

# THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

## Part 1

### "Now Faith Is"

**John 11:17-25 (ERV) "Jesus arrived in Bethany and found that Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb for four days. 18 Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. 19 Many Jews had come to see Martha and Mary. They came to comfort them about their brother Lazarus. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to greet him. But Mary stayed home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask." 23 Jesus said, "Your brother will rise and be alive again." 24 Martha answered, "I know that he will rise to live again at the time of the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection. I am life. Everyone who believes in me will have life, even if they die."**

**I want to talk to you today about 3 kinds of faith—yesterday faith, someday faith, and faith for today.**

**Notice in our text how Martha exhibits the first two kinds of faith—faith for yesterday—"if you had been here,"**

**And someday faith—"I know that he will rise to live again."**

**Had been. He will.**

**But what Jesus was looking for was NOW faith, TODAY faith—the faith that believes that, even though things had not gone down like the sisters had hoped, He was still the NOW answer for their dilemma!**

**After expressing her disappointment that Jesus was, in her opinion, late, Jesus looked at Martha and said, “I am the resurrection and the life...” (NKJV)**

**The two key words are, “I am.”**

**I’m not only the One who could have done something YESTERDAY, or the One who will do something SOMEDAY...**

**I am a NOW Savior! A TODAY answer to your problems!**

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**The first thing that jumps out is that Martha’s faith was inflexible.**

**Her faith was locked into only one possible outcome—Jesus would immediately respond to the messengers, make a beeline for Lazarus, and heal him before things got worse.**

**And when Jesus didn’t do that, her faith hit a wall.**

**Martha had a fixed picture in her mind of exactly *WHAT* Jesus would do, and *WHEN* He would do it...**

**But the *WHAT* of Jesus's plan was not to heal Lazarus, it was to raise him from the dead.**

**And the *WHEN* of His plan was not to come immediately, but to wait four days after Lazarus had died.**

**To Mary and Martha, Jesus was late. But to Jesus, He was right on time.**

**What looked to them like Jesus not caring, was actually Jesus caring more than they could have imagined...**

**He intended to take their faith to a whole new level!**

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**Jesus had already told His disciples, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe" (John 11:14-15 NKJV).**

**Rather than heal him, which the disciples had seen Him do many times before, Jesus's plan was to raise him from the dead.**

**This would be a far more spectacular miracle that would profoundly affect the faith of the disciples, and Lazarus's two sisters, forever-more!**

**So Martha's plan was a good one, but not the best one.**

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**So the first lesson we learn from this story is:**

**I. Don't lock Jesus in a box of your own expectations**

**Expectations are good, but not inflexible expectations that don't allow for God to do things differently!**

**God said through the Prophet Isaiah, "This plan of mine is not what you would work out, neither are my thoughts the same as yours!**

**9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours" (55:8-9 LB).**

**How often in my own walk, His plan is not what I would have worked out.**

**But His way was always better!**

**So I've learned to live by a new beatitude:**

**"Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be disappointed!"**

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**We walk by faith, and faith includes leaving the HOW, WHAT, and WHEN to God.**

**For instance, Abraham, the father of our faith, was called by God to leave his hometown, Ur of the Chaldees.**

**He walked away with nothing more than a word from God to leave.**

**The Bible says, "He went out, now knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8 NKJV).**

**He had no idea how God was going to work out the WHAT, WHEN, and HOW of his future!**

**But unlike Martha, he wasn't locked into any one single expectation of how God was going to bring His plan to pass.**

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**If you had walked up to him as he left Ur with his nephew and wife, and asked him, "Hey Abraham, where are you going?"**

**He would have said, "I don't know."**

**If you had then asked, "Abraham, how long will you be traveling?"**

**He would have said, "I don't know."**

**If you had then asked, "What will you do when you get wherever it is you don't know where you're going to?"**

**He'd have said, "I don't know."**

**You see, Abraham's faith was in a NOW God, a TODAY God...**

**His faith said, "He'll take care of me TODAY, He'll guide me TODAY, He'll feed me TODAY.....He'll get me there when He gets me there, but right now I trust Him to work out His plan TODAY!"**

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**Sometimes our expectations of how God will bring a certain thing to pass are so fixed in our minds, we can even miss His answer when it comes.**

**We know from Scripture that the Jewish people missed their Messiah, Jesus Christ, because they expected a conquering Messiah—one who would rule the world and put down all evil.**

**They expected their messiah to stop all wars and conflict in the world.**

**They believed their messiah would drive the Romans out of their home land, Jerusalem, so that they could live in peace.**

**When Jesus didn't do any of that, they rejected Him and missed their Messiah!**

**So we must be careful to not say, "If only you *HAD*—done things according to my expectations, everything would be alright!"**

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**Then Martha also had SOMEDAY faith—"I know that he WILL rise to live again at the time of the resurrection on the last day."**

I know that he will—not that he can today, but that he will someday.

So we also learn from Martha:

## II. Don't limit God to SOMEDAY

You see, it was this attitude in Martha, as well as the people that had gathered for Lazarus's funeral, that produced the shortest verse in the Bible—"Jesus wept" (John 11:35 NKJV).

Why did He weep?

Because they didn't understand that the very One they believed could have done something if He had arrived SOONER, or who would do something LATER, was standing right in front of them as a NOW Savior...

He could resurrect NOW, he could answer them NOW!

He was not limited to YESTERDAY, or SOMEDAY—He could do something TODAY!

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SOMEDAY faith is easy faith...it's east to say: "Well, someday I believe God will do this or that."

But it's the TODAY kind of faith, the "rubber meets the road" kind of faith, that we need most!

**David wrote of the Lord, "God is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of great trouble" (Ps. 46:1 CEB).**

**It's the TODAY kind of faith that brings home the bacon,  
brings peace in a storm,  
opens that needed door,  
And resists the devil till he flees!**

**When bills need to be paid and you don't have a job, you don't need a someday Savior, you need a NOW Jesus.**

**When your kids have gone into crazy rebellion and Satan is attacking your home with discord, you don't need Him SOMEDAY, you need Him TODAY!**

**Jesus wanted Mary, Martha, His disciples, and all the funeral attendees to know that He can do something NOW—not just yesterday, not just someday, but *TODAY!***

**So He walked up to the tomb where Lazarus lay and said, "Roll away the stone."**

**And that's what we'll talk about next time—rolling away the obstacles between you and your answer.**



