

Doctrine of Christ

I Am the Resurrection

1. After the death of Lazarus, Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha where He declared that He was the resurrection.
 - *John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

2. The context for this statement begins with the illness of Lazarus. A notice was sent to Jesus that the one whom He loved was sick.
 - *John 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

3. The Lord's response to the news was encouraging. Then, Jesus did something that was not expected. He delayed going to the home of His friend, whom He loved, for two days.
 - *John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. 8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?*

4. Jesus did not do the expected. He did not do what Mary and Martha expected Him to do. Jesus did not do what His disciples expected Him to do, and that was to stay away from Judea. Addressing the disciples first, Jesus explained why He would return to Judea.
 - *John 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*

5. Upon hearing the concern of His disciples, Jesus used the moment to teach a spiritual truth. Simply enough, there was work to do, and so the work must begin immediately.

6. It was no doubt early in the morning when Jesus told His disciples they would return to Judea, because the practical illustration Jesus used was the twelve hours of work allowed in the day by the light of the sun. Jesus said that it is better to walk, and work, in the day, because in the night, a person might stumble.

7. While the disciples were meditating on the spiritual message the Lord had concerning walking, and working, in the light, Jesus said to them something else they did not fully comprehend. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

8. By calling Lazarus, “our friend”, Jesus was conveying an important concept. Our friends should be the friends of Jesus.

Special Note.

Far too many Christians are unduly influenced by people who are not friends of Jesus. A non-Christian parent will try to influence the children not to go to Sunday School or Church. A non-Christian friend will often influence a Christian not to walk with the Lord and engage in spiritual work.

9. Because the disciples did not understand the words of Jesus, they said something that made perfect sense to them. If Lazarus was sleeping, he should do well to rest.

- *John 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*

10. However, Jesus was not speaking about physical rest for their friend Lazarus. The Lord was speaking of His death. There is a spiritual language of the heart that every Christian must learn in order to be spiritually discerning.

- *Jesus 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

11. While the disciples contemplated the force of that shocking statement, Jesus continued to speak in cryptic, but spiritual language, by saying He was glad (chairo), Jesus said He was cheerful, or calmly happy, He was not there at the death of their friend Lazarus.

- *John 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.*

From a human perspective, the disciples might have interpreted the words of Jesus to mean that He was glad He was not present to see the painful demise of a beloved friends.

From a divine perspective, what Jesus meant was, “I am glad I was not there, for your sake, because, you have seen nothing yet of the glory that is soon to come when I bring Lazarus back from the dead.”

A lesson is learned. Every event in life can be viewed from either a human, or a divine perspective. The difference will make the heart sad, or glad.

12. Setting aside what Jesus might have meant by saying He was glad, the disciples did comprehend the Lord’s determination to return to Judea.

13. The Lord said with firmness, “*let us go unto him.*” Hearing that, Thomas thought Jesus meant that they would all return to Judea in order to die.

- *John 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

14. It could not have been a happy journey the disciples of Jesus were making with their Master. They were in a state of emotional shock upon hearing that their friend, who they thought was sick, and was resting, was dead. They were perplexed by the decision of Jesus to return to harm's way. They were convinced they too were going to suffer arrest, and die. To go to Bethany was to go near Jerusalem, the source of much hostility to the public ministry of Christ. To their eternal credit, the disciples went to Judea with Jesus.

- *John 11:17 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: 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

15. Upon arriving at the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples found that Lazarus had been dead for four days. In the Jewish culture, that notation by John is significant. Many Jews at this time in history believed that when a person died, their spirit would return to visit the body until the fourth day. After that, even the most hopeful Jew relinquished any hope the body might revive. Lazarus was dead. He had been dead for four days, and the corruption was settling in.

Jesus and His disciples also found many people gathered who had come to comfort Martha. However, Martha was not ready to be comforted. There was bitterness in her heart toward Jesus. *“Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”*

16. Martha's statement was not fair, or true. She did not know what the Lord would have allowed. She did not know what God was willing to do under different circumstances. It is not wise to speak with certainty about things that are beyond our control. Much anger is generated when something is postulated, and then asserted as if that is the reality.

