

# I AM The Resurrection And The Life

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Date: 24 May 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] As we come this morning to God's Word, as those that are worshipping here regularly will be aware, we've been going through the I am sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

And this morning we're on our fifth study where Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life in John 11. And as we had the passage read to us, we see our text is taken from John 11, 25 to 26, where Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

And that's a question that we'll come back to at the end of our service. Our title for this morning is, I am the resurrection and the life. And while it may look that there are four points, there are actually two.

The circumstances and the conversion will be taken as one point and the claim and the confession, which we find in verse 27, will be taken as our second point.

[ 1 : 16 ] As we come into this passage, just in terms of what the circumstances are around it, we recognize, as Ken read for us in from the beginning of the chapter, that we've been notified that Jesus' friend Lazarus was sick.

And instead of rushing to the home of Martha and Mary, to Bethany, Jesus tarries.

And that might seem that it's unusual when you hear of a friend that is sick on the point of death, that instead of going to visit them, Jesus tarries.

But we see there quite clearly that what it says there in verse 4, But when Jesus heard it, he said, This illness does not lead to death, for it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

There was a purpose, and Jesus knew what that purpose was. And one of the things that we learn as we go through this passage is, there are things that are said by Jesus. There are things that we come across within the passage that we maybe have questions over.

[ 2 : 30 ] And we maybe have questions over Martha's response, and some of Martha's actions and questions. What we have to remember is, that we now have the whole Bible.

Martha didn't have access to the Bible. And she didn't have a full understanding of everything that we are now blessed with, in our understanding, and hopefully we'll unpick some of it.

I can't profess that we'll be able to get through it all. There is so much within the passage. We could have read on, down to the end of verse 44, and covered the whole of the resurrection of Lazarus.

But time doesn't allow us to go. What we want to focus on is Jesus' interaction with Martha, that then leads Jesus to say, I am the resurrection and the life.

And as we go into the passage, and as we see, we recognize that Jesus has difficulty getting the disciples also, to understand what is actually happening.

[ 3 : 42 ] The disciples hear that Lazarus is sick, they recognize that Jesus is tarrying, and then Jesus tells them that Lazarus has fallen asleep, and they're going to go and wake him.

But the disciples don't understand that what Jesus is actually saying to them is, that Lazarus has actually died. And he says in verse 14 and 15, then he told them plainly, Lazarus has died.

And then we learn something else here. And for your sake, I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. We've seen as we've gone through the I am sayings, one of the things that Jesus keeps asking is, do you believe?

Do you believe in me? Do you believe that I am the bread, I am the light of the world? And he asks repeatedly, do you believe? And it's no different here. And even as we see, when he speaks to Martha, he asks that question of her, do you believe this?

It's not do you believe on something, it's do you believe this, that I am the resurrection and the life. So right at the beginning, as we study this passage, what we need to be thinking about is, what do we believe?

[ 4 : 57 ] What do we believe about Jesus? Do we believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? And what he has come to do, and why he came.

If we move on, we can see the interaction between Jesus and Martha. Jesus eventually arrives in Bethany, and as he is there, or arrives there, Martha comes out to him.

Now we've met Martha before in the scriptures. We knew that Mary and Martha were sisters. We learn here that Martha and Mary were also the sisters of Lazarus. Martha was the one that was in the house, cooking for Jesus, while her sister sat, her sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet.

And Martha questioned Jesus, on that occasion as well. She wanted Jesus, to get Mary to get up and help her. And Jesus said, no, Mary's doing the right thing.

So then we meet Martha here. And Martha's left the home. Again, Mary stayed at home. And Martha comes out to meet Jesus. And Martha comes out in her grief.

[ 6 : 11 ] And what's the first thing she does? She questions Jesus. If you had been here, my brother may not have died. What does it teach us?

It teaches us that Martha came to Jesus. And each and every one of us, in our grief, as we prayed earlier on, it's been a difficult time for the community here.

Not just in the last fortnight, but in the last number of months. There's been deaths that have happened that have been unexpected. And Martha's brother here has died. And she comes to Jesus.

And she asks Jesus a question. Or makes a statement to Jesus. And the reality is that what Martha teaches us here, that we must come to Jesus with our questions. Jesus says, come unto me, all ye that are weak and heavy laden.

