

“The Resurrection and the Life”

Series: He said, “I Am”

John 11:17-44

April 1, 2018

MEME

No joke this morning, but something to think about.

It’s Easter time. Time to eat all the candy and marshmallow eggs. Time to pig out. There’s gotta be a nicer word for pig out. A euphemism, as it were. Hey, try to think up a nicer word for euphemism. And while you’re at it, think up a shorter word for abbreviation. And a synonym for Thesaurus.

- And why is it that doctors call what they do “practice”?
- Why is it that to stop Microsoft Windows, you have to click on “Start”?
- Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavor, and dishwashing liquid made with real lemons?
- Why is the person who invests all your money called a broker?
- Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?
- Why isn’t there mouse-flavored cat food?
- Why don’t you ever see the headline, “Psychic Wins Lottery”?
- Why are there Braille labels at drive-up ATMs?
- Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?
- Why can’t women put on mascara with their mouths closed?
- And why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ such a big deal?

I mean, there’s got to be an if-then relationship. If Jesus rose from the dead... then what? We deal with if-then statements every day. For example, Columbus said, “If the world is round, then I can get to the East by sailing west.”

So... what’s the big if-then statement for the resurrection? If Jesus rose from the dead... then what? What are the implications? Does it affect my life more than the fact that I live in 2018 “A.D.”? If Jesus rose from the dead, then does it affect my situation at school or what’s going to happen at work tomorrow?¹

For the last several weeks, we have been studying statement that Jesus made about Himself: I am The Way, the Truth, and the Life; I am The Light of the World; I am The Bread of Life; I am The Good Shepherd. Each of these statements started with “I Am.” Today we are going to look at one more statement that will turn around your life. I invite you to turn to page 5 in your bulletin to follow along and take notes.

Let me give you the context for today’s Scripture passage. Jesus was friends with a group of siblings: Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, who lived in a town named Bethany. One day, Jesus got word that Lazarus had died suddenly. He arrived 4 days later, and the Bible says:

Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I

¹ Mike Sares in “The If-thens of Easter” on www.sermoncentral.com

know that God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.” “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”²

Then Jesus makes this incredible statement:

“I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”³

Now, I bet you were expecting me to read the resurrection story. I mean it’s Easter; you’ve got to read the Easter story.

Well, you know it. It is the story of how Jesus was raised from the dead. But sometimes, we can think, “That’s just a story about Jesus. But what about me? What about my life?”

This message to Martha even before Jesus’ death that He is the resurrection and life is proved by His own resurrection on Easter Sunday, and it is the great hope of the Gospel and of Christianity. Martha was privileged to hear from the very lips of Christ some of the greatest teaching one could ever hear, proved out on Easter Sunday. And Jesus says 7 things that changes everything⁴.

First, we learn about the person of Christ.

Jesus says, “I am...” The great Gospel proclamation begins fittingly with the person of Jesus Christ. Who is He? This text tells us Who He is. He is the great “I AM” of the Scriptures. He uses two Greek words: *ego eimi*,⁵ which we translate “I AM.” But it is more than the verb for “to be.” The Hebrew equivalent of *ego eimi* is Yahweh, the Hebrew name for God. When Jesus said, “*ego eimi*”, the people knew exactly what He was saying: I AM the God of your ancestors.

This is absolutely key to this passage. I, God, AM. We’re not looking at a pretender. We do not following some guy who really didn’t have a clue what was happening to Him, how He would end up being crucified. We do not worship a pretty good person. He is *ego eimi*, I AM.

Second, we learn about the prominence of Christ.

In John 11:23-24, Jesus says to Martha:

“Your brother will rise again.” “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”⁶

She was looking at an event: “the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus changed her focus from an event to a person. The resurrection was in Him.

We all need this focus. It is easy to see Easter as just an event as well. Once a year, we can talk about the resurrection.

But the resurrection is a person: Jesus Christ. He was raised on the 3rd day. He is the resurrection. That means that your loved ones who have passed away, if they were in Christ before they died, then they have Christ in death and that means they live on in Christ. Everything... is all about Him.

Third, we learn about the possessions in Christ.

² John 11:18-24 (NLT)

³ John 11:25-26 (NLT)

⁴ Outline from Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor, John 11:25-26.

⁵ εγω ειμι

⁶ John 11:23-24 (NLT)

“Resurrection, and the life” are great possessions which we have in Christ. When Martha said, “I know that God will give you whatever you ask,⁷”, Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life.” And with the words *ego eimi*, Jesus is saying that He is able to impart either bodily or spiritual life to whomsoever He wishes.

And note that Christ is both the resurrection and the life. The resurrection is the beginning; life is what follows. Spiritually, the resurrection frees us from the deadness of sin.

Paul writes in Ephesians:

*that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)*⁸

Bodily, Christ raises the dead from the tomb. But the resurrection is not all. There is also life. Christ gives us more than existence. He gives us expression, experience, energy, enjoyment, and excitement. Christ gives us life.