17. Martha is not to be commended for her assertion. It was presumptuous, and a public rebuke of the Lord of glory. It was a shameful comment because of something else. Martha did not know what the Lord would do. She did not foresee the resurrection of her brother. Had Martha said, “Lord, I am so glad you are here. I believe that, even though my brother has died, you are able to raise Him now, and I humbly ask you to do that.” Had Martha expressed her faith in the future, then the moment would reflect her spiritual maturity. When the Lord blesses, it is easy to have faith. It is when the goodness of God is veiled that spiritual maturity is tested.

18. With that gentle rebuke against Martha, her next expression is encouraging.

- *John 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

19. If these words express hope that Jesus would do something special, then the faith of Martha is vindicated. Sometimes, after an angry outburst, the heart wants to make amends for being too harsh.

20. There is no reason to believe that Martha expected an immediate resurrection miracle, for her interaction with Jesus does not indicate that, though her heart must have been comforted with the promise of Jesus.
- *John 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.*
21. Perhaps still on an emotional roller coaster, Martha responded.
- *John 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*
22. As a rule, people do not like to be told something they already know very well. It appears to be condescending. Also, people do not like meaningless platitudes, especially in times of emotional duress and stress.
23. We do not know the tone of Martha's response to Jesus, whether it was an affirmation of her own faith, or an irritation that Jesus would state what a faithful Jew already believed, namely, there is to be a bodily resurrection of the dead at the last day.
24. In her belief, Martha was conservative. Not everyone in Israel believed in a future resurrection. The Pharisees did, but the Sadducees rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.
25. What is certain is that Martha was not looking for an immediate resurrection. She did have faith in a future resurrection on the last day.
26. The response of Jesus to Martha's statement is one of the grandest statements every uttered.
- *John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...*
27. Jesus does not say, "I Am the One who will raise Lazarus." Jesus says something far more profound. Jesus says, "I Am the resurrection, and the life."
28. Jesus is the One who not only gives light to the world, He is the Light of the world. Jesus not only helps people through the door to safety, and eternal life, He is the Door. Jesus not only gives life, He is Life. Jesus not only raises people from the dead, He is the resurrection.
29. In the culture of the day, if something was closely associated with a particular person, that person could, in terms of speech patterns, be identified with whatever they were associated with. For example, God is love. Therefore, love is God.
- *1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

30. In context, Jesus is so united with power, and the power over death, that it could be said He is the resurrection.
31. By affirming He is the resurrection, Jesus was definitively answering the question of antiquity uttered by Job. “If a man dies, shall he live again?”
- *Job 14:14 If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*
32. Job’s question has been in the mind of every human being since death was first experienced. In every culture, tribe, and civilization, people speculate about death and the afterlife.
33. People want to know, “When I die, is that the end?” People are anxious to know if the totality of personal existence is summed up between the two points of birth, and death. Or, is there something more?
34. For most people, life is so precious, there beats within the heart a hope that there will be life beyond the grave.
35. When Plato wrote about the death of Socrates, he gave a philosophical argument for the immortality of the soul.
36. There is an argument for life after death borrowed from the cyclical character seen in nature. Something is born, it grows to maturity, it lives, it dies, it becomes the source for new life. When something dies it becomes a metamorphosis for another way of living.
37. Paul spoke about different kinds of life, and different bodies for each life. There is a body suited for the spirit world.
38. The ancient Egyptians, long before the Greeks, believed that the soul, or Ba, survived death of the physical body. An image from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* conveys the idea of the transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation.
39. The greatest hope that humans have is found in the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ.
40. The resurrection of Jesus is the first among the resurrection of many. Jesus was resurrected for us, that we might also participate in His life.
41. One of the reasons why first century Christians were so willing to undergo martyrdom, is because they believed in the resurrection of Jesus. They were convinced the grave was not the final dimension.
42. Instead of death being the bitter victory for Satan, death is an entrance into eternal life. The victory belongs to Christ.
- *1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