It's also said elsewhere in Scripture, cast all your cares and your anxieties upon me. Why? Because he cares for us. So when we have questions, come to Jesus with them.

[ 7 : 14 ] It doesn't mean that we go into a wee huddle and we try and work it out ourselves, because very often we'll come up with the wrong answer. We come to Jesus as Martha came here. But there's something else we learn about Martha as she came to Jesus.

There was maybe a lack of faith. Martha asked or said, if you were here, my brother would not have died. We know, as we read in Scripture of the centurion servant, that Jesus didn't have to be physically present for somebody to be healed.

And sometimes, while we have Jesus, we understand who Jesus is, do we sometimes doubt the capabilities of Jesus? Do we actually, although we love Jesus, does our faith sometimes trip us up that we don't actually trust in what Jesus can do?

Do we come to him and ask him and fully believe that as we come and ask that he is able to do? When you read the commentaries, Martha gets quite a difficult time.

But I think what we have to do is recognize that Martha's no different to any one of us. That we have doubts, we have failings, but what she teaches us here is that she came to Jesus.

[ 8 : 34 ] Do we come to Jesus with our doubts, with our worries, with our concerns? She then goes on and she says in the second part of the verse, if I can focus on it here, but even now, sorry, if you just go back one moment, I should have said there are some quotes there from J.C. Ryle.

As I said, some commentators give Martha a bit of a hard time, but I think the way that J.C. Ryle breaks down the question in three different ways helps us to understand how Martha may have come to Jesus and how we can come to Jesus.

Here is a passion not unmixed with a tinge of reproach, I wish you had been here. Why didn't you not come sooner? You might have prevented my brother's death.

And that might be a prayer and a request that somebody has, not just in terms of somebody's bereavement, but very often even during a time of sickness. She comes in love, confidence and devotion.

I wish you had been here. We loved you so much. We depended so entirely on your love. We felt if you had been here, all would have been well-ordered. Do we have that confidence in Jesus when we come to him, trusting that he will be able to do what is impossible for us as men and as women?

[ 10 : 08 ] And faith, I wish you had been here. I believe you could have healed my brother and kept death from him. So while there is rebuke from some for Martha, J.C. Ryle recognises that the

question she asks actually shows her passion not just for Jesus but for her brother, her love and her confidence for Jesus, but also that she had a faith in what Jesus was able to do.

And she goes on to say, but even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. And again, on the surface, that statement by Martha is probably what many of us would say ourselves.

But it fails again to understand who Jesus actually is. Martha's understanding of what had happened in the past when we read in 1 Kings sorry, in 1 Kings when Elijah was crying out to God for the child to be revived and Elisha when he lay on top of the young boy and cried out to God, Martha's understanding was that Jesus had to come and ask God.

She failed to recognise that Jesus was actually God and that he didn't need. She had seen the miracles that he had performed and now here as he speaks to her while she says that you would call upon God and he would give it to you, she fails to actually fully understand who Jesus is.

And it's at the position with some of us here that we actually don't fully understand who Jesus is, who Jesus was when he walked on earth and who he is to us now as he sits at God's right hand.

[12:12] Do we come and we ask half-heartedly, not recognising that as we come to God, that he, come to Jesus, he intercedes on our behalf to God.

We can come and we can ask and Jesus can give because he is God but Martha failed to understand it here. and then as we go on, we get an understanding as we look into the Old Testament.

Jesus asked the question or said to her, your brother Lazarus will rise. And in the Old Testament, we have references to resurrection and that would have been Martha's understanding.

Isaiah tells us your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. Daniel, in Daniel 12, is a bit more specific. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.

And here we read of a separation that will take place, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Here Daniel tells us that there will be a resurrection, that the resurrection he speaks of here indicates to us that there will be a separation.

[13:34] Some will rise to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Now we know within scripture that the Pharisees believed in resurrection, the Sadducees didn't, but we maybe get an understanding of why Martha then goes on to say, yes, I believe that my brother will arise at the last days.

She didn't fully understand what it was that Jesus was actually then going to have to explain to her. So while we have the circumstances and the conversation that is here and the incidents that are in the Old Testament that shape Martha's understanding, we then find out as we move on that Jesus makes this claim.

The claim, I am the resurrection and the life. He's trying to explain to Martha what's going to happen. Your brother will rise, but she doesn't fully understand.

