

“Life only comes through Jesus.”

NKJ John 11:17 So when Jesus came, He found that he (Lazarus) had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. 19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around 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 was sitting in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

INTRO

Some of you may have gone to the doctor before, where you had your vital signs checked. The doctors and nurses check things like blood pressure and oxygen level to determine your health status. If we did this with everyone here we are bound to get different results. Should we judge our life status on these criteria? Well, Jesus addresses this question – How do I know my life status? He shows us that we should not be looking at ourselves. We can only answer this question by looking to Jesus and what He says and what He did. We should all get the same results – Life only comes through Jesus.

I. Life for Lazarus that came to an end.

The coming cross casts its shadow from Calvary. Upon returning here to Judea, Jesus has His face set for Jerusalem and the cross. He will not again leave this country until His final mission is accomplished. Jesus' last visit to Judea was found in chapter 10 of John. That last encounter found Jesus accused by the Jews of blasphemy for claiming to be equal with God. Therefore even His

disciples did not understand why He would so soon return to this hostile country, the country where on their last visit, the Jews tried to stone Him. Why would Jesus go back?

Notice in v.18 John's eyewitness account on the proximity to Jerusalem. What was about to take place would have a two-fold effect: It would lead many to believe on Him as the only source of life, as the Christ, the King, the one who soon ride in to Jerusalem on Palm branches, being hailed as the Messiah. Yet it would also mark Him as a wanted man, a man the chief priests and Pharisees could no longer tolerate, a man who threatened their power, a man who must die.

Knowing all this, Jesus returns to Judea and finds Lazarus clearly dead. Four days in the tomb left no doubt. For those present, it appears as though Jesus has come too late. As Martha says here and Mary will later reiterate, "If only You had been here." But for Jesus it was not too late to bring Lazarus back from the dead – life only comes through Jesus.

Following out text we find Jesus going to the tomb of Lazarus and with a word of His mouth Jesus gives life to Lazarus. Yet the physical life that Jesus gave to Lazarus was a life like you and I are living, a life in this world, a life subject to sin. It was a life that we presume ended in death just like all of us can expect.

Was the raising of Lazarus from the dead the life that Jesus had come to bring? Is "the life" that Jesus speaks of in verse 25 something that we can see? Is it something composed of the things of this world? The life given to Lazarus was a precursor. It was a sign of a greater resurrection that comes through Jesus.

The life given to Lazarus was a public declaration of who Jesus is and what power He has. This resurrection was to show us that this is the Messiah, the One who will one day raise all of our bodies from death.

II. Life for all believers that will never end.

The life that comes through Jesus is more than the externals. The world looks at you from the outside. The world doesn't see results, they only see Christians throughout the centuries dieing like everyone else. But they don't understand that the life Jesus brings is only known through faith. It cannot be seen. It is life for the believer that will never end.

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.

When Jesus tells Martha that her brother will rise again, she looks everywhere but right in front of her. She looks ahead to a future expectation instead of laying hold of the present reality. The resurrection and the life was standing right in front of her.

How often is this the case with us too? We may tend to look everywhere else, but not see what is right in front of us. When we struggle with different difficulties in our life, where do we look? It reminds me, to a much lesser degree, of when I get up to go to the fridge. – I will go, open the door, get distracted by something and either end up staring blankly or grab the wrong thing. And usually what I went there for was right in front of me.

Well, maybe every once and a while we need to ask ourselves, "what did I come to Jesus for?" Jesus points us too from a future expectation to a present reality. Not just a life to come, life right now. Rather than can Jesus fix this problem, Jesus is the solution right now. When we look at these verses we too should see the resurrection and the life standing right in front of us.

This present reality of Jesus should cause the veil of problems that this world poses to fade away and the present reality of eternal life to be revealed. Jesus changes our perspective. This doesn't mean that problems will cease to exist in our lives, rather it means that we can get through, bear down, be lifted up, overcome. We know that Jesus has given us a life that transcends this earthly life. It is not a life that exists in the externals, it exists in the internals, Life through Jesus only is known through faith.