43. Death has been defeated. Death, for the Christian, is a transition to a better environment. All of this comes down, not to a debate, but to a person. The only question is, “Do you believe?”
44. “Do you believe Jesus when He says, ‘he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...?’”
45. At first, these words sound contradictory. Jesus said that a dead person can live. Then He said that a person who believes in Him shall never die.
46. What Jesus is saying is that there is a sense in which people who believe in Him never die. In another sense people do die. Physically people die. People must prepare to meet God.
47. In another sense, the soul that trusts in Jesus shall never die the death of the wicked which is eternal separation from God.
48. The “zoe”, or the life which Jesus gives to His people begins the moment faith is born in the heart. Zoe life cannot be killed by death. Physical death cannot destroy the life that Christ puts into the believer.
49. The day that the body of a believer dies, is not the day that self dies. That is the day a person becomes more conscious of reality. That is why Paul was ambivalent about living, and dying.
- *Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*
50. As Jesus was comforting Martha, He was conveying to her that He was not just talking about a future resurrection. She was talking to the One who was the resurrection.
51. Then, Jesus asked Martha a question.
- *John 11:26... Believest thou this?*

Special Note.

Since the Garden of Eden, God has asked His creation to believe Him. Lucifer, and many angels did not believe God, and were cast out of heaven. Adam and Eve stopped believing God, and ate of the forbidden fruit. Jesus asked people to believe in Him, and for this reason. A person’s honor is bound up in what they say. The character of God cannot be divorced from His Word. If He has spoken, it must be true. Sin has destroyed the soul of man, reflected in the constant perversion of individuals.

An internet headline for April 16, 2016 read, “My Husband is now My Wife”. The militant homosexual community finds new ways to express its agenda. This is done because life, and that more abundantly, is pursued outside of Christ. A life without God is pursued because people do not believe the Lord. In grace, the Holy Spirit changes the hearts of many who do believe in Jesus. Martha was one such person.

- *John 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*
- 52.** Martha said, “Yes, Lord, I do believe.” With that she turned, and went into the house to get Mary. Her private conversation with Jesus, overheard by the disciples, was finished. Now, others must hear the good news. Martha must find Mary.
- *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.*
- 53.** When Mary came to Jesus, she bowed before Him in honor, only to make the same charge as Martha had made.
- *John 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*
- 54.** Rather than review what He had said to Martha, Jesus, being grieved in His own spirit, simply asked where the body was laid. Then, Jesus wept.
- 55.** Some of the people who had come to comfort the sisters noticed the tears of Jesus.
- *John 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*
- 56.** Others wondered out loud why Jesus had not used His known healing powers to keep Lazarus from dying.
- *John 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*
- 57.** Finally, the procession arrived at the cave where Lazarus was buried. A stone had been rolled over the entrance. Jesus stood before the grave site, and said, “Take ye away the stone”, only to hear the voice of doubt from Martha. She did not fully understand after all what Jesus had been saying.
- *John 11:39, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*
- 58.** The physical decay of Lazarus speaks of the spiritual decay of every unbeliever who is dead in trespasses and sin. Such a person, in the sight of God, “stinketh”. Nevertheless, God still works a work of grace in the soul of those who are offensive to Him.
- 59.** Jesus answered Martha’s protest with a gentle rebuke.
- *John 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

60. With those words, the debate was over, and there was obedience. The stone was removed, and then Jesus offered a prayer.

- *John 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

61. After He had finished praying, Jesus cried with a loud voice, and spoke to Lazarus, a man four days dead.

- *John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

62. The physical resurrection of Lazarus is a perfect illustration of the spiritual resurrection of every soul. Salvation is personal. Salvation is a sovereign act of God. Salvation is apart from human merit, or ability. Regeneration is the mighty work of the Holy Spirit. Only God can create life. Only God can recreate life. Salvation is by divine selection. Salvation is God showing mercy to one, but not to all without exception. Only Lazarus was raised from the dead. Life is created, and recreated, by the power of the divine call. By His word all that is created is.

63. The same way Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come forth”, is the same way He created the universe. He spoke, and it was done.

- *John 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

64. The result of the miracle of Jesus was that people believed.

- *John 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

65. The people had a right to be astonished, because Jesus has the key, the power to unlock the grave.

- *Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*
- *Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

66. “Do you believe?”