Fourth, we learn about the prerequisite for Christ.

So far, the Cincinnati Reds have not figured out the most important thing for a baseball team: that is to win. Myra’s boy – that’s what we call a favorite player: my boy – Myra’s boy Scooter Gennett is hitting great, but nobody else. You’ve got to hit to win.

Jesus said,

*... Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.*⁹

Faith in Christ is the prerequisite we must have to obtain the resurrection and the life which Christ gives. Jesus uses the word “believes” twice here to show the prominence of faith in obtaining the resurrection and life in Christ. Unbelief gains you nothing worthwhile. It leaves you empty handed. Faith in just anything will not do. It must be faith in Jesus Christ.

Fifth, we learn about power of Christ.

Verse 25 reads:

*Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.*¹⁰

Some people struggle with this statement. They think about their dear saintly mother or aunt who is now dead, and they say, “Jesus was wrong. My loved one is dead. They’re not alive.

Jesus is referring to death as an event, not a condition. Death is a result of sin entering the world; that is an event. But now Jesus has come, and the event, which used to be so traumatic because it was so final, is now just an event, a transition for the believer into something prepared for them in heaven. The condition is more important now, whether one’s faith and allegiance is in Christ. Though a believer in Jesus Christ may die, they have not lost the blessing of the resurrection and life.

Sixth, we learn about the possibilities in Christ.

Verse 26:

*Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.*¹¹

⁷ John 11:22

⁸ Ephesians 2:5 (NLT)

⁹ John 11:25b-26a (NLT)

¹⁰ John 11:25b (NLT)

¹¹ John 11:26a (NLT)

The word here is “everyone.” No longer are their divisions of what nationality you were born in, what social status you came from. Faith is not restricted to white Americans or those in 2 parent families. Jesus says the Gospel is open to anyone who will believe.

Acts 2:21 reads:

*But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.*¹²

Finally, we learn about the protection in Christ

The New Living Translation really emphasizes the Greek in verse 26:

*Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.*¹³

This verse in Greek has a double negative *ou me*. Now, in English, a double negative cancels out the negative. “I did not not have one of my wife’s cupcakes last night.” But the double negative in the Greek emphasizes the permanency or eternalness of the negative. “I did not not have one of my wife’s cupcakes last night, and I will always not not eat them.” In its usage here, it teaches that the believer will never experience spiritual death, that second death which is separation from God in torment and agony for all eternity.

Have you ever had a blood draw? Anybody really like those things, especially when they are digging around for a vein. How about a kidney stone? Whose had one of those? Wow, that is some kind of pain? Ever been absolutely miserable with a massive headache or the stomach flu or a broken bone or something else really painful? We can’t wait for relief, a stoppage of the pain, or the nurse with a pain shot.

Take that pain, that feeling, and multiply it a hundred fold, and that is wait awaits those who do not have their faith in Christ, for they will be thrown “...into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,¹⁴” eternally separated from God.

But that is not what God wants for you. He wants you to accept Jesus as your only answer to life eternal. He wants you to give your heart to Him and receive life, real life, now and forever.

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: “This burial place must never be opened.”

In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones.

The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God’s creative word. There is no problem insurmountable by the One who made something out of nothing when He spoke the universe into existence. Nothing you are facing can triumph over God, neither can it triumph over you... if you

¹² Acts 2:21 (NLT)

¹³ John 11:26 (NLT)

¹⁴ Matthew 13:42 (NLT)

believe in the risen Christ Who opens the door to blessings that His resurrection guarantees.

Will you believe what Jesus says, that He is the resurrection and the life? Will you believe, Martha?

Max Lucado, in his book, *Six Hours One Friday*, tells the story of a missionary in Brazil who discovered a tribe in a remote part of the jungle. They lived near a large river. The tribe was in need of medical attention. A contagious disease was ravaging the population. People were dying daily.

A hospital was not too terribly far away—across the river, but the natives would not cross it because they believed it was inhabited by evil spirits. To enter the water would mean certain death. The missionary explained how he had crossed the river and was unharmed. They were not impressed. He then took them to the bank and placed his hand in the water. They still wouldn't go in. He walked into the water up to his waist and splashed water on his face. It didn't matter. They were still afraid to enter the river. Finally, he dove into the river, swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side. He punched a triumphant fist into the air. He had entered the water and escaped. It was then that the natives broke out into a cheer and followed him across.

That's exactly what Jesus did! He told the people of His day that they need not fear the river of death, but they wouldn't believe. He touched a dead boy and called him back to life. They still didn't believe. He whispered life into the body of a dead girl and got the same result. He let a dead man spend 4 days in a tomb and then called him out and the people still didn't believe Him. Finally, He entered the river of death and came out on the other side. No wonder we celebrate the Resurrection!