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“I AM the Resurrection and the Life”

John 11:1-37

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John 11 includes the fifth of Jesus’ I AM statements. It also includes one of the most beloved scenes in the Bible—the death of Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus. Jesus shows us his tender, emotional side as He grieves for his friend. He also shows us His miraculous, powerful side when He defies the grave by raising Lazarus from the dead! Although Lazarus was only raised temporarily (he would die again later), it is a picture of how Jesus has the power over death and the grave. This is the reason Jesus said, “I AM the resurrection and the life.”

One of the most challenging aspects of this story is Jesus’ delay in going to Lazarus upon hearing that he is sick. It is important to note a few things about Jesus.

**1) Jesus is never frantic or in a hurry (about anything!)**

Bad news does not alarm him; sad news does not paralyze him. There is a steadiness and calm confidence about Jesus that is not only admirable but is desirable. We all need to follow the example of Jesus’ steadiness in the midst of the storms of life. Because of Jesus, we can have the peace of God to guard our hearts and minds.

**2) Jesus is not driven by emotion; He is guided by devotion (to the Father)**

Despite an emotional moment, hearing that a close friend is near death, Jesus decided to stay right where he was for a few more days. No doubt, he knew the disappointment at his delay that would come from Lazarus’ sisters, Mary and Martha. Jesus understood that they could possibly even be disappointed in him.

Rather than responding immediately to Lazarus, he is guided by the Father and operates on a heavenly timetable! He is always surrendered in devotion to the Father.

As people we often do impulsive things based on emotion. We say regrettable things based on emotion. We think irrational things based on emotion. Emotion is not always bad, but it is certainly unreliable. When our emotions try to dominate, we have to take our thoughts captive in obedience to Christ. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus because he wanted to be emotionally present in the moment!

## 2 Corinthians 10:5 *"...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"*

The immediate answer we sometimes think we have is not always right. We have to let God lead.

### 3) God's delay is often for His display

God does not work on our timetable and he never will. We have to adapt to God's timetable, not the other way around. Jesus intentionally delayed getting to Lazarus so that Lazarus could die! Jesus wanted to demonstrate a greater miracle than healing Lazarus - Jesus wanted to raise him from the dead! Jesus was demonstrating that he had power not only over sickness, but over death and the grave. Jesus had a larger plan that an earthly understanding could not have appreciated at first. Sometimes God wants to do something for his greater glory.

### John 11:38-44

*<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone."*

*Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."*

*<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone <sup>1</sup>from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" <sup>44</sup> And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life". He said that so we would understand his power over death and the grave. He demonstrates that power by raising Lazarus from the dead. However, this is an incomplete picture. At some point in the future, Lazarus died a natural death. It was not a permanent resurrection. However, the raising of Lazarus was meant to point to a greater picture of the resurrection and eternal life that Jesus offers to all who believe in him!

The Bible tells us things about life after death. Unless the Lord returns first, we will all experience death. It is no respecter of persons.

### What the Promise of Resurrection means for us

#### 1) Death is not a destination; it's a Transition.

For the believer, death is an immediate transition of your soul to the presence of the Lord. This is not the soul sleep that Jehovah's Witnesses teach. The immediate thing that happens is that your soul goes to be with God in heaven.

Billy Graham once said, "One day you will hear that Billy Graham has died. Don't you believe it. On that day I'll be more alive than ever before. I've just changed addresses."

#### 2) Death is a reunion with our loved ones for those in Christ.

When you know Christ and your loved ones have known Christ, heaven is a great reunion. This is one of the greatest comforts we have as believers when facing death. Pastor Gary believes that we will recognize our loved ones in heaven. In John 21, Jesus in his resurrected body maintains a recognizable appearance! He was recognizable in His glorified state. The case is the same in Luke 9 in the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration where Moses and Elijah are recognizable. Pastor Gary also said that we are never alone, even in death.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”*

### 3) Death is not the end; it’s the beginning of Eternal Life

**John 14:19** *“... Because I live, you will live also.”*

Of course, he is making an allowance for physical death. The reality is that physical death is not the ultimate end. The human soul never dies. Heaven is a real place and so is Hell. The question becomes where will you spend eternity – in heaven with the Lord or eternally in Hell separated from him. **Matthew 25:41** explains that Hell was initially created for Satan and his demons. However, people end up joining Satan and his demons by choice when they reject Jesus as savior. God wants none to perish but all to come to saving repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). God’s original intent for mankind was to spend eternity with him. While sin separated mankind from God, Jesus died on the cross to make gracious provision that we might have eternal life! God opened heaven wide for as many who would trust and believe in the one way of Jesus Christ!

God made a way where there was no other way that we might have relationship and life with him!

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read the Seven “I AM” statements.
2. What do you think Jesus’ disciples would have thought about his delaying going to see Lazarus? How would their perspective change after seeing Jesus raise Lazarus?
3. Discuss moments in your life where God’s delay has been for his display.
4. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)