



A Resurrection Story

Message Notes, March 27, 2016

John 11:1-144

He is risen. He is risen indeed! "Whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:26). Jesus' question to Martha looms large before us: "**Do you believe this?**"

Easter! Spring is bursting forth. New life is all around us. We celebrate the day with joyous song, bold declarations, special gatherings – food, laughter, life! What a joyful day for Christ-followers. But Jesus' question remains: Do you believe this? Do you *really* believe this – that, *in Him*, light shines into darkness, joy invades despair, peace assuages pain, and life swallows death. Not just on Easter Sunday, and not just after we die and go to heaven, but *now*, in our everyday lives – He is risen indeed!

The resurrection story of Lazarus highlights the cosmic resurrection story of Jesus. In the Lazarus story Jesus declares that He is the resurrection and the life (and his raising of Lazarus validates this claim), in the Easter resurrection story He achieves and fulfills this eternal identity.

Read John 11:1-44

- Notice Jesus' various interactions and conversations with others.
- Notice the different postures toward Jesus (the disciples, Martha, Mary, the crowd).
- What emotions are at work in these different characters?
- How does Jesus respond to each? What does he say? What emotions does he express?

As we ponder this passage, we see the heart and hand of Jesus (of God):

1. **He waits.** The family sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick, but he did not come straightway; he waited 2 days. "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." (Lazarus was dead four days when Jesus arrived.) When Jesus finally said, "Let us go to him," the disciples were concerned about returning. Why?
2. **He speaks hope.** "Your brother will rise again. ... I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." This is the true anchor of our hope. That Jesus has secured for us an unshakable and eternal salvation. Our penalty is paid. Our sins are forgiven. We will enjoy eternal union with Him (and it begins now) for all who believe. Do you believe this?
3. **He sees our turmoil and pain.** Jesus saw Martha and Mary (vv. 20, 33), not just with his eyes but with his heart. He saw their grief, their sorrow, their anguish (esp. with Mary). Jesus saw them and he "was deeply moved." The Greek word here is that for the snort of a fiery stallion – eyes blazing, nostrils flaring. Once again, Jesus feels angry (as in the temple), not with the women, but over the devastating impact of death. He's stirred up, ready to do battle with this enemy.
4. **He feels our turmoil and pain.** "He was deeply moved and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' When he saw, Jesus wept." He knew what was about to happen. He knew he would raise Lazarus. Why his weeping? He wept *with* them.
5. **He acted.** With that bold, nostrils flaring, ready-to-do-battle-with-death authority, He said, "Take away the stone ... Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus did!



So the end of the story was redeeming, joyous, and victorious, but along the way, Martha, Mary, the mourners, did not know what was going to happen. They were left to walk through their confusion, sorrow, and anguish. This was their opportunity to learn deeply, in a transforming way, to trust Him. Jesus had a plan, but he did not reveal it completely. They had to trust him.

We've all had Lazarus moments when darkness hovered, fear or despair set in, hope seemed lost, pain and anguish consumed us. We may have cried out like the sisters – "Lord if only you had _____." or "Why didn't you _____?"

In his pursuit to have us as eternal lovers, God has intentionally made us free (so love will be real), but this freedom has left room for rejection and rebellion, which we often choose. This is sin. Our own sins and the sins of others bring brokenness, pain and suffering into our lives. But God has a plan. He has already accomplished it in Jesus, in the Easter story!

Many times, God's seeing, feeling and acting leads to transformed circumstances, resurrections right here and now! But sometimes they do not. Still, we have an unshakable, eternal hope, no matter what unfolds in this life. We can trust Jesus *now* with whatever circumstances come. He sees; He feels; He is present. He will deliver or sustain us, and in the very end, He *will* make all things right. **He is risen indeed!**

Are you facing a painful, tumultuous Lazarus moment in your life right now? How does this message help you to turn to Jesus and trust him in this?

Have you had a past Lazarus experience that left you confused, disillusioned, or bitter? How does this message help you bring this to Jesus and renew your trust in Him?