

# John 11: The Resurrection & Life

*The Life-Giving Victor*

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John 11.38-45

# The Grim Reality of Sin

*Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.*

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- ❖ For a second time, Jesus is deeply moved, i.e. angered and outraged, as He surveys the terrain and handiwork of His adversary: barren stone, dank lifeless caves, death.

*When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.*

MARK 5.2-5

- ❖ Jesus is the antithesis of all that He is seeing. He is the Eternal Word, the One by whom all things were created, the Light Of Life for All (P<sup>1-4</sup>). This is not what He created; this is not the work of His hands; this does not reveal His glory. In this, the last of His signs, the Author of Life will serve notice on His adversary, the Purveyor of Death, and declare, “Enough!”

*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

1 JOHN 3.8

- ❖ Like Lazarus, we are spiritually lifeless, dead in our trespasses and sin, imprisoned by the dominion of darkness.

*They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.*

EPHESIANS 4.18-19

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.*

EPHESIANS 2.1-4

- ❖ Lifeless like Lazarus, it was impossible for us to be anything other than what we were or to do anything for ourselves.

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned . . .*

ROMANS 5.12

## Grace at the Graveyard

*“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone.*

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- ❖ *“Take away the stone.”* Partnership with Jesus means there will be hard work on our part; it requires us getting to where sinners are, exposing ourselves to the awfulness of their condition, and being willing to do what is necessary to expose them to the light and life of Jesus. We take away the stone, and Jesus calls to life. To see the glory of God, we have to move the stone.
- ❖ *“By this time there is a bad odor.”* Moving the stone means uncovering the stench. There is no good sin and there are no good sinners. Anytime we are comfortable with the good in ourselves or others, we have lost sight of the awfulness of our sin in the sight of God. A gospel that does not expose our stench and need for regeneration and transformation negates the purpose of Christ’s coming and death.
- ❖ *“If you believe, you will see the glory of God.”* Martha had faith for the final resurrection but not the present reality. The glory of God will not be revealed if we leave people in their sinful condition. Being a follower and partner with Christ means confronting intractable sin with faith in His transforming grace.

## The Certainty of True Faith

*Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that You have heard me. I knew that You always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent me."*

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- ❖ The reminder of Jesus to Martha about the display of God's glory was sufficient—the stone is removed; the reality is irrelevant. Trust has regained its authority over reason and reality. Martha is back to the place of faith that she expressed earlier, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." (v. 21)
- ❖ What do we learn about faith as we listen to the prayer of Jesus—prayed for our benefit?
  - ▶ Faith is only viable when it is looking upward.
  - ▶ Faith does not accept the status quo as the final word, no matter how extreme or dire the circumstance.
  - ▶ Faith is supremely confident that God hears.
  - ▶ Without faith, we have no witness to the world.

## The Life-Giving Victor

*When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.*

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- ❖ Here is the ultimate revelation of the divine nature of Jesus—proof that He is truly equal with God, the claim for which the Jews tried to kill Him—

*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (P 4-5)*

- ❖ Here is proof that Jesus is truly the *One-By-Whom-All-Things-Were-Made*—the Author of Life (Acts 3.15), the One with the ability to speak and it is created: from the grave comes a regenerated Lazarus, in perfect health, all faculties and organs in perfect function—a re-creation of the Creator!
- ❖ We can only be alive when we encounter the life-giving Christ.

*But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

# Take Off the Grave Clothes

*Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."*

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- ❖ Our lives without Christ are utterly incompatible with life in Christ. We must take off the grave clothes.

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

EPHESIANS 4.22-24

*. . . since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

COLOSSIANS 3.9-10, 12-14