

John

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [0 : 0 0] It is found in the Gospel recorded by John, the eleventh chapter, the twenty-sixth verse.
And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.
Believest thou this? We are quite sure of one thing.
And that is that this subject, which we have been considering today and shall continue to do so tonight, is one of the greatest subjects in the eyes of the Lord Jesus.
No one could read the Gospels, the account of his ministry, his life, all that he set before himself while here on earth, without coming to this conclusion, that the great purpose of the Lord Jesus was to direct men and women to believe in his name.
- [2 : 0 1] And if it is therefore the great subject on the mind and in the eyes of the Lord, it ought to be in ours.
And indeed, if it is not, it is woe for us. But if it is, it's the most blessed and most prospective subject that ever we could entertain.
Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are three things I want this evening just to try to unfold before you.
First of all, the belief in the Lord Jesus, how important and how precious. Then again, how that belief is established.
And thirdly, what are its effects. Three great in things. What it means to believe in the Lord Jesus.
- [3 : 3 0] What belief means in its reality. How it is established in a believer's heart and in a believer's life.
And what are the effects. Are there any effects? I hope we shall see tonight how great and how glorious, how lasting and how beneficial the effects of a real believing heart can be and will be to all those who truly believe.
Now, what is belief? The moralist will say, Oh, you do not need to concern yourself about belief.
All that you need to do is to improve. Make yourself better. There are any amount of ways of doing it.
All manner of aids are at your disposal, says the moralist. To make yourself better. To make yourself better.
- [4 : 5 2] And in so doing, make yourself worthy of a state of salvation. And also make yourself worthy of entering into heaven.
That's the moralist. Then the ecumenist, he says, All you need is unity.
Belief can be left on one side. We can settle that matter at our own convenience. But let us put first of all, and aim first of all, after one thing, and that is unity.
So you see, both these types, they are quite prepared to leave belief altogether out of their consideration.

But not so with the Lord Jesus. He says, Except a man believe, he shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[6 : 09] And how many other scriptures that come from his sacred lips, that verify fully and blessedly the greatness of belief, the glory of belief, because it is a work of God and the gift of God, and also the reality of it.

Believing in Jesus. Believing in Jesus. Then, we see then these people, Christ says to them, he says to us, believe.

And we look at Martha, who is so much involved in this