

**John 11:17-45**  
**I AM the Resurrection and the Life**  
Sunday September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

Today we confront death and life issues to learn how to live unbound by sin and fear and death. And it begins with a death, Lazarus' death. He in fact had been dead 4 days, not in a coma, not in some dazed state, but dead, stinking dead!



Today is the 5th message of the 7 I AM statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Today 3 of the 7 "I am" statements come together in this powerful story of death, life and resurrection!

First in vs. 25, **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life."** This is the 5<sup>th</sup> "I AM" statement in the gospel of John. It is closely related to Jesus' I AM statement we will look at in 2 weeks **"I am the way, the truth, and the life."**

The fourth "I am" statement is seen in vs. 28 & 29 (Martha) went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, **"The Teacher is here and is calling for you."** **And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him."**

Here Jesus is seen as the **Good Shepherd who calls his sheep and his sheep know his voice, so they come to him.** Note she was called by someone else to go to the Good Shepherd.

The 2nd "I am" statement is seen in vs. 37, when some of them said, **"Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"** This recalls Jesus saying, **"I am the light of the world."**

All of these I AM statements come together to declare, shout, proclaim as Martha did that Jesus is **"the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."** Together they proclaim that Jesus Christ is God; that there is no other way to God than through Christ who is God.

And besides the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, there is no more powerful sign of this being true than the resurrection of Lazarus!!

The key verses in our story today are 25 and 26, “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet will they live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

In verse 25 when Jesus declares he is the resurrection and the life he declares his power over death. In verse 26 when he declares everyone who lives and believes in him will never die he declares his power over life in this world. Jesus Christ will give us life before death, even abundant life.

Jesus in these verses declares that he is the ruler over this life and the next. Now to believe these things will give us great power to live our lives in this world and live into the next, but we are often as tentative in believing and living these things as Martha & Mary were. We never quite claim and live the full power of our faith.

In verse 39 we see the tentativeness of Martha’s faith, who believed, but not quite believed. In verse 27 Martha had declared that Jesus was “the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.” and earlier in verse 22 she had also said, “But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.”

But in verse 39 the tentativeness of her faith in Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life really comes out, for she says after Jesus asked the stone to be rolled away from Lazarus’ tomb, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.”

And how many times have we said,  
“Yes, we believe, but...  
Yes, we will give totally of our resources and lives to you, but...,  
Yes, we will follow, but...  
Yes, we will be freed from that sin or addiction, but...  
No, I won’t be afraid, but...

Through our tentativeness we fail to grab the power of the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection and the Life, and so continue to live in fear and captivity to sin.

Yes, Lazarus would have been stinking in the tomb... nothing like that smell. Shortly after we were married my wife and I lived in a rat-infested duplex. One Sunday morning before church I and our two dogs dispatched a rather large rat on the living room floor as Deede danced on the piano bench.

So, I bought some of the deadliest rat poison I could find. It said to only put out 10 grains of poison at a time. I did that not thinking about where that rat would die, which was in the wall of our duplex closet. For about 4 months we could not open the downstairs closet door. The stench was overpowering.

We say we believe that Jesus has the power to raise us from the dead, but we act as if the stench of death would overpower what Jesus would offer; and though he knocks at the door of our heart we will not open it preferring the stench of death to the breath of life.

Death, and the realities of death, confront us and often our faith fails. We lose a loved one, or suffer loss of something important, and so we reproach God as Mary and Martha reproached Jesus, for both were polite, but pointed when they said, "**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**" And if you know the beginning of the story you would know that Jesus had been invited to show up earlier, but didn't.

In the following video clip, you will hear this same reproach when Julie says to her husband Smith, "You go to your God and you fix this." Some things in this world will not be fixed,... and Jesus weeps.

### **ROLL CLIPP "LOSING A CHILD, FINDING FAITH"**

Heartbreaking evil—the death of a child—but death in general is an evil. To overcome it and conquer it is why Jesus came to earth. It is

why he was crucified and rose again. It is why he is the Resurrection and the Life!! Because death is evil!!!



