

Text— John 11:19-45

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection relates one of the greatest miracles done by Jesus during His visible sojourn on earth; that being, the raising of a man named Lazarus from the dead.

Lazarus had two sisters, one named Mary and the other named Martha. Interestingly, John 11:5 reports, “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” So, the three siblings were close friends of Jesus.

Martha, Mary and Lazarus resided in the town of Bethany, which was located about a tenth of a mile from Jerusalem.

Prior to our sermon text, we are informed that Lazarus had fallen ill. Consequently, Martha and Mary had sent for Jesus. However, John 11:6-17 reports, “When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.”

Sadly, Thomas’ remark certainly showed a lack of confidence in Christ. Nevertheless, Jesus had no problem with going into Judea to see His close friends. In fact, Jesus’ visit to the area would result in supplying unimpeachable evidence regarding:

“JESUS’ POWER OVER DEATH”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why it is certain Jesus has power over death
- 2) How Jesus proved He has power over death
- 3) What effect Jesus’ power over death had on many folks

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Verse 19, ----- (John 11:19)

Lazarus’ corpse had been entombed for four days by the time Jesus arrived in Judea. Mary and Martha were still grieving the death of their brother, *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.* It was nice that a sizeable number of Jews had come to the sisters to comfort them in their grief.

Verses 20-22, ----- (John 11:20-22)

When Martha received the news that Jesus was on His way, she could not wait, but immediately went to meet Him, while her sister Mary sat still in the house, surrounded by the many Jews who had come to comfort her and her sister.

Consider Martha’s words to Jesus, for they supply us with one reason it is certain Jesus has power over death, for Martha said to *Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* Note it well: Martha knew JESUS IS LORD!

Indeed, Jesus is not only true man, sinless man, Jesus is also true God, for in reference to Jesus

Christ, Colossians 2:9 relates, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Martha's confidence in Jesus was well placed, for He is always in full concert with His heavenly Father, for Jesus – who cannot lie – declares in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." John 3:35 adds, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Thus, we again see that it is certain that Jesus has power over death, "for with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27) Yes, anything that Jesus, who is God, would ask of God the Father, Jesus would receive.

Verses 23 & 24, ----- (John 11:23-24)

Jesus promised Martha that her brother would rise again. Then, Martha confessed her belief in the resurrection which will take place on the Last Day, the great day when Jesus visibly returns to earth in glory to publically judge all people.

Accordingly, Martha was a true Christian, a true believer in all the doctrines of the Holy Bible, for Daniel 12:2 states, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." My friends, there is a bodily resurrection of all the dead on the Last Day, for Jesus says in John 5:26-29, "as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Nevertheless, Jesus in speaking to Martha was not at that time referring to the general resurrection that will take place on the Last Day, as we shall shortly see.

Verses 25-27, ----- (John 11:25-27)

Let's carefully consider Jesus' words, for He said to

Martha: *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* Martha rightly replied: *Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* So, Martha again correctly addressed Jesus as LORD!

My friends, JESUS CHRIST IS THE LORD OF LIFE. JESUS CHRIST IS THE RESURRECTION, because He provides spiritual life to the spiritually dead and physical life to the physically dead, where and when He chooses.

Fellow Christians, we would not be Christians if the Lord did not grant us spiritual life, for it is Jesus Christ who declares in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Furthermore, we read in Ephesians 2:1-10, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Thus, Jesus is our life-giving Lord!

Furthermore, Jesus Christ will raise our dead bodies back to life on the Last Day, for we read in

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Therefore, all praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life!

In our sermon text Jesus says: *whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die*. Accordingly, take it to heart that temporal death for the Christian is nothing but a sleep of the body in the dust of the earth, for upon dying the Christian’s soul is immediately transported into the presence of the Lord Jesus, and consequently enjoys bliss and happiness, as the soul awaits being reunited with its body on the Last Day when that very body will be raised in glory.

It’s as the apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:21-24, “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Then, in 1 Corinthians 15:41-44 the same beloved apostle writes, “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” Hence, a wonderful future awaits ALL who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Oh beloved, it is certain Jesus has power over death because Jesus is Lord and therefore has ALL power! It is certain Jesus has power over death because Jesus says so and He is truth personified! It is certain Jesus has power over death because JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!

As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see how Jesus proved He has power over death.

Verses 28-30, ----- (John 11:28-30)

Martha departed from the place where she had met with Jesus and went home, *and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee*. Mary then wasted no time in going to Jesus, for *she arose quickly, and came unto him* in the place outside of town where He had earlier met with Martha.

Verse 31, ----- (John 11:31)

The Jews who were present to comfort Mary and Martha, as they mourned the death of their brother, thought that Mary had rushed off to the grave to weep there. The Jews did not know that Mary had gone to see Jesus.

