
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on April 1, 2017

INTRODUCTION

What a profound and magnificent promise Christ has made to all those who love and trust Him! And, what incredible evidence Christ has given in order to demonstrate His trustworthiness to make good on that promise! Christ has power over death – even His own death – and He has promised to grant everlasting life to those who believe Him. Christ has raised dead men back to life, He has been resurrected Himself (never to die again), and Christ will raise all His people to new and everlasting life in the end. In this message, we shall consider Christ’s miraculous power over death in the resurrection of His friend, Lazarus.

MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (Jn. 11:25).

Concerning death, modern American Evangelicalism can seem much more like Epicureanism than biblical Christianity. The ancient Epicurean philosophers taught that the key to happiness is the experience of pleasure and evading pain. Death, being the ultimate pain, must be avoided and ignored. Many Evangelical funerals today have become “celebration of life” ceremonies or some other kind of forced-happiness occasion.

Biblical Christianity is much more gritty and direct than many of us might think. The Bible speaks much of suffering and death, and these ugly foes are confronted head-on. The Bible gives expression to what we know deep-down about suffering and death. Death is awful. Death is painful. Death is bad.

The Bible also speaks of a sure victory over death and suffering for those who look to Jesus Christ, who has already conquered such things. In fact, Jesus’ power over death is so certain that He calls Himself “the resurrection and the life.” Anyone who believes or trusts this masterful Savior will certainly and joyfully live, even in the face of death.

JOHN 11:1-44 (ESV)

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. ***It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.***”

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

8 The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?”

9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

11 After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” 12 The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, 15 and ***for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.*** But let us go to him.” 16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 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 from 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 on the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, "***I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who 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 coming into the world."

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, ***if you had been here, my brother would not have died.***"

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and ***greatly troubled.*** 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

35 ***Jesus wept.*** 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "***Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?***" 38 Then ***Jesus, deeply moved again,*** came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, ***he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."***

44 ***The man who had died came out,*** his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

Jesus is God's solution to suffering and death, and those who believe in Him will one day be free from both.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) SUFFERING & DEATH ARE NOT AGAINST GOD'S PLAN

(2) SUFFERING & DEATH ARE BAD

(3) CHRIST IS GOD'S SOLUTION TO SUFFERING & DEATH

(4) APPLICATION: DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

MESSAGE

(1) SUFFERING & DEATH ARE NOT AGAINST GOD'S PLAN

- **We cannot understand Jesus' words or actions here unless we believe God is in charge of death.**
 - "3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. *It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.*" 5 Now *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.* 6 *So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer* in the place where he was" (v3-6).
 - Friends, you have to spend more than a few seconds thinking about some of this stuff here!
 - How can illness and death be "for the glory of God"?
 - How is the Son of God glorified through illness and death in this story?
 - Could it be that the Son of God is glorified through (in the face of) death more broadly?
 - What is God teaching us by including such things in the Bible for our attention today?

- **Death is part of God's plan**

- God said to Adam, "*of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for **in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die***" (Gen. 2:17).
 - Then in Genesis 4, there is the violent death of Abel at the hand of his brother (Cain).
 - And then in Genesis 5, there is the repeated refrain of every person listed, "***and he died...***" (v5, 11, 14, 17, etc.).
 - Friends, you understand that death is part of life as we know it... But, do you understand that death could not be unless it were part of God's plan?
 - Do you understand that God has caused death to be part of the human experience, at least for now?
 - Oh, we may not blame God for the pain of death... it was entirely the fault of our first parents... and we also have sinned greatly against God's good authority... but we also may not understand death rightly unless we understand that it is part of God's judgment on humanity... it is part of God's plan.

- **Jesus answered harshly when some people seemed insulted by death**

- When Jesus was talking to a crowd, some voiced complaints about several Galileans who were murdered by Pilate. They said Pilate had mixed the blood of those people with the blood of sacrificed animals. This was to express a deep offense, since these Galileans were sacrificing as worship to God, and death came for them even in the midst of this sacred act.
 - But, Jesus answered them by saying, "***Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.** Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*****" (Luke 13:1–5).

Summary: **Suffering and death is not against God's plan, and the death of Lazarus was actually for the glory of God in Christ!**

(Segue) ***But, make no mistake... This is not to say that death is good. Death is not good... death is bad!***

(2) SUFFERING & DEATH ARE BAD

- **Mary hated the death of her brother, Lazarus**
 - When she saw Jesus, Mary “fell at his feet, [and said] to him, ‘Lord, ***if you had been here, my brother would not have died***” (v32)
 - In this way, Mary expressed the emotional pleas that many of us have felt when we face the death of a loved one.
 - Friends, when death comes near to you, don't you feel the skin-crawling nastiness of it?
 - Don't you smell the putrid finality of death?
 - Don't you hate the thought of that lively loved one being forever silent and still?
 - Mary, Lazarus' sister, grieved the loss of her brother, and what was Jesus' response to her plea?

- **Jesus hated the whole scene of sorrow and death**
 - “***When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved*** in his spirit and ***greatly troubled***” (v33)... and “***Jesus wept***” (v35)
 - Jesus surveyed the whole scene, and heard the cries of His beloved friend Mary, and He joined His sadness with theirs!
 - Friends, God the Son, in human form, demonstrates the sorrow God Himself feels in death.
 - God is certainly in charge of death, but that does not mean that God delights in death (Ezekiel 33:11).

