

Loose him

John 11:44

When freed from the dead we are often still bound in our old ways and we are to let go of the past

Introduction

- Well, we made it through September 23rd and the alignment of the planets and stars.
- You will notice in your bulletin, Thursday and Friday was Rosh Hashana, the Feast of Trumpets, the Jewish New Year.
- But to our text this morning, John 11: 17 thru 44

We will learn this morning that to really help someone we must first meet them where they are; not where we expect them to be; nor where we think they should be.

- Jesus helped Mary, Martha in the depression of their painful grief
- Too many times we want to immediately **correct** someone; we tend to want to **confront** them with their wrong actions, opinions or theology.
- The first step is to be their friend; stand by them—next to them, right where they are.

We notice: Jesus did not scold Martha's lack of knowledge or her lack of faith.

- Yes, she should have known from Scripture the Messiah has the power over death
- She said she confessed, Jesus is the Christ, Verse 27.
- Yet, she still wanted what she wanted...for her brother to be healed and not die.
- Then Jesus asked to see Mary, Verse 28, to comfort her; who had issues of her own

Verse 24 expresses the emotion we all feel or will feel.

Verse 23: *Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

Verse 24: *Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

- We have all felt a sense of great loss at the graveside.
- There, at the grave, we sense an overwhelming disappointment or anger in our sorrow
- Knowing Jesus is the resurrection and life doesn't remove the pain of grief

Which brings us to Verse 25: *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* Verse 27 *She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

- We know Jesus is the resurrection; the author and finisher of our faith, Heb. 12:2
- We know Jesus is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. 1:30
- We know Jesus is life, John 1:4 and we shall live again, John Chapter 6
- ❖ **But, knowing is one thing; pain and sorrow is ALL TOGETHER DIFFERENT,**
Verse 32: *Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."*
- ❖ **We know these words. We have prayed them:**
Lord, if you would have done what I asked, I would be happy and not in pain!

Mary and Martha represent MANY OF US here this morning:

- They represent our frustration with God's will having supremacy over our will
 - Like Mary, we say: If you had been here...
 - Like Martha we confess: Yes, I believe you are the Christ
- We believe with our head; but we grieve with our heart!

Which brings us to Back To: Verse 25: *I am the resurrection and the life.*

This is Jesus' FIFTH "I am" statement; THERE ARE SEVEN!

- The first was in Chapter 6: *I am the bread of Life.*
- The second was in Chapter 8: *I am the light of the world*
- The third was in Chapter 10: *I am the door of the sheep*
- The fourth was also in Chapter 10: *I am the good shepherd*
- This is the fifth: *I am the resurrection of the life*
- The sixth is in Chapter 14: *I am the way, the truth and the life*
- The seventh is in Chapter 15: *I am the true vine*

Honestly, is this helpful? Even if we could quote all seven "I am" statements, would that bring comfort in a time of great grief? Not really. Knowledge is only helpful when we know-that-we-know it is true; that is, we believe it!

- Verse 25: *He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*

- Verse 26: *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*
- Verse 26: *Do you believe this?*

Are you sure?

- **Because your answer is critical to your faith.**
- Martha missed the question
- Her answer implies Jesus asked if she believed He was the Messiah
- That wasn't the question.

The questions before us this morning is:

- Do you believe Jesus is THE resurrection and THE life?
- Do you believe that though you may die you will live again?
- Do you believe that you will never die?

This is important, because Mary and Martha were not alone in their confusion

- Verse 37: *"And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"*
- They missed the point all together!

Now you see how critical your answer is.

- Now we understand more fully that our concept of life and death is NOT the same as God's
- We limit our understanding of life and death to the physical; God does not
- Jesus is using physical death, "though he may die" to teach spiritual immortality
- Therefore, to never die means this: by believing we receive eternal life

Chris Fisher did a great lesson on this very topic.

- From God's point-of-view; the proper biblical view of death is SEPARATION.
- Physical death is when the spirit is separated from the body; Luke 23:46
- *"And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last."*

Therefore, Chris concluded: spiritual death is separation from God

- Spiritual life is to be reunited with God or reconciled to God or born again by God
- We cannot look at physical death as separation from God
- We must look at spiritual death as the second death: total and forever separation from God
- **Therefore, "whoever lives and believes in Jesus shall never die"**
- **That is, WE SHALL NEVER BE separated from God**

Faith begins with what we know—the past: we have believed

However, the present causes us to question what we believe because we cannot know the future.

Therefore, we must believe and know Hebrews 11:1 is TRUE!

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- **The substance is of course, Jesus**
- **The evidence is the resurrection—back then and in the future!**

Which brings us to the resurrection of Lazarus. Verses 38 – 44

We notice right away how the Son of Man reacts to human suffering:

- Verse 33: Jesus groaned in His spirit.
- Verse 35: Jesus wept.
- Verse 38: Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb.

The Greek word translated "groaned" is hard to express in English

- The literal translation of groaned would be to "snort with anger" used by Greeks to express outrage and also used to express blame
- The NIV and others translate the word "deeply moved", which we who have grieved would understand.
- Jesus was not angry, but grieved over the broken hearts before Him.
- Like some of us, people in Bethany believed He was the Christ...BUT didn't fully understand that as the Son of God He had the power over death!

We notice how the Son of God, who is love, is moved to act.

Verse 39: “*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.”*”

Verse 40: *Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”*

Verse 41: “*Then they took away the stone 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. 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.”*”

Verse 43: “*Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”*”

Now read carefully... Verse 44

Verse 44: “*he who had died came out...*” The Same Man: body and soul, Lazarus

Verse 44: “*Loose him and let him go...*”

We conclude, therefore...

1. **That if Jesus begins with prayer of thanksgiving then so should we.**
 - It was Steve last Tuesday who remembered to thank God even after many of us had jumped right in asking God for more miracles of healing...
 - **Verse 41: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me”**
 - That is where our prayers should begin, Thank you.
2. **We should take Jesus at His word: we will see the glory of God after we rely on His faithfulness—His Power; Verse 40**
3. **We should take notice the resurrection of Lazarus is the gospel call**
 - Dead souls are brought out of the grave of sin by the word of God
 - Sin is no place for those alive in Christ—holiness is our calling
 - Therefore, allow God to remove our graveclothes, Verse 44
 - We cannot freely walk in the Spirit still bound in sin
4. **The sinner cannot save himself that is, remove himself from the grave**
 - He cannot sanctify himself—remove his own graveclothes
 - He cannot save his friends or his family
 - BUT, ONCE SAVED HE CAN LAY ASIDE EVERY THING KEEPING HIM FROM HIS FREEDOM IN CHRIST—NAMELY THE SINS OF HIS OLD LIFE!
5. **This is important.**
 - Because the church, which is the body of Christ is made up of believers.
 - Each been gifted by the Holy Spirit to have an important part of the ministry of the church. **The first of which is to make disciples of Christ of our children!**