Verse 32, ----- (John 11:32)

Mary was a woman of faith in Jesus Christ, just like her sister Martha. Mary made the exact same confession to Jesus as did her sister, for *when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*. Note it well: Mary knew JESUS IS LORD! Mary knew that Jesus Christ is not only true man, but He is also true God. Mary was sure that if Jesus had been there when Lazarus fell ill, he would not have died.

Verses 33-35, ----- (John 11:33-35)

It is so beautiful and comforting to see that the Lord Jesus truly sympathizes with us sinful human beings, for upon approaching the grave of Lazarus and seeing Mary and the Jews with her weeping, *Jesus wept*.

My friends, Jesus truly cares about us, for He came to this earth to rescue us from sin, death and the power of the devil, “For the wages of sin is death;

but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18) Jesus Christ is our life-giving Lord! Jesus Christ is our Savior from the never-ending death of hell! Some of the people present knew Jesus is Lord, for they rightly addressed Him as such.

Verses 36 & 37, -----. (John 11:36-37)

The Jews noted Jesus’ love for Lazarus. But, there were some in the crowd who leveled a complaint against Jesus, for our text relates: *some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?* Oh, some of the Jews apparently thought of Jesus as nothing more than a man who was gifted with abilities to heal; a man who should have shown up sooner and prevented Lazarus from dying.

Verse 38, -----. (John 11:38)

Jesus was indignant at cruel death as He came to the grave of Lazarus. The grave was a cave which had a large stone sealing the entrance to the burial chamber, a common practice at that time in that place.

Verses 39 & 40, -----. (John 11:39-40)

Jesus commanded that those present remove the stone from the entrance to the burial chamber. Lazarus’ sister Martha said to Jesus: *Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.* Oh, Martha did not want to remember her brother as a smelly, rotting corpse. Why, after four days being buried in that climate, Lazarus’ body was decomposing and undoubtedly stunk.

Nevertheless, *Jesus saith unto Martha, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* Thus, Jesus reminded Martha of the fact He IS the resurrection and the life.

Verses 41-44, -----. (John 11:41-44)

Some folks near the entrance to the tomb of Lazarus did as Jesus commanded, for they *took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Observe that Jesus is ALWAYS in full sync and communication with His heavenly Father, God the Father almighty, for before Jesus spoke aloud in the hearing of the people He knew He was heard of His Father. Yes, Jesus – the living Word of God – is one with His Father, and with the Holy Ghost too, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)

Jesus lifting up His eyes to heaven and mentioning aloud His thanks to His Father for hearing Him was done for the benefit of the people there present, that they might know that Jesus is always heard by His Father and that it is His Father in heaven who sent Him to earth as the Savior of the world.

Notice what Jesus did after the stone was removed from the grave entrance and after He thanked His Father in heaven for hearing Him, for when Jesus *thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

Just think of it: Jesus commanded Lazarus – a decaying corpse – to come out of the grave; and, what happened? Lazarus came forth, still wound in the graveclothes in which he had been buried.

Jesus then commanded those present to loosen Lazarus from those grave-clothes and to let him go. Oh, Jesus spoke His Word and Lazarus was raised to life! Jesus proved He has power over death by raising Lazarus to life!

JESUS' WORD is so powerful that even though Lazarus' ears were rotting off his head he still heard that Word of the Lord!

My friends, the Lord Jesus' WORD is still powerful, for Romans 10:17 informs us, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Yes, and so it is when the Word of the Lord is attached to the waters of Holy Baptism, that such is a, "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5) God's Word has power, my friends. God's Word gives life where sinful human beings think life is impossible.

Let us never forget how Jesus proved He has power over death by raising Lazarus back to life after the man's body was rotting in a grave four days. Jesus spoke His Word, and life was given to a dead man.

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As we ponder the last verse of our sermon text, let us see what effect Jesus' power over death had on many folks.

Verse 45, ----- (John 11:45)

Upon hearing Jesus' words of thanks to His Father in heaven and then hearing Jesus' command to Lazarus to come forth from the grave, after rotting therein four days; then, seeing Lazarus come out of that tomb alive; it happened that *many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

Many Jews came to faith in Jesus Christ because His miracle in raising Lazarus back to life proved He is the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah foretold of old. Jesus' miracle proved that the Word He spoke was and is absolute truth. Thus, many of the

Jews were spiritually resurrected when Lazarus was physically resurrected.

Jesus Christ is our life-giving Lord, for, as Acts 4:12 states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Let us never forget Jesus' power over death. Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord, for He is truly the Supplier of eternal life. Amen.

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