John 5:24 " Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Jesus declares this truth to you as a present reality. "He who believes ... has everlasting life ... has passed from death into life." This is not something that will happen for you, it is something that has already happened. Again, Jesus is definitely talking about more than just physical matters.

I found a few the definitions for "life" on the internet: " ... the condition that distinguishes organisms from inorganic objects and dead organisms." Life is rightly defined by comparison – comparison with death. We know we are living by comparing our condition with what is dead.

So what is the death of which Jesus speaks? Some call death a separation. And the death from which we have passed into life was a spiritual death - a separation from God. This is the state of everyone born into this world – separated from God by sin. This separation caused by sin means we are unable to please God in any way. It means we can never love God above all things. It means we can never love each other the way the way that we should.

But if life is rightly defined by comparison to death, the opposite of this separation known as death, is a union known as life. So what is it that ends this separation? What is it that unites us with God? Where does true life come from? Jesus – the resurrection and the life. Jesus is your present reality of life – spiritual life with the Father, through the union of Jesus Christ. Just as a bridge connects two pieces of land together, so also Jesus connects you with God. Jesus bridges the gulf of death so you pass over into life. Unfortunately it is our naturally sinful way of thinking is to think that we can jump the gap. Without Jesus, we fall to the bottom of hell. Only the innocent death of the perfect Son of God was able to unite us with God. There for Jesus is called the resurrection.

And thus we see here this Lenten season, Jesus, having the hostility of Jews set against Him, returning to Judea where they had last tried to stone Him. We see Jesus poised now to face Jerusalem, to reach the goal of His ministry, to make that ransom payment to the Father for what we've done. We see Jesus prepared to endure the full wrath of God for your sake. All this to bring you life. All this to unite you with the Father forever.

25b ... He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. The way that we receive this free gift of eternal life is through faith. Through faith given by the Holy Spirit we see that the life we have in Jesus is not this physical earthly life, it is a life that will not end. It is life that even those who appear dead to us, already possess. Life that Lazarus already possesses. Life that the world does not see.

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

So let us live our lives with that mind. Let us live, not for the things of this world, not for things that perish. Let's store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy. The present reality of Jesus brings a whole different perspective than the present reality of this world brings. This life that Jesus brings enables us now to do things that please God, to resist sin. Our pleasing God is not earning this life, it is only a result of the fact that this life is already ours through faith. The reaction to what Jesus has done for us should lead us to not live a life like the world lives. Although your life is hidden with Christ, you can still reveal this truth to others by not acting like the world acts. Show the world your confidence in the life that comes through Jesus, a life that does not end.

III. Because He is the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.

In our text here Martha appears to be learning a valuable lesson. We see this in her confession in verse 27. Those names she confesses

answer the question Jesus asks, "do you believe that I am the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that life only comes through Me?" We know life only comes through Jesus, because of who He is: The Christ, the Son of God, the one who is to come into the world.

If we tract through Martha's thought process we see growth in her faith, a growth that each of us may go through. Hear Martha: v.21, *Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."* We see that Martha wasn't quite looking at Jesus with the proper faith in His power. She didn't quite grasp the fact that life only comes through Jesus, that Jesus in and of Himself has power over death. who has already has this authority: *John 5: 21 "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

So when Jesus asks Martha, "Do you believe this?" Martha gets it. Martha knows that life only comes through Jesus because of who He is. 1) He is the Christ: One Anointed of God for God's special purpose to bring life into the world. 2) He is the Son of God: the One who is equal with God, the One who gives life to whom He will, the One who we should honor just as we honor the Father. 3) He is the One who is to come into the world: the One that was prophesied of who would come into the world to do the works of God, of whom it was prophesied that He would raise the dead.

Conclusion

Earlier we talked about checking our vital signs of life. Well now we could check our spiritual vital signs: Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the only source of life? The only reason you can answer correctly is because you are already living. This is evidence of the spiritual life supply you are receiving. No O2 needed, Jesus, through death, is your everlasting supply of life.
Amen.