The evil and the pain of death that we all face is why Jesus was, as it says, “**greatly disturbed in spirit, or deeply moved.**” It is why **Jesus wept!**



Death is an evil, the final evil to be overcome that separates us from loved ones on earth and seemingly can separate us from a relationship with God. God knows our sorrow. God knows our pain. Jesus wept!!!

Now we can live our lives in the fear of death. We can live our lives in doubt like Martha, “Lord, there will be a stench!” Or we can live our life in Life, the Life who is Jesus Christ.

In this world we are all in bondage to death and sin. Dr. Barclay writes this, “The last words of Edward the Confessor were: ‘Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessing of the Lord in the land of the living.’”

We call this world *the land of the living*; but it would in fact be more correct to call it *the land of the dying*. Through Jesus Christ, we know that we are journeying not to the sunset, but to the sunrise; we know, as the writer Mary Webb put it, that death is a gate on the skyline.” Barkley John

Vol. 2 p. 110



But death is still an evil no matter how we wrap it.

So how do we live in the face of Death? How do we, the dying, for we are all moving on towards death, how do we live into “the resurrection and the life” in this life?

13 years ago I had cancer surgery. I learned in the subsequent years to face death day by day, moment by moment. Oh, I don't dwell on death. Because I learned that fear, fear of the cancer reoccurring, fear of illness, fear of death, that fear sucked the life out of my life.

I learned that this moment, that we in this room share, is the only moment I truly have, that you truly have. So, I try to make the best of each moment of life knowing that, though, I was once saved from cancer I know death in some form is coming for this life. And I live fully alive giving all I can give to Christ in service to others.

We can live in fear, or we can live in faith; and use the moments, the few moments God has given us to love and serve others. We can hide in the shadows, or live in the light of Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

I wonder about Lazarus. He died, and his soul went to heaven. Did he resent coming back to earth? Or did he live out his life in a wild abandonment to his faith in the service of others knowing that without a doubt where he was going for he had already been there before? I believe the later for he knew the One who gave life and life abundantly.

Now I believe that there are people here today that are already dead, because of the bondage in which they live. Like Lazarus they are awaiting a resurrection in this life. They are bound up by fear of death, fear of poverty, fear of sickness, fear of living a meaningless life. And I know simply because of the percentages in any population that others must be in bondage to addictions to drugs, alcohol, porn, gambling.

I don't know your name only God does. But you are bound by sin of some sort. We all are the dying, but the already dead sit among us, because of their fears and bondage to sin.

If this is you, I know you think that you and your life stinks, just like Lazarus's dead body! You smile and show up, and just pray that no one sees through the smiles and handshakes and hugs; and takes a whiff of what's within.

You probably think that you stink so bad you need to get cleaned up before Jesus would resurrect you and give you life, new life.

No, think of this,... stench and all Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb. Jesus raised Lazarus's stinking corpse to life! Jesus comes to you before you are cleaned up, unbound and even when you smell of sin, and death, and maybe even booze and drugs. You don't have to be perfumed and deodorized to be raised by the Resurrection and the Life. You simple must believe and put your whole trust in him.

Now this "I AM" series is based on the belief that when we know who God is through Christ we will know who we are and what we need to do. Now you and I won't necessarily raise the physically dead like Jesus did for Lazarus, though, I have heard testimony of those who have. But we are given the power to raise the spiritually dead in this world by introducing them to Jesus: The Resurrection and the Life.

We, being in Jesus image, can lead ourselves and others to a resurrection in this life. We through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's Spirit, can be released from the things that hold us in fear: a living death. We can be released from the things that bind us, like Lazarus was unbound from the cloth when he was raised from the dead.

Jesus said to them and to us today, "Unbind him (them) and let him go."

Hear now these most freeing of all words for those bound by life, sin, death and the devil. (Listen! Listen closely!!)

**"In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!"**

Say it with me and claim it by saying, **"In the name of Jesus Christ I am forgiven!"** Share those words of freedom with others.

I end most of my messages with two questions: What is God saying to you and what are you going to do? Jesus answered the first question today when he said,

“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet will they live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

I end with Jesus question: “Do you believe this?”

In his name, amen.