

“I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

10-12-14

Mary and Martha’s brother, Lazarus was very ill. They sent out a message to Jesus to come. But instead of leaving right away to go see him, Jesus stayed where He was for two additional days.

Open to John 11. After two days, Jesus said to the disciples, *“Let’s go to Judea again.”* But the disciples were concerned for Him because the Jews were planning on stoning Him if they ever saw Him again. Jesus told them Lazarus was asleep and Jesus was going to wake him up. The disciples are just like us and got confused at what Jesus said. Look at verses 14-15, *“Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’”*

So Jesus and the disciples went to Bethany, even though Lazarus was already dead! Look at verses 20-25, *“So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.’”* Jesus said to her, *“Your brother will rise again.”* Martha said to him, *“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”* Jesus said to her, *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”*

When Jesus says that He is the resurrection and the life, Martha sees His answer as something that can happen only in the future. Her first response was: *“I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”*

Martha was right! This is what will really happen at Second Coming of Christ. The dead in Christ will be resurrected. But her faith only allows God to do that IN THE FUTURE. And so she sees that Lazarus has to remain dead, and wait for that day to come.

Jesus is always the “I AM” in your life. Whatever the situation, He’s the ‘I AM’ in it! To Martha, who has just seen death, Jesus says *“I am the resurrection & the life.”* To those who walk in darkness, Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world.”* To those hungry, Jesus says, *“I am the bread of life.”* He’s not the *“I was”* or *“I’m going to be, or I will be”* but He’s the “I AM” in our lives!

Jesus wanted to stretch not only Martha’s faith, but also the faith of those who were there mourning the death. Verses 41-42, *“So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 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.’”*

Jesus comes to us, in the present, to address our present needs. He can bring life to the dead, right now! He can bring hope in a hopeless situation, right now! He can bring joy to the mourning, right now! He is and will always be the “I AM” in our now situations!

Listen to Exodus 3:13-14. God asked Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. *“Then Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’”* God said to Moses, *“I AM WHO I AM.”* And he said, *“Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”* He will always be the ‘I AM’ in your life! All of Jesus’ I AM statements are always in the present tense.

Jesus asks Martha in verse 26, *“Do you believe this?”* What a question! Jesus is asking her, “Do you believe I can, even if I didn’t come on time to heal your brother? Do you believe I can, even if your brother’s been dead for 4 days? Do you believe I can turn your mourning into joy? Martha, do you believe I am the resurrection and the life?”

To receive the gifts of Jesus, we must BELIEVE. The word believe is the key to seeing life in death, light in darkness, hope in despair, and experiencing joy in sorrow. And the key to unlock all this is FAITH!

Faith is so important in our relationship with God. God operates in response to our faith.

Jesus’ final words to His disciples in John 14:1, *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”*

To be fair, Martha did have faith, to a certain extent. When she went out to greet Jesus, her first words were, *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”* That’s faith! She had faith in Jesus’ ability to heal.

We can easily identify with her. We have faith in God, too. But sometimes things just don’t happen the way we expect it. Sometimes it almost feels like God’s let us down. Sometimes, He doesn’t respond in the way we want. We’re too caught up in our own way and own timing. Because of this, it can cause us to lose faith in Him and doubt His goodness!

In verse 27, we see Martha saying, *“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”* That’s quite a statement of faith, but it wasn’t really what Jesus wanted her to believe. The devil believes that too! Jesus wants her to believe He is the resurrection and the life. That with Him, even something as hopeless as death, is under His control!

Today, we’re just like her. We believe Jesus is God. He’s alive and He’s with us today. But Jesus also wants us to believe that He can do something to our situation, no matter what it is. It’s one thing to know that Jesus is God, it’s quite another to trust Him in the midst of a difficult situation! To know with our mind is one thing, to know it in our heart, with a deep conviction, under harsh circumstances, is quite another!

We know the end of the story. Jesus proved His words. Martha saw what she heard from Jesus, resurrection and life. Today, we can expect to SEE what we READ about in the Bible, and HEAR as God answers prayer. God’s plan is good. In fact, God always plans a better way each day of your life!

This will always be true in our lives, because as Romans 8:28 reminds us, *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*

All of the power to resurrect, to bring back death to life, and to make things new is in the hands of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ last words to His disciples were: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations”*. What more do you need? Jesus says to you, *“I am your resurrection and your life forever!”*