truth that can be believed in for eternity. It is the living, breathing center of Christianity.

The believer in Jesus who undergoes physical death will nevertheless live. Jesus is not announcing a general resurrection on the last day. He is looking forward to His own rising from the dead and affirms that believers in Him, being united to Him by faith, will share His risen life even though they experience bodily death. Our eternal life is a life which knows no death. This mortal life must come to an end. However, eternal life is life forever. Jesus said, because I live, you will live also (Jn. 14:19). This is our blessed hope.

Faith is the only link between the Lord Jesus and our soul. It unites us to Christ. Faith is an empty handed receiver that is a suitable conductor for grace. Faith is nothing apart from that upon which it relies. Faith makes no noise of its own. It receives Christ. It allows the Word of God to speak and it obeys.

Faith hastens to ascribe all the glory of salvation to Jesus Christ alone. Works of self-righteousness seeks to take the credit for what God alone can do for sinners. Faith is always self-forgetting.

Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die, said Jesus. And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand (John 10:28-29).

There is no limit to the power of the resurrection and life in Christ. There are no hopeless cases with Christ who saves by grace through faith alone. We are all dead in trespasses and sins. No one can merit, earn or manipulate God with self-righteousness. It is God alone who can raise the dead spiritually. Yet, if you believe

manipulate God with self-righteousness. It is God alone who can raise the dead spiritually. Yet, if you believe on Christ you shall live. It is the matchless power of Jesus Christ who is the resurrection and life that raises the dead. You get the life of God in your soul, and you shall never die. ”

Alexander Maclaren said it well: It's just this —a man gets from Christ what he trusts Christ to give him, and there is no other way of proving the truth of His promises than by accepting His promises, and then they fulfill themselves. You cannot know that a medicine will cure you till you swallow it. You must first taste before you see that God is good. Faith verifies itself by the experience it brings. ”

JESUS IS THE LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE NOW

The Bible makes it very clear that we are dead by nature, and you and I can never produce life out of death. The last spark of heavenly life is gone from human nature. We are dead in trespasses and sins, and it is vain to seek for life among the dead. Jesus links physical death with the spiritual death which is at work within us even now. We experience the inner death as loneliness, bitterness, emptiness, despair, depression, boredom, hate, pride, malice, resentment, violent temper, restlessness, guilt, lust, fear, despair, etc. How do we overcome? It is through the power of the resurrection. We have the resurrection life now and in eternity.

The life of every Christian is Christ. He is the beginning of life, being the Resurrection: when He comes to us we live. Regeneration is the result of contact with the living Christ: we are begotten again unto living hope by His resurrection from the dead. The life of the Christian in its commencement is in Christ alone. No fragment of the Christian life is from the believer himself, and the continuance of that life is equally the same. Jesus is not only the resurrection to begin with, but He is the life to go on with day unto day.

Your spiritual life, in every breath it draws is in Christ. It is a vital union in Christ and you have no life of your own. For the Christian it must ever be so. I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. He is ever saying to the believer, I am the resurrection and the life. ”

Do we have a tendency to bind our Savior's words to some experience of the past, or some distant future? Martha said, Of course there will be a resurrection and then my brother will rise with all the dead. ”

Do we place the words of Jesus on a shelf out of the way? Do we go to Him saying, Lord, I thank you for that word! I expect You to do what You have said. I know You are always better than I can possibly think You to be. I take You at Your word. This promise is from You for me. I choose to act upon it. ”

How sad that we who profess to believe in Christ never take His words to be true in our hour of need. Lord, I know Lazarus will rise again in the last day. But Christ wants us to treat Him as the resurrection today! We tend to think His promises are a long way off in the distant future. How tragic that we look at God's Word through the wrong end of the telescope. Don't refuse the present blessing because of lack of faith. He has life for you today.

Do we make the promises of God unreal and impersonal? Jesus told Martha, Your brother shall rise again. ” She replied, Yes, he will rise in the resurrection at the last day. He will rise when everyone does. He will come with the rest. Oh, Martha don't miss the point. We can quote the great promises in magnificent style, and yet be in spiritual poverty because we do not trust Him personally for our present hour of need. We have to go to the bank on His promises and cash His check. If you are a child of God all things are yours, and you may help yourself. If you are hungry at His banquet it is for want of faith; if you are thirsty by the brink of this river it is because you do not stoop down and drink. His promises are true. The principles upon which we live Christ every day have not changed. Behold, God is your portion. The Father is your shepherd, the Son of God is your food, and the Spirit of God is your comforter.

is your food, and the Spirit of God is your comforter.

Do you rejoice, and are you glad with the firm hand of a personal faith in the promises of our Savior?

Have you grasped the truth of the personal power of Jesus Christ to give and sustain your life? Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe that? What changes has that truth brought about in your daily life?"

