

7/27-28/2024

PP John 11:1-44 *Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life*

I am privileged to share the Word with you this evening/morning. I will start by saying there is not much that I need to do, it's all right here, I am here to simply deliver the Word. There is no new spin I am going to put on this or any new insight, it's a simple message that you have likely heard before. As has been said by many of those before me, here at Cornerstone we simply deliver the Word.

I want to start by saying ALL scripture is important, each and every detail. I will say though, that much like a microcosm some passages contain the whole picture of the Gospel... and the attributes of God.... all summed up in one story. May I suggest to you, I have such a story today...

The title of the message is *Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life*. We will hear a story and examine the person of Jesus, *who* he is and the *work* he does. PP In keeping with the purpose of John's Gospel these things are written that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing *you* may have *life* in his name.

Before we get much further, I want to map a course for what some key takeaways are for me, and what I'll call the focus points of this message. Here they are and again this should be nothing new.

- Jesus is all powerful and that includes total power over death
- Not only is he all powerful, but he is compassionate (usually with power there is a lack of compassion)
- Lastly, in the midst of his unfathomable power and his immense compassion, you are not too small that he doesn't see you, and knows you specifically by name.

As is customary we stand for the reading of God's word, However, I hope you will not take it as irreverent, but I am *not* going to ask you to stand today. Of course you may follow along in your Bible, but, if it helps you to really get into the story, you may close your eyes. (That's probably the only time you will ever be told to do that in church). I have come to enjoy reading stories to my kids and there is no greater story than the Bible, so allow me to read to you God's word.....

John Chapter 11 verses 1-44

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." **4** But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So, when he heard that Lazarus[a] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. **7** Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” **8** The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” **9** Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. **10** But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” **11** After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” **12** The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” **13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. **14** Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, **15** and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” **16** So Thomas, called the Twin,[b] said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles[c] off, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. **20** So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” **23** Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” **24** Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” **25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[d] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” **27** She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” **29** And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. **31** When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. **32** Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” **33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved[e] in his spirit and greatly troubled. **34** And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” **35** Jesus wept. **36** So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” **37** But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 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." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

The reading of God's word

This is a deeply moving passage of scripture. Allow me to walk though this briefly with you, knowing that I am only scratching the surface..

I want to start with what Jesus says to his disciples, in verse "11 After saying these things, he said to them, PP "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." The disciples (of course) think he is talking about sleep, so Jesus speaks plainly in verse 14 PP "Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Let me say I am glad for **our** sake he has spoken plainly, so let me underscore this point that Jesus made clear to his disciples.... PP Lazarus... is... DEAD. In order to better understand Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life we must examine death.

We have all experienced the pain of sitting under the shadow death casts in this world. The cold truth of never seeing someone again as they once were. I use the word shadow to describe death here. This is not a new idea, the psalmist invokes such imagery when he refers to it as the shadow of death in Psalm 23. The reason I use shadow here is because it was not so from the beginning. To have a shadow, you must *first* have a light source. We learn in the very beginning of God's word that he created Light in every sense of the word... no shadows. We learned in a previous week's sermon that PP Jesus is the Light. We also know that through the Lord's Sovereignty, he *allows* darkness in the world. There *are* areas where the Lord allows these shadows to remain, for now. Do not mistake it though, the Light can quickly and easily dispel even the darkest shadow in an instant. I recognize that I run the risk of sounding cold and insensitive by drawing a connection between something so real and painful as death (which again we have all experienced the effects of) with something so fleeting as a shadow. I will ask you to stay with me as we examine the text and examine the heart of our Lord. PP Point number 1 is this, Death is like a shadow.

Moving forward Martha says Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died. Jesus was moved to compassion and he wept. Dear brother and sister, Jesus is not distant, he sees, and he *feels*. The text tells us he was deeply moved in his spirit, and the bystanders exclaimed “See how he loved him!”. In Lazarus' death we see the Love and compassion of Jesus on display. Jesus knows he can dispel death with one word, but he steps into that pain. He is all powerful and it is nothing for him, but he knows this is the reality we live in. I want to slow down for a moment so we don't miss this. Jesus is “outside” of death. In my usage of the word “outside” I am defining it in this way, *He is not obligated to it*. We *are* obligated to it. Hebrews 9:27 says “.....it is *appointed* for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”. Do we fully understand how difficult it is to show compassion when you are outside of something? Truly showing love or kindness to the sick if you have never been sick? Do you see my point? He was outside of it, yet he shows such compassion. Even more so, we know later he was pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities. He was outside of it, but he chose it... He sees your struggle, he is moved in his spirit and he feels. PP Point number 2, He is compassionate

Here we move to a pivotal part of the story, Jesus moves to the tomb, and he gives an instruction. “Take away the stone”. I can only imagine what this moment would have been like. We know what Martha says, she's concerned about the odor. Was there a hush in the crowd? Disbelief about what might happen next? What are we going to see? Is disappointment coming? These are of course my thoughts at what people might be thinking, the text doesn't say anything other than that which was said, so let us keep moving. We are at verse PP 41 “So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 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.” 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”

After praying to the father and making it very clear to all around the authority he has in union with the Father, Jesus calls out his name. Lazarus. Just like that, he is there. I believe Pastor Kyle said this earlier in the year, there is no competition between God and Satan as if it's a wrestling match. Friend, there is no one like our God. Jesus speaks Lazarus name and immediately, definitively, Lazarus is on scene *totally alive*. PP Point number 3 Jesus calls *us* by name.

