

WHO IS JESUS?

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!

“Jesus said unto her, 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?”

John 11: 25,26

Home missionary, Pastor Audred Spruiensma

WHO IS JESUS? CONTRAST BETWEEN DEATH AND LIFE

You have probably stood before the casket or grave of a loved one. Perhaps it was an older person relieved of the troubles and pain of old age. But maybe it was an infant or young person, or a person in the prime of life. An accident or an illness suddenly took that loved one away. What grief and sorrow you experienced.

Mary's and Martha's brother, Lazarus, died. He was also a dear friend of Jesus. There was a profound sorrow finding expression in a flood of tears. Martha says to Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Martha had faith that Jesus' presence could have made the difference. She also believed that Jesus could still ask God to make her brother alive again.

Jesus speaks of life. "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha says that she knows that. Jesus corrects her vision by turning her from the distant future to the immediate present. He fixes her eyes upon himself. It is not future events but the person of Jesus! Jesus is always present with us. This is what brings comfort, strength, and blessing. Jesus causes Martha from dwelling on the dead Lazarus to instead trust in himself as the Lord of life. "I am the resurrection and the life."

Death, in all of its power and ugliness, is seen in the grave of Lazarus. In his case it was a sickness. The body was brought to the grave to decay and stink. Death is the separation of body and soul. It is the separation from family and friends. Death causes those left behind to be filled with fear, grief, and tears.

Death is not a natural phenomenon. Rather it is God's punishment for sin. "The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)." Death is the revelation of God's wrath against sin (Psalm 90). The death of Adam and all his descendants is a spiritual separation from God. In sharp contrast stands Jesus, the life!

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION

Jesus himself is the power over death. He has conquered and defeated this killing force. Jesus is the power to raise the dead out of the grave, to bring life out of death. Jesus is the power to form new bodies that are adapted for heaven. Jesus gives that life that can never perish. What a power of victory, joy, peace, and comfort. He is the resurrection.

Jesus not merely possesses the power of the resurrection and the power of life. He **is** the resurrection and the life. He does not merely say that he will be that in the future when he comes again. He is that right now, in himself. "I am..." Jesus is the resurrection because he is the life.

What is the connection between these two titles for Jesus? Jesus has the power to raise folks from the dead because he is the Life. His life is the cause of his being the resurrection. That Jesus is the Life does not merely mean that he has life or possesses life. He is the living One. He is the source of all life. This can only be because he is God! We have in our text another of Jesus' "I am..." statements. Jesus is the eternal and natural Son of God.

When Jesus says that he is the life, he does not mean merely physical or biological life. It is not mere earthly existence. Jesus is spiritual life. That life is fellowship and friendship with God. Jesus, with this statement also means that he is the life to sinners who are in the grip of death (separation from God). Jesus is the life to dying people. He is the saving life. He is that life because he delivers sinners from the penalty and power of death and gives them life! Jesus is this life to us because he is the Savior. He came into this world of death. He took the penalty of our sins, suffered it, and conquered it. On the cross, he said, "It is finished." Debts paid in full.

Because Jesus has this life in himself, he is also the resurrection. He has power to bring life out of death. This was true of his own death for us. He

died on the cross, and on the third day he arose from the dead. After his resurrection, Jesus was seen in his body by over 500 of his saints. He is now in heaven in that resurrection body.

Jesus is the resurrection to and for his people, those who believe in him. He raises our dead souls to new life. This is called regeneration. Some are given this new spiritual life while yet in their mother's womb. Others receive this gift of new life later (like the thief on the cross). This is called the new birth, being born again, or, being born from above. From being dead in trespasses and sins, we are made alive.

What Jesus does for our souls, he will also do for our bodies when he comes again. Martha had it right. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." When you and I stand by the sickbed of a loved one or bury them in the grave, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life to those who believe in him. The body that is placed in the grave is called a "sleep", because when Jesus comes again, our loved one will be awakened. As Jesus called, "Lazarus, come forth", so also Jesus will cause all those who are his to come forth from the grave in a new body fit for heavenly life. We are called to comfort one another with these words (1 Thess. 4: 18).

THE PROMISE OF JESUS

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11:25)." Jesus points out the way in which this blessing is received and enjoyed by dead sinners. It is in believing in Jesus. It is by faith. This faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8, 9). Faith is not our work, but it is power given to us when God graciously has given us new hearts in our birth from above (the resurrection of the soul). The dead soul of the sinner is made alive by the Spirit of Christ. The soul is made alive to believe in Jesus.

The activity of faith is our looking and trusting in Jesus. It is a confidence and hope in Jesus. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Because the life he

gives is eternal, there is a future hope. "Though he were dead, yet he shall live." Jesus is speaking of the very thing that happened to Lazarus. He lived through death. His body was in the grave, stinking. But his soul was alive, and by Jesus' powerful voice, Lazarus body is revived and comes out of the grave.

This is what will happen to every believing child of God. When he dies, his soul goes to heaven. He is with Jesus! That life cannot die. But we look forward. When Jesus comes again, his body will be raised in glory, a spiritual body, immortal, incorruptible (1 Cor. 15). Then, in body and soul, we will be with Jesus and all the saints in the new heavens and the new earth.

Jesus promises, "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (vs.26)." This happens to our souls in our new birth. This happens to our bodies at Jesus' second coming. This promise is only for those who believe in Jesus.

THE QUESTION OF JESUS

The question was put to Martha, "Believest thou this?" And her answer was, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the world." Wonderful faith!

This pressing question comes to all those who hear the gospel. Do you believe in Jesus, that he is the Christ, the Savior, the Resurrection and the Life? Do you trust in him and have confidence and hope in the midst of death?

They say that there are only two constants in life: taxes and death. As we face our own mortality and the sicknesses and death of loved ones, believers can have comfort and hope. It is the truth that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Do you believe this? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house (Acts 16: 31)."