

The Great I AM: The Resurrection and the Life (4/21/2020)

My dad once told me, “If you ever think you’re great and wonderful, go and visit the cemetery; it is filled with people who were great and wonderful.” No matter how great and wonderful a person thinks he is, no matter how lowly and obscure a person may be, death is the great equalizer. In the end we all wind up in the grave. Dust we are, and to dust we will return.

This truth came home to two sisters named Mary and Martha. Their brother Lazarus was sick. They sent word to Jesus, who was some twenty miles away, saying, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” They simply informed Jesus of the situation. They didn’t make any requests or demands of him. They knew Jesus would take care of the situation according to his gracious wisdom. So what did Jesus do? Surprisingly, he stayed there two more days. Then he said to his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I’m going there to wake him up.” They replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus was speaking about his death—for to him death is nothing but a sleep from which he will awaken us. The disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

When Jesus arrived, Martha came and met him on the outskirts of town. “Lord,” she said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus replied, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world.”

Martha let Mary know Jesus had arrived. Together they went to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” Jesus said. Martha objected, “But Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” It seemed the situation was hopeless. In addition to decomposition, the Jews believed that the soul hung around for three days, and after that was gone forever. But Jesus reassured her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took the stone away. He looked up and prayed to the heavenly Father so the people standing there would believe he was sent from the Father. Then he 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. Jesus said, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Jesus displayed his almighty power over our worst enemy, death. News of this spread quickly and the Jewish religious leaders were desperate because of Jesus’ popularity. They were afraid he would take away their power and prestige, and so they sped up their sinister plot to kill Jesus. Before long he was hanging on a cross being robbed of his life, so that we might have eternal life. Three days later he proved he is the Resurrection and the Life by breaking death’s icy cold grip.

A little boy had cancer and his parents were told that there was no hope. Their pastor came and visited the boy at his hospital bed. “Pastor, am I going to die?” the little boy asked. “No, son,” the pastor said, “God’s children never die.”

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Lord, let at last your angels come;
To Abram’s bosom bear me home
That I may die unfearing.
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
That my own eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, your glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, My prayer attend,
my prayer attend,
And I will praise you without end.

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read John 11.

Pastor Zuberbier