

Introduction: This is the first Sunday of Lent. Lent is when Christ's Church seeks to become more like Him through contemplation, confession and soul-searching. *** This year Lent spans three months beginning on the last Sunday of February and ending with Palm Sunday on the first Sunday of April. The four Sundays in March will get at the essence of Lent. We will see the humility of Jesus, how one of His closest apostles denied Him, His declaration of the delay of His glorious Kingdom, and how His people came together to reject Him. As we consider these truths, we must remember what Jesus said about students becoming like their Teacher and servants like their Master (Matthew 10:24-25). So, starting next week we will be exhorted to seek God in order to humble ourselves, accept being denied what we desire and the delay of the realization of our dreams, and even be prepared for a time when many, if not most, people will reject us. *** But today, before we get to the hard teaching of sharing in Christ's sufferings and death, we begin by considering the power of Jesus as He demonstrates He is the conqueror of death. All who live by the faith of Him will live even though they die; and, by His Spirit, The Covenant God renews the life of His creatures who have expired. *** This is our incentive to accept the self-denial Jesus requires of us. *** Now let's examine The Life Jesus says He IS.

I. Lazarus dies before Jesus reaches him, but Jesus says Lazarus will rise because: I AM the Resurrection and The Life.

(John 11:1-27)

- A. Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that their brother whom He loves, Lazarus, is sick; and Jesus says death will not have the last word, even though Lazarus died. *(Verses 1-15)*
1. Lazarus from Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha, her sister, is being sick. *(Verse 1)*
Four Names: Lazarus (Hebrew – Eleazer) means ‘God helps’, Bethany – ‘house of affliction’, Mary – ‘their rebellion’ and Martha – ‘she (is) rebellious’. Typically, sisters’ names would share a root word.
 2. Mary was being the one who had anointed The Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, of whose brother Lazarus was being sick. *(Verse 2)*
Anoint: Mary’s anointing of Jesus came a little later, just before Jesus entered Jerusalem to be crucified (John 12:1-3, 12-19).
 3. Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, ‘Lord, behold! He whom Thou are loving is being sick. *(Verse 3)*
Lazarus loved: Jesus loved Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha.
 4. When having heard, Jesus said, ‘This sickness is not being unto death; but, on behalf of The Glory of God, that may be glorified The Son of God through it’. *(Verse 4)*
Sickness to God’s Glory: Although Lazarus would die before Jesus arrived in Bethany, God and Jesus would be glorified when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.
 5. [Jesus loved all three siblings, but stayed for two days.] Then He exhorts His disciples, ‘Let us go to Judea again’; and they are saying to Him, ‘Great One, now the Jews have been seeking to stone Thee, and again Thou are going there?’; Jesus replied, ‘Not indeed twelve hours in the day? If anyone may be walking in the day, not he is stumbling because the light of this world he is seeing; but, if a man may be walking in the night he is stumbling’. *(Verses 5-10)*
Dialogue: Jesus exhorts they go to Judea together, but the disciples question if Jesus will be safe there.
Day: He says as long as they are in the light of day they will not stumble. Jesus told Nikodemus evil men prefer darkness (John 3:19-20). With this Jesus affirmed wisdom straight from the mouth of Job (24:13-17).
 6. Jesus informs them Lazarus has died, but uses a metaphor of sleep; He concludes, ‘I am glad for your sakes so you may believe because I was not being there, but let us be going to him. *(Verses 11-15)*
Lazarus is dead: Jesus delayed His arrival in Bethany until He knew that Lazarus was dead.
Goal: His intention was that many would believe after He did a miracle to The Glory of God.
- B. Jesus discovers Lazarus has been four days in the grave, then Martha meets Him saying He could have cured her brother, He asks her if she believes: ‘I AM The Resurrection and The Life’. *(Verses 16-27)*
Setting: Then Thomas (the twin) says to his fellow disciples, ‘Let’s also go that we may die with Him’; when Jesus came, He found Lazarus in the grave four days (Bethany was two miles from Jerusalem) and many Jews came to comfort Mary and Martha concerning their brother. *(Verses 16-19)*
1. Martha, as soon as she heard Jesus is coming, met Him (but Mary in the house was sitting), then Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord! If Thou were being here, not may have died my brother; but also now, I have known that whatsoever Thou may ask of God, He will give to Thee – God!’ *(Verses 20-22)*
Martha’s faith: Martha has two-fold faith: If Jesus was with them when Lazarus was sick, He would have healed their brother AND she fully knows that whatever He asks of God, God will give it to Him.
 2. He is saying to her, Jesus, ‘He will rise again – the brother of thee’; she is saying to Him, Martha, ‘I have know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the Last Day’. *(Verses 23-24)*
Last day: Her hope in her brother living again is more for the future, not for today.
 3. He said to her, Jesus. ‘I AM The Resurrection and The Life; he believing in Me, though he may be dead, he will live; and, each one living and believing in Me may in no way ever die into eternity. *(Verses 25-26a)*
I AM: This is Jesus’ fifth ‘I AM’ statement. He is God AND anyone living and believing in Him as a way of life will not experience the death of separation from God – forever! Let us praise God for Jesus being eternally The Resurrection and The Life.

Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life

4. ‘Are thou (Martha) believing this? She is saying to Him, ‘I, even I, have fully believed that Thou are being The Messiah (Anointed), The Son of The God, Who into the world is coming’. *(Verses 26b-27)*
Confesses Christ: She confesses Jesus as God’s Anointed, Messiah in Hebrew, Christ in Greek.

II. Jesus comes to the grave, weeps, reminds Martha she will see God's Glory, and calls Lazarus to life; He fulfills the words of a creation Psalm. (John 11:28-45; Psalm 104:27-30)

- A. Jesus comes to the grave and weeps; detractors question Him, then He orders the stone be removed, Martha says he stinks now and Jesus says she will see God's Glory. (John 11:28-40)

Gap: Martha tells Mary The Master is calling her; hearing, she rises quickly, coming to Him; but Jesus was where Martha met Him; the Jews being with her, comforting her, having seen Mary rise quickly and go away followed her, thinking she goes to the grave to weep; Mary falls at Jesus' feet saying what Martha said; then, Jesus groaned in the spirit and is troubled. (Verses 28-34)

1. He wept, Jesus. (Verse 35)

Great compassion: Jesus shows great compassion for Mary and Martha and sadness over Lazarus.

2. The Jews were saying, 'Behold! How He was loving him'; but some said, 'Not was he being able, this one who opened the eyes of the blind, that to have done, even this (one), that he may not have died?' (Verses 36-37)

Detractors: These detractors are questioning what they see as inconsistencies in Jesus. Why heal a blind stranger and allow a well-loved friend to die?

3. Therefore, Jesus again is groaning in Himself, coming to the grave (memorial) being but a cave, and a stone was lying on it, and Jesus is saying, 'Y'all must take away the stone'. (Verses 38-39a)

Grief revisited: Now Jesus groans with grief at detractors' un-belief. We must know un-belief grieves Jesus as much as death, because they are two sides of the same coin – un-belief leaves people dead. Only faith brings from death to life.

First step: As a first step to bringing Lazarus to life, He asks that the stone of the grave be removed.

4. Martha, the sister of the one who had died, says, 'Lord! Now he is stinking, because the fourth day (he) is being (dead)'; Jesus says, 'Said I not, if thou may have believed, thou will see The Glory of God'. (Verses 39b-40)

Martha's reality check: By the fourth day, even devout Jews knew a corpse is decomposing. She exclaims this to Jesus!

Jesus reminds: Jesus asks Martha to keep believing, promising she will see God's Glory in Him – The Resurrection and The Life! May we all be motivated because Jesus conquered death in order for us to persist in trials with the joy that comes from hope in Him.

Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life

- B. After the stone is removed, Jesus prays and calls Lazarus out of the grave, as he comes out bound, Jesus commands he be loosed to go his way, and many Jews believe on Jesus. (John 11:41-45)

Prayer: They took away the stone, Jesus lifted His eyes and said, 'Father! I thank Thee that Thou heard Me. I say this for the people that they may believe that Thou sent Me. (Verses 41-42; see Luke 6:12-16; Matthew 14:22-25; 26:36-46)

1. This having spoken, in a voice great He called out, 'Lazarus, come out!' (Verse 43)

Calls Lazarus: After praying, He emphatically calls Lazarus out of his memorial grave.

2. He came out, the one who had been dead, had been bound feet and hands; and his face, facecloth had been wrapped; He is saying to them Jesus, 'Y'all must loose him, and y'all must let him go (his way)'. (Verse 44)

Lazarus comes out: Lazarus comes out of his grave under his own power, if awkwardly, because of all his grave-clothes.

Jesus looses him to go: Jesus sets Lazarus (whom God has now miraculously helped) free to live a new life of service for Him because The Resurrection and The Life has raised him from the dead!

Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life

Many believe: Finally, John was inspired to write that many Jews, having seen what Jesus did, believed in Him. (Verse 45)

This is why Jesus came: That people may believe in Him and have life in His Name. (John 20:31)

- C. God feeds His creation until He takes away their breath; but, when He sends His Spirit, they are renewed. (Psalm 104:27-30)

1. These all to Thee wait / to give them food in its time // Thou will give to them, they will gather /

Thou will open Thy hand, they will be satisfied with good. (Verses 27-28)

Wait: All creatures wait for The Covenant God to provide for them.

Food: Specifically, each gets the food it needs when it needs food.

Open hand: When Yahweh, The Creator-Covenant God, opens His hand to them they are all satisfied with what is good for them.

2. Thou will hide Thy face, they will be dismayed / Thou will take away their breath, they will die / and to their dust they will return. (Verse 29)

Die into dust: The Covenant God told Adam he would return to the dust from which he was made (Genesis 3:19), and Moses said God turned men back to dust (Psalm 90:3). They had been condemned to wander for forty years (Numbers 14:26-35).

3. Thou will send forth Thy Spirit, they will be created / and Thou will renew the face of the ground. (Verse 30)

Spirit renews: God gives His Spirit to His creation that it may be renewed (Romans 8:19-21).

The Spirit of Yahweh renews all creation

Conclusion: Through Lazarus, the Jesus-loved brother of Mary and Martha, Jesus demonstrates that He IS The Resurrection and The Life by raising Lazarus from the dead, then setting him free to go his way (in God's will).

The result was many believed in Jesus as The One who renews life.

Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life