

“DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING”

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

John 11:17-27

INTRODUCTION

The apostle John did not write this Gospel in order to celebrate death; he wrote it in order to show the way of Life (20:31). “Life” is one of the prominent themes of this book. In this passage Jesus shows us not merely that He can pray to the Father in order to ask for the life of a loved one, and that He can actually raise up a dead one; He also shows us that ***HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.***

As Jesus asked Martha in verse 26, “**Do you believe this?**”

I also ask: “Have you believed this and are you saved?”

“Does this truth give you **comfort** in this world,?”

“Does it give you **hope** and **confidence** for the world to come?”

I. THE SCENE OF DEATH (17-18)

A. The Comforters—friends and professional mourners—from Jerusalem did not have far to go.

B. Christ’s enemies would have close access to Him.

II. THE SYMPATHY TOWARD THE BEREAVED (19)

- Mourning customs were very significant to the Jews.
- They did not necessarily consider all of Jesus’ friends to be outcasts.
- This family was probably prominent—a good family to be friends with.
- Jesus would use this custom to grant even these enemies **another opportunity** to repent and to **believe** on Him!

III. THE SORROW OF THE LOVED ONES (20-22)

A. She manifests initiative—typical of her character as shown in Luke 10.

- Martha, as some commentators have noted, “comes off well” in this passage. Mary does not come off as well. There is a time for contemplation, and a time for action. By not being aware and not going, Mary missed a significant statement of Jesus.

B. She Expresses her Grief (21)

- She is confident in His power to heal the sick.
- She evidently did not consider Him able to raise the dead.
- She did not say, “If you had come.” Such would have been rebuke.

C. She Is Confident that God hears His Prayers (22)

We note several things about this statement:

IV. THE STATEMENTS OF THE LIFE-GIVER (23-26)

A. Life for Lazarus (23-24)

1. Jesus promises life in the present, as well as in the future—yet

he doesn't say it will be immediate, nor that He will be the one to do it.
2. Martha regards His words with reference to the future resurrection.

B. Life in Jesus (25-26)

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE”

Some of the most powerful words ever spoken by our Lord!

- He doesn't say “I will be the R & L”; He **IS** the R & L now!
- Resurrection first; life accompanies.
- The **fifth** great “I AM” statement by Jesus in John—cf. 6:35 (Br. of Life); 8:12 (Light of World); 10:9 (the Door); 10:11 (the Good Shepherd); 14:6 (the Way, the Truth, the Life); 15:5 (the Vine).
- He doesn't merely say that He is the **source** of the R & L—He **IS** the R & L. As God He can say this.
- This passage deals *primarily* with physical resurrection, although spiritual resurrection cannot be excluded.

1. Life after physical death

2. No real death for those who are alive in Christ

- These people alone will never die.
- They will live on forever.
- They will not suffer eternal death.
- The Greek says: “**They will not not die into forever.**” *Otherwise, there is no way possible for them to ever die!*
- Where is the Sting of Death?

V. THE SAVING FAITH (26B-27)

Jesus asked: “Do you believe this?” This is what a Christ-follower must believe.

A. “Yes Lord”—I believe what you say!

B. “You are the Christ”

Not that she had a totally Biblical view of Messiah; her understanding needed clarification just as the disciples' did. (See on 1:20; 41.)

C. “You are The Son of God.”

D. “You are the Coming One”—

CONCLUSION

She answered Jesus question: “**Yes Lord, I believe.**”

O Death, where is your sting?” You are but a little pussy cat, not a ferocious lion.

Jesus Christ has de-clawed you. You are now powerless against Him and against His people.

GO DOWN DEATH! YOU ARE POWERLESS OVER ME. CHRIST HAS DELIVERED ME FROM YOU.