



# Sermon, Palm Sunday April 2, 2023

## “I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

### Pastor Paul’s Sermon

**SCRIPTURE: John 11:17-27** <sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup> She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

#### Introduction: Christians who live with the confidence of the resurrection

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! The energy of spring is gradually felt in our lives. Winters in Iowa, where we live, are long, but spring is coming to us, nonetheless.

Today is Palm Sunday. This is the day when Jesus rode on a donkey and entered Jerusalem with praise from the people. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead before entering Jerusalem. This incident is the decisive reason why the chief priests and Pharisees tried to kill Him. They thought that if everyone believed in Jesus, the Romans would take away their place and nation. So they conspired to kill Jesus.

However, the death of Jesus was the path that the Lord had to carry **“not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.” (John 11:52).** We have moved from death to life because the Lord walked that path. The promise of the Lord's resurrection tells us that we are not beings trapped in the hardships and pains of life but living abundantly in the hope of resurrection.

Through today's text, I pray that the hope for the promise of resurrection will bring greater abundance to our lives.

#### Body: The Mystery and Grace of the Lord

John 11:1 begins with the words, **“Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.”** This verse describes a man named Lazarus living in Bethany who has been sick for a long time. The name of the town of Bethany in this passage means “house of figs” in Hebrew. And the name Lazarus means ‘God has helped’. In other words, Lazarus, a sick man in Bethany, represents all those who are marginalized and in need of the Lord's help.

The sick Lazarus had sisters named Martha and Mary. When Lazarus is critical, they send a man to Jesus. **“Lord, behold, he whom You love (Lazarus) is sick.” (John 11:3).**

However, when Jesus heard of Lazarus' critical situation, he was in no hurry. After hearing the news of Lazarus, Jesus said; **“This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” (John 11:4).**



As we see in this verse, the Lord did not leave the place where He was, saying words that are difficult to understand, but stayed longer. And, after two days, Jesus told his disciples to go to Judea. And Jesus said, **“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.” (John 11:11)**. The disciples think that the meaning of Jesus’ words is that Lazarus really fell asleep. Then, Jesus tells the meaning of what he said to his disciples as follows; **“Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.” (John 11:14-15)**.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary about Lazarus, and when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. And Martha said to the Lord, **“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” (John 11:21-22)**. In this passage we see Martha's infinite trust in Jesus.

Then Jesus said to Martha, **“Your brother will rise again.” (John 11:23)**. In fact, Martha did not immediately understand what Jesus meant by these words. However, because she had hope for resurrection, she answered, **“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” (John 11:24)**. Martha did have hope for resurrection, but she did not think that what Jesus said was about the present situation with Lazarus.

Jesus said to Martha, **“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26)**. This verse is the most important word of today's text. Do you have confidence and hope for the resurrection?

The resurrection promised to Christians is the mystery of life that we will finally enjoy. But the resurrection is not just about our future. For Christians, the resurrection is the mystery and grace of the Lord that fills every moment of our lives from the moment we believe in the resurrection to the time of resurrection on the last day. Therefore, resurrection is the joy to come, but it is also the power to keep today alive. So Jesus said to Martha, **“Whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”** However, there are many people around us who are alive but live like the dead. I hope we open our hearts wide to the power of resurrection, the mystery and grace of the Lord at work in our lives. Then the power of resurrection will surely lead us from death to life.

Later, the Lord met Mary after telling Martha the secret of the resurrection. Mary falls at the Lord's feet and says, **“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”** When Jesus sees Mary and the people who are weeping, he grieves with them and has pity on them.

With a grieved heart, Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus lay and tells them to remove the stone blocking the tomb. At Jesus' words, Mary says that Lazarus has been dead for four days, and that the decay of the body must have begun. Jesus says to Mary, **“Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” (John 11:40)**.

Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, **“Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.” (John 11:41-42)**. When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come forth.”** At that time, the dead Lazarus finally came out of the tomb.

Dear brothers and sisters! We have received the saving grace of Jesus Christ who changes the place of death into the place of resurrection. The story of Lazarus today clearly shows and promises us this. Do you believe in the resurrection that the Lord promised us? I hope that all of you will stand up against any adversity with the faith of resurrection.

**Conclusion: I hope you enjoy and live the mystery and grace of the Lord in your life.**

Now let's summarize today's message. In today's text, Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead is a



foreshadowing of Jesus' resurrection.

In today's text, Martha confessed to the Lord, **"I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You"**. And the Lord answered her, **"Whoever believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."** He also said to Mary, **"If you believe, you will see the glory of God."**

Also, the dead Lazarus came to life, and all those who loved Lazarus experienced amazing miracles and healing of sorrow. Resurrection faith is not just hoping for the time of the final resurrection, but rather living a life filled with hope and experiencing the mystery and grace of the Lord that fills every moment of our lives. I hope all of us can enjoy such blessings. **Amen!**