Just like He did for Martha, Jesus with gentle spirit comes to us and proceeds to teach us more about Himself. We need to appropriate more of Jesus! Jesus Christ is the sovereign cure for our problems. Jesus revealed Himself to Martha as the resurrection and life. Here is reason for us to have a clearer hope and substantial faith. He says to you and me, "I am the resurrection and life. Don't miss His claim, "I am, I and I alone, I and no other am the resurrection and the life. "

This is our need today. God's people need to know more of what Jesus is, more of the fullness which it has pleased the Father to place in Him. Why should I limit Him by my lack of faith when God the Father has placed so much fullness of Himself in Jesus?

Let's get into God's Word and spy out all the riches of His grace which lie hidden in Him for you and me. Jesus is the author and giver of life. He maintains life of the believer because it is His life. He was what Martha wanted for her brother. Lord, You are my life.

SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

When you say yes to Jesus Christ then you will get a life which will quicken you out of your spiritual deadness, and fashion you day by day into more of the beauty of His character.

There is nothing worth calling life, except that which comes to a quiet heart submissive and enfranchised through faith in Jesus Christ. "

Jesus said, "He that has the Son has life; he that has not the Son has not life. Again, He that believes . . . though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever lives and believes on Me shall never die. The implication of Jesus' words are very clear: He that believes *not* in Christ, though he were living, yet shall he die, and whosoever lives and believes *not* shall never live. There are no other options. "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? "

When a sinner dead in trespasses and sins believes in Christ a miracle takes place.

When Jesus comes the dead shall live. They always come to life. Every born again believer in Jesus Christ is a miracle because there is a true coming into the human life of the divine, a true supernatural work, the infusion of life which is the Christ-life, into a dead soul.

The whole human race is plunged into death because of sin. Therefore, as Calvin says, "no man will possess life unless he is first risen from the dead. The believer to all eternity cannot die.

There is no greater comfort than having received the life He gives. He that believes on Me, though he die, yet shall he live. "

When you come into a vital life-giving connection with Jesus Christ it is always by faith in Him.

There is only one way any person can have a intimate personal relationship with God and it is by the exercise of his own personal faith in Christ. You and you alone, must answer to it. No one else can do it for you.

When Jesus Christ returns all His redeemed shall come and live with Him.

The body of every believer will be transformed and made glorious like the magnificent body of Jesus Christ. Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

Then our brother shall rise again, and all our dear ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus the Lord will bring with Him, said Spurgeon. Only Jesus Christ gives us hope over death and the grave. When He shall come with trumpet sound all the redeemed shall come with Him.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

When Jesus Christ comes all living believers will be transformed.

We shall all be changed, and there shall be no more death for His people. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. ”

C. H. Spurgeon said, When the Lord comes there will be no more death; we who are alive and remain . . . will undergo a sudden transformation —for flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God — and by that transformation our bodies shall be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. There shall be no more death then. ”

Thank God. That is hope for the grieving widow, the fatherless son, the mother who has lost her daughter. When Christ comes the dead shall live; when Christ comes those that live shall never die. ”

Even now the “dead in Christ” are alive.

They are more alive now than ever before in their existence. Alexander Maclaren wrote:

Those that believe on Jesus Christ appear to die, but yet they live. They are not in the grave, they are forever with the Lord. They are not unconscious, they are with their Lord in Paradise. Death cannot kill a believer, it can only usher him into a freer form of life. Because Jesus lives, His people live. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: those who have departed have not perished.

Death to the wicked is the king of terrors: death to the saints is the end of terrors, the commencement of glory.

Depend upon Christ with all your might just as you now are, and as the Lord lives you shall live, and as Christ reigns you shall reign over sin, and as Christ comes to glory you shall partake of that glory forever and ever.

forever and ever.

From the moment of death on for the believer death is only a restful shadow, not the real death, because Jesus has taken that away. The moment the Christian dies he enters into the presence of the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessed hope. Once you have this real life in you, which is identified with Jesus Christ, just as is the resurrection no death in a real sense can ever touch him. There is no way the believer in Jesus Christ can die forever. We shall in no way die !"Why? Because we have eternal life. We have it because of our connection with Jesus Christ. By this intimate, personal, connection with Him, by the confident trust in Christ we have eternal life and shall never die the second death. Temporal death will come, but not the second death that issues in eternal separation from God.

Another way of stating the issue is by asking the question, where will you spend eternity? If you died and stood before the Lord God today, would you spend eternity with Him? Or, would you spend it eternally separated from Him in hell? Do you have a personal trust in Christ? Physical death is not the important thing. Death which has eternal significance is to be avoided at all costs. The Christian passes through the door we call physical death, but he will not die in the fuller sense. Death for the Christian is the gateway to fellowship with God for all eternity. It means the moment a man puts his trust in Jesus he begins to experience that life of the age to come which cannot be touched by death. "

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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Series: Life of Christ

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