There is still so much in this story to unpack, you could look at the actions of Martha or Mary and put yourself in their shoes, but again to support our main point we need to consider Lazarus. When the story begins its *Illness heading toward a certainty of death*. Is this not you and I when we were in our sinful condition? It says the wages of sin is death, we were all born into this *illness producing death*. Jesus did not leave us there though. For all of us believers we can recognize that Jesus has called our name. Remember my first point about death being like a shadow. The moment he speaks, the moment he calls your name, the moment the Light touches it, the darkness flees and immediately, like Lazarus, there you are, alive.

I want to highlight another point, and that is this. Jesus is more powerful than death, obviously. Yet he still chose to lay his life down for us. Even though God can *totally* overcome death with a simple word, he knows what it is like. Look again at how our Lord was moved in verse thirty five, it says, **35** Jesus wept. **36** So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”. It was clear to them the love the Lord had for Lazarus. The same can be said about the Lord's love for you friend. Jesus loves you, and he chose to lay his life down for you. Look at **PP Romans 5:8** “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”.

What love..... A Savior to love us while we were dead, understand our pain and be moved to compassion, and call us to life by name. This is Jesus, The resurrection and the Life. This is who he is.... And this is what he does.

I would like to add one last personal story. When I was 7 years old my great grandmother went home to be with the Lord. We traveled from our home in upstate New York to Pennsylvania to attend the services. We all attended the calling hours and at the conclusion of the night we were preparing to return to the hotel room. My younger sister who would have been around 4 at the time (this is from my fathers recounting) became concerned about my great grandmother (it was an open casket). She asked my father something to the effect of “who is going to wake her up?” Probably thinking she should leave as well. I am sure my father gave an age appropriate, biblically accurate explanation to her in a way that a loving father would. After his explanation her take away was this, “I know who is going to wake up great grandma.....Jesus is” And you know what.... She is right. This is Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life.

As I was preparing this message I was thinking about if I wasn't concise in my points or if I left something out and I was brought back to my earlier thought that this story can be viewed as a microcosm of the whole Gospel (Think fern) and how I think I'm missing something here.

But before that, let me tie up what I've already said, and I know I'm repeating, but repetition is the key to learning.

Point 1- Jesus is all powerful and death becomes like a shadow

Point 2- Not only is he all powerful, but he is compassionate

Point 3- Lastly, in the midst of his unfathomable power and his immense compassion, you are not too small that he doesn't see you, and knows you specifically by name.

So about the microcosm. We have three parts: the beginning, middle and end. The thought I felt I left out was ‘the end’. Aren't you thankful for the Lord's guidance as we study scripture? I've already stated Jesus is the light right at the very beginning. He was the light and life that preceded the shadows. Our text starts with Lazarus being ill, and that is where we are, all mankind. Illness headed toward a certainty of death. Or spoken another way we are already dead in our trespasses. Ephesians 2:1 says “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins”. Does this sound like the curse found in Genesis?

Now when we see Jesus speak, Lazarus comes to life. This can be viewed as the middle (or present) of our microcosm. He is working in our world today for his kingdom and his glory. Much of our scriptures is story upon story of the Lord working in people's lives. Aren't we thankful he is still doing all this work?

Lastly, there is the end of the microcosm, in the end of our passage, Jesus speaks to those around Lazarus to “Unbind him, and let him go”. Now, we don’t actually get to see Lazarus unbound and walking in the new-ness of life, but we get to imagine this part, knowing Jesus commanded it. For our bookend we turn to Revelation chapter 1 verses 17-18. “**17** When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, **18** and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” There is much we don’t know about the future, but we know who our Lord is, the power he has, and what he has commanded.

These 44 verses point to Jesus as the Resurrection and the life.... in the very beginning.... here and now.... and our hope in the future forevermore.

As I concluded here the words of a familiar hymn

“O soul are you weary and troubled
No *light* in the *darkness you see*
There’s *light* for a look at the Savior
And *life more abundant and free*

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace”

Here again the words of Jesus from our reading in verse **25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[d] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

I want to ask you, PP Do you believe this? Has the Lord spoken your name? Has he brought you back to life? If you hear our Compassionate Lord calling you today, respond.

Pray