- **The Bible never asks us to call death good**

- Death is a devastating summary of the curse God announced against defiant creatures (Gen. 2:17).
- Death is a festering disease that spread to all of Adam's descendants (Rom. 5:12).
- Death is a reigning enemy, taunting all sinners with their helplessness and the judgment that is sure to come (Rom. 5:14, 17, 21).
- Death is the horrendous debt to be paid by all those who have lived on the credit of sin and wickedness (Rom. 6:23).
- Death is a constant reminder that the stench of our own sin will eventually consume us (Rom. 7:24).
- Death is to be the abolished foe... but who can do this for us (2 Tim. 1:10)?!

Summary: **Suffering and death are bad...**

(Segue) **And Christ is God's solution. He defeated death through suffering!**

(3) CHRIST IS GOD'S SOLUTION TO SUFFERING & DEATH

- **In our scene: Jesus told everyone who He was and what He would do**
 - ***"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die..."*** (v25-26)
 - This statement was a clear indication that Jesus was calling for everyone watching to recognize who He was and believe Him.
 - Jesus had been calling for people to respond with belief all throughout His earthly ministry!
 - ***"Whoever hears my word and believes... has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life"*** (Jn. 5:24).

- **Jesus showed everyone that He did, in fact, have life-giving power**
 - Standing by Lazarus' tomb, "Jesus said, 'Take away the stone...'" And Jesus prayed, and then "**he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.'**" And then John tells us, "**The man who had died came out...**" (v39-44).
 - This (*the last of Jesus' public miracles recorded by John*) was a definitive sign that Jesus was "*the resurrection and the life,*" and many who saw it did believe (Jn. 11:45).

- **This was merely a foretaste of Jesus' resurrection**
 - Unlike Lazarus, Jesus was not raised merely to die again...
 - When Jesus was raised, His resurrection was to eternal glory as the 'firstfruits' of all who are to be raised in the end (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).
 - The Bible summarizes well all that we have considered so far, when it says, "*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 15:56–57).
 - ***The sting of death is sin***
 - Sin is any disobedience to God's law, and sin is why we will ultimately die.
 - Death is not the penalty for personal sin only... Just as we've already considered, Adam messed it up for everyone.
 - Death is God's curse upon the whole world because of sin/disobedience.
 - You and I both know what should be done – honesty, justice, love, self-sacrifice, submission to God, and love for our Sovereign Lord.
 - But we naturally do the opposite – lie, steal, hate, act and think selfishly, rebel against God, and hate the thought of being held accountable to someone greater.

- **The *power of sin is the law***
 - When we sin, we know what we are doing, saying, and thinking is wrong... our conscience convicts us... this shows that God's law is written on our hearts.
 - When we read the Bible, listen to a preacher, or even watch a godly person live... we are confronted with the reality that we are not what we should be.
 - God's law is not life to us... it is death!
- **But thanks be to God... there is *victory in Christ!***
 - How is there victory in Christ?
 - He Himself has conquered death!
 - This man is the only human in history to face death and come out victorious!
 - And what has Christ said?
 - *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die..."* (v25-26)!
- **This was also a foretaste of the resurrection awaiting all who believe**
 - Jesus will one day call out, not only to Lazarus, but to all people!
 - Jesus said, "*Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear [My] voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment*" (Jn. 5:28–29).

Summary: **Jesus is God's solution to suffering and death!**

(Segue) ***And those who believe in Him will one day be free from both.***

(4) APPLICATION: DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

John 11:25-26 – “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die...

Do you believe this?””

1. Do you believe death is going to come for you?

- a. Have you ever really thought about that?
- b. I'm not asking if you have a will, or life insurance, or a burial plot arranged... though this kind of planning is quite good.
- c. Do you believe that one day (maybe sooner, maybe later) your ability to ignore death will be gone?
- d. Do you believe that you will one day have all of the distractions of this life utterly removed... as you stand before the God who created you?
- e. Do you believe death is going to come for you?

2. Do you believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again?

- a. Do you believe there really was a Jewish man, named Jesus of Nazareth?
- b. Do you believe that relatively young Jewish man was crucified on a Roman cross just outside of Jerusalem about 2,000 years ago?
- c. Do you believe Jesus was buried in a tomb where His body lay dead?
- d. Do you believe Jesus came back to life, and walked out of that tomb on the third day after He died?
- e. Do you believe that same Jesus ascended into heaven and will return one day as the final judge of some and ultimate savior of others?

3. Do you believe that Jesus can give you resurrection life?

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse (pastor/theologian) was widowed at a fairly young age. After his wife's funeral, he was driving away with his three young children in the back seat of the car. Broken by the pain of loss, he was searching for words to comfort his sad children.

As he was driving, a big truck passed by and cast its shadow upon his car. He turned to his children and said, "Children, would you rather be run over by a truck or by its shadow?"

One of the children in the backseat immediately responded, "Of course, Dad, we'd much rather be run over by the shadow. That can't hurt us at all."

Dr. Barnhouse said, "Did you know that 2,000 years ago, the truck of death ran over the Lord Jesus in order that only its shadow might run over us?"

Death is but a shadow for all of those who believe in Christ. On that cross, the Lord Jesus took the full burden of all our sin deserves so that you don't have to bear it.

Major Point: Jesus is God's solution to suffering and death, and those who believe in Him will one day be free from both.

Do you believe this?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

I Am the Resurrection and the Life by Jason Helopoulos

<https://www.universityreformedchurch.org/sermons/i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life/>

Resurrection and the Life by Various

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/resurrection-and-life/>

I Am the Resurrection and the Life by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-58/i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life-part-1>

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-is-the-resurrection-and-the-life>