

# LIFE THAT DOES NOT END Sunday School- May 20, 2012

## Unifying Topic: THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

### Lesson Text

I. Jesus Comforts The Sisters (John 11:17-19)

II. Martha Speaks To Jesus (John 11:20-22)

III. I Am The Resurrection And The Life (John 11:23-27)

**The Main Thought:** Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (John 11:25, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** People often think that death separates us from everything we know. How can we have confidence that death is not the end but a transformation? Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will—even though they die—have a new relationship with God.

**Lesson Aim:** To gain a better understanding of Jesus as "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25, NIV).

**Life aim:** To help the students find comfort in the fact that death does not have the final say for those who are children of God.

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11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

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

11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

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:

11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

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.

### HISTORY:

**Chapter 11:1-16** This story begins to tell us that Lazarus was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha. This was the Mary who had anointed the Lord's feet with ointment and dried them with her hair. They were all close friends of Jesus. Word had been sent by the sisters that the one Jesus loved was sick. Upon hearing this news, Jesus says "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*" This might have seemed strange to everyone, but truly a miracle was about to take place. There were seven purposes we can see in this story for Lazarus' sickness. The **first** purpose was to glorify God and proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God (v.4). Each member of the family is mentioned personally. Jesus loved the family which leads to the **second** purpose of Lazarus' sickness: to show Jesus' great love (w. 1-5).

Jesus did not go readily to see Lazarus, He waits two days before He and His disciples depart toward Bethany. Jesus was nowhere near Lazarus and the sisters. The **third** purpose of Lazarus's sickness was to show the necessity for waiting upon God in great crises (v.6). Can we truly wait on God?

- The day of travel by the messengers to bring word to Jesus (v.3).
- The two days needed for Jesus to complete His ministry (v.6).
- The day or two needed by Jesus to travel to Bethany (v.17).

The point is this: Martha and Mary were learning to wait upon God throughout the whole experience. It had been three days since Jesus had received the news of Lazarus' sickness. We will learn that Lazarus had died and had been buried four days when Jesus determines the time; "*Let's go into Judea again.*" The time had come. (w.6-7).

The **fourth** purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to teach the need to grasp opportunity (w.8, 10).

- Go and do your work while it is day (v.9).
- Go and do what is right, regardless of the danger (v.8).
- Go and do what is right lest the day pass and the opportunity be lost (w.9-10).

The disciples protested Jesus' return there because of the threat to His life. The last time He was there they tried to stone Him. But Jesus alludes to the fact that His time on the earth is a final period of time and it cannot be changed. A person who walks in the light of God's Will cannot be harmed, but the person who does not—stumbles. After Jesus said what He had to say, He tells them, "*Our friend Lazarus sleeps.*" "*Never mind me; let's go see about our friend, I*

*needed to wake him.* The **fifth** purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to show Jesus' great power over death (v11). Jesus calls every believer His friend, therefore, there is supposed to be a sweet fellowship between all believers! Well, the disciples thought Lazarus was physically asleep and assumed that sleep was the best thing for his illness. Then Jesus had to talk plainly to them and tell them that Lazarus was dead. Wow! How shocking is that? (vv.8-14).

Jesus says here, that *'I am glad for your sakes that I am not there to heal Lazarus before he died.'* Why? Because when He raises Lazarus from the dead, they will be astonished and believe. The **sixth** purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to help strengthen the disciples' belief (v.15). Thomas, called Didymus (Gr "twin"), encourages the disciples to go with Jesus, that they may die with Him. The outlook for safety in Judea is dim and Thomas feels that Jesus will be killed, and as a result they will be killed as well. The **seventh** purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to stir the disciples' courage and loyalty (v.16). Thomas was known as a doubting man, but he took the lead here by showing great courage and loyalty to Jesus which should be demonstrated by every believer (vv.15-16).

## LESSON:

### John 11:17-19 Jesus Comforts The Sisters

**11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.** When Jesus arrived, a messenger told Him that Lazarus had already been buried for four days. The fact that Lazarus had been dead that long only gives greater proof of the miracles and greater opportunity for people to believe. On the fourth day, decomposition begins to set in; so there was no doubt about the death of this man.

**11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:** The scene was on the outskirts of Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem about two miles away. Jesus had His reasons for not going into town; knowing the animosity against Him and not desiring to attract any undue disturbance, especially at this time. He still took His time.

**11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.** There were a tremendous amount of mourners who had come to comfort the family; a great amount of Jews.

### John 11:20-22 Martha Speaks To Jesus

**11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.** However, as soon as Martha heard about Jesus, she ran out to meet Him. Jesus was finally close but not quite at the house. Was He too late? We see that there was a contrast between Martha and Mary. Martha was the woman of action and energy; the one loaded with initiative, and she was the one who went out to meet Jesus. On the other hand, Mary was the contemplative and meditative one, and she remained at home to receive the mourners.

