

Lesson Six

“I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

Jesus is the source of life that never ends

John 11:11-27

Worship

Responsive Reading (Psalm 16:8-11)

A: I have set the LORD always before me.

B: Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

A: Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

B: My body also will rest secure,

A: Because you will not abandon me to the grave,

B: Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

A: You have made known to me the path of life;

B: You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Prayer:

Thanks to you, O Christ victorious!

Thanks to you, O Lord of life!

Death has now no power o'er us,

You have conquered in the strife.

Thanks because you did arise

And have opened paradise!

None can fully sing the glory

Of the resurrection story.

(CW 147:2)

Introduction

In matters of death, resurrection, and eternal life, which of the following things do you struggle with the most?

- That death could strike at any time, and I need to be ready.
- Accepting the fact that I am going to die.
- Being confident about what awaits me beyond death.
- Facing the prospect of losing someone I love when he or she dies.

Death is sleep

Jesus' friend Lazarus was sick, and Jesus was asked to come to Bethany and heal him. Jesus purposely waited until Lazarus died, and then he went to Bethany. In the context of a death and a funeral, Jesus speaks words about the resurrection.

Read John 11:11-13.

1. What does Jesus call death in verse 11?
2. Sometimes people try to soften the harshness of death and speak of it as "sleep" only to keep friends and relatives from feeling uncomfortable. Is Jesus doing that here?
3. How are death and sleep alike for the believer?

Jesus used death as an opportunity

Read John 11:14-16.

1. Why was Jesus glad that he had not been with Lazarus before Lazarus died?
2. What good purposes can death serve?

Death leads to the decay of our bodies

Read John 11:17-19.

1. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb?
2. Why is knowing this fact important for understanding the miracle Jesus will perform?
3. What assurance is here for us if our bodies are violently destroyed in death?

"Reason cannot become reconciled to the teaching that this rising is to come about so quickly. For it sees that one is reduced to ashes by fire, another thrown into the water, a third torn by wild animals, a fourth devoured by ravens on the gallows, etc. In short, who can tell, nay, imagine the manifold and strange ways in which human beings perish throughout the world? And yet, in one moment all these are to stand alive before the Last Judgment."—Martin Luther

Death may tempt us to doubt

Read John 11:20-24.

1. Which of the following describe Martha's attitude in verse 21?
 - Despairing
 - Blaming
 - Sorrowful
 - Wishful
 - Angry
 - Second-guessing

1. Which of the previously listed attitudes would be sinful?

2. What tells you Martha was still clinging to her faith in Jesus?

3. What are Jesus' words of comfort?

4. We are often called on to comfort those who have lost a loved one. What effect do we want our comfort to have on them?

Believe that Jesus rose and will raise us up

Read John 11:25-27.

1. Jesus says, "I am the Resurrection." What is the resurrection, according to the following verses?
 - John 5:28,29
 - Philippians 3:20,21

- Job 19:25-27
2. What will it mean to have a glorified body?
 3. How is Jesus *the* resurrection?
 4. "He . . . will live, even though he dies. . . . [He] will never die." It sounds as if Jesus is contradicting himself. Explain what each phrase means.
 5. Martha's confession of faith is rich and wonderful. What is she saying about Jesus by calling him—
 - the Christ?
 - the Son of God?
 - the one who was to come into the world?

Summary

It has been said, "The death rate throughout history has remained constant—one per person." Sooner or later all of us must face death. It is the ultimate problem of the entire human race. Humanly speaking, there are no solutions for it or for the eternal death that would follow.

But death does not have to end in eternal misery. Those who believe in Jesus are promised a new and perfect life after death, for Jesus has canceled the deathly debt of sin with his substitutionary life and death for us, and Jesus will reunite our bodies and souls in heaven. Jesus is the ultimate solution for death, because Jesus is the Resurrection.

For further discussion

1. Philosopher Blaise Pascal once said, "Being unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, men have decided, in order to be happy, not to think about such things." How does this tendency of human nature make the gospel about the resurrection less appealing for people? Why might our modern medical advances have a similar affect on people's views about death and resurrection?

2. How important is the teaching of the resurrection to the Christian message? (See Philippians 3:10,11; 1 Corinthians 15:13,14.)

3. Comment on this quote from C. Everett Koop, regarding the death of his son David: "In an effort to be comforting, so many Christians glibly say, 'God will fill the void.' Instead, we found that the void is never really filled, but God does make the void bearable."

4. It is said that there are five steps that people go through when grieving a death or facing their own imminent death: (1) Denial, (2) Anger, (3) Bargaining, (4) Depression, and (5) Acceptance. How does Jesus' promise of the resurrection address each one?