So Jesus tells her plainly, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

And the question to her, do you believe this? And she said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is coming into the world. Jesus makes the statement, I am the resurrection and the life.

[15:10] It wasn't really understood by those that were round about him. He didn't really understand what it was that Jesus meant. Without Jesus, there was no resurrection.

There is no resurrection. And without Jesus, there is no life. As God breathed life into Adam when he made the first man, Jesus was there with him.

And Jesus is very life. And it says there, there is neither resurrection nor eternal life outside of Jesus. And what we need to get our heads round, what we need to understand, is the very question that Jesus asks.

do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? And J.C. Ryle goes on and he says, I am the great spring and source of all life.

And whatever life anyone has, eternal, spiritual, or physical, is all owing to me. it's amazing, absolutely amazing, that the life that we have, whether it be our physical life, whether it be our spiritual life, or more importantly, our eternal life, isn't it a great comfort in knowing that because Jesus came and because Jesus was and is the resurrection and the life, that we have life and we are promised eternal life.

[16:48] Again, I ask you the question, do you believe this? Let them not just be words that are on a page. Don't let them just be words that are there for each and every thing that were written here as part of history.

There are words that are there for each and every one of us to think upon, to dwell upon, to meditate upon, and to recognize that Jesus is the very giver of life.

Each and every one that comes to Jesus has been resurrected because we are told that we were dead in our trespasses and sin.

And only by receiving the new life through Jesus can we truly be resurrected. And it goes on in the passage to say to us, those that believe now will never die.

those that die, die physically but not spiritually. Now that can be difficult for us to get our heads round.

[17:55] And I absolutely recognize that. I take great comfort in the fact that it says in Scripture that here we see but through a glass darkly.

But then we will know and then we will see fully. there are things that we read that we don't always understand. We find it difficult to explain. But what we need to fully understand with the passage here is that Jesus came as a resurrection and a life.

If we believe in him, we have life. Life in all its fullness. Life eternally. if we refuse, as we read earlier on, in Daniel, there will come a time of resurrection.

There will be a separation. Those that will go to eternity, those that will spend on eternity in shameful contempt. The question comes back, do you believe, sorry if you just stay back one moment, do you believe this?

And she said to him, yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. Martha had asked various questions of Jesus.

[19:16] She had made statements about Jesus, but here we have recorded the first statement of confession from a woman about who Jesus was.

And some would say that her confession about who Jesus was was greater and is greater than the confession that Peter made when Jesus said that you are the Christ. She comes and she says, yes Lord, I believe.

She affirms her belief in who Jesus is. She recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, that he's the Son of God that's come into the world.

It says there who is coming into the world. And there is truth in that because he is coming back. But Martha, despite all her maybe misunderstandings, is able to say, yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus told her, I am the resurrection and the life. He told her the importance of believing in him. And he asks, do you believe this? And she says to him, yes Lord, I believe.

[20:31] And I said at the beginning, there was a question that each person gathered here this morning needs to be able to answer for themselves. And that's the same question that was asked of Martha.

Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that Jesus came to offer you eternal life?

That he came and hung upon a cross at Calvary for you? And if you hear that message this morning, I pray that you would be able to answer as Martha did here.

Yes, I do believe. I do believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that came into this world to give me eternal life.

Why? Because I believe in him. I'll give the last word to James Boyce. As you think about it, notice that Jesus speaks of faith and not a feeling.

[21:43] He did not say to Martha, do you feel better now, Martha? He recognized that Martha had been grieving. But he came with a very different comfort. Do you feel better now, Martha?

Have you found these thoughts comforting? Do you feel your old optimism returning? According to Jesus, it was now not how she felt that was important, but what she believed.

Feelings are deceiving. Moreover, they come and go. On the other hand, faith is an anchor fixed in bedrock.

to believe the words of Jesus is to believe in the one whose promises are absolutely trustworthy. Do you know and have that anchor, sure and steadfast, with your faith in Jesus?

Knowing that Jesus came as the resurrection and the life, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.

[ 22 : 50 ] It's not about your feelings. It's not about how you feel this morning, how you may feel later on this afternoon. It's about whether you believe and have your anchor firmly placed in Jesus.

I am the resurrection and the life. He came to give his life for each and every one of us. We hear his call upon our life and answer that call by coming and believing.

Do you believe this morning? Let us pray. My