**11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Martha believed in Jesus. She even believed that if He had been there, Lazarus would not have died. Yet, she was disappointed! The point is:

- She believed but not to the point of resting in faith.
- She believed but it was limited.
- She believed but not fully entrusting the matter completely into the Lord's hands.

A questioning complaining faith is a limited faith. It is a faith that questions Jesus' lordship. It says to Jesus, *'If you had been here; if you had acted differently; if you had done this or that, then this trial would not have happened.'* She might have been a little upset because Jesus didn't come immediately to heal her brother.

**11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.** She was still limiting Jesus to some level below God. She was not quite clear as to who Jesus was, but knew that whatever He asked of God, God would give it to Him. She knew that much.

### John 11:23-27 I Am The Resurrection And The Life

**11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.** This was an unusual statement to hear from Jesus, knowing that He could have been there to heal him. But Jesus is getting her ready to really believe on who He really is; getting her ready to not doubt about anything; getting her ready to see with her own eyes the miracle that was possible all alone.

**11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.** Martha misunderstood. She thought Jesus meant that Lazarus would rise in the resurrection at the last day. She believed in the resurrection which is one of the fundamentals of faith. Right then it may have been a little comfort, however, the promise of a future resurrection and reunion is not always the comfort we're looking for. Jesus was

trying to get her faith into a now faith, a living faith. What was needed was the knowledge that Jesus, the very One who stood before her, is "*the Resurrection and the Life*."

**11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life:** Jesus finally and plainly makes the claim to her. There is no doubt about who He is now that is standing before her! Jesus had made a declaration that He is the very being and essence; the very power and energy of life. Therefore, He can...

- give and sustain life as He wills.
- resurrect and restore life as He wills.

**...he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:** We just heard the great claim, now the great promise is that all she has to do is truly believe.

1. believeth in me (Jesus)
  - a. though he were dead
  - b. yet shall he live

Just as this world exists, another world exists—a spiritual world—a spiritual dimension—a world that the Bible calls heaven. It's where God/Jesus, and angels, other beings, and all those who have gone on before (died) now live, that believe in Jesus. Because Jesus is the Resurrection and Life, Lazarus is able to get up from the grave.

**11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?** I now see another reason why Jesus stayed on the outskirts of town, so that Martha's faith could come alive to the life giving Savior.

2. believeth in me (Jesus)
  - a. whosoever lives and believeth in me
  - b. shall never die

The idea is that the believer shall never taste death. Quicker than a believer can blink an eye, he passes from this world into the next world. He is transported and transferred into heaven. The believer never loses a single moment of consciousness. There is only one difference. He is immediately perfected: transformed, made perfect, more alive than ever before. The crucial point of receiving eternal life is conditional: a person must believe! This is what Jesus asked Martha: "*Believest thou this?*"

**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.** After hearing the great claim, the great promise, then comes Martha's great confession. Martha believed and confessed, and called Jesus "*Lord*." She believed three things...

1. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.
2. Jesus is the Son of God.
3. Jesus is the One who was to be sent into the world by God.

Knowing that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life means three things to us:

1. That Jesus is alive, living right before us in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is both in us and all around us. Our faith is living and alive and in constant communion and fellowship with Him.
2. That our loved one is present with Jesus, no longer imperfect in mind and body, but perfect: more conscious, more aware, more alive than he/she was on earth. How do we know this? Jesus is alive in heaven and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2Corth.5:8).
3. That Jesus is alive, so the resurrection of our glorified bodies is assured (1Corth.15:1-58).

Where Jesus is, the resurrection is present and active. He is the Resurrection of the dead and the Life of the living. He has power over life and death.

### SUMMARY:

This part of the story Jesus had waited before coming to Bethany after hearing the news of Lazarus' illness. Now He and His disciples have made the decision to come to Bethany where Lazarus, Martha, and Mary lived. Many mourners are there to comfort the family. Martha meets Jesus before He gets there but Mary stays at home. There is a dialog between Martha and Jesus because His friend and her brother had died. Martha really wanted Jesus to be there before Lazarus had died, "*Lord if you had been here my brother wouldn't have died.*" She had some beliefs but not like the beliefs Jesus wanted to teach her. He makes His great claim of being the Resurrection and the Life; and the great promise: "*believe in me though you were dead, yet shall you live—whosoever live and believe in me shall never die.*" This was the comfort Martha needed! As she received this truth, she declared that she believed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

### APPLICATION:

Life does not end for those that believe in Jesus. Death is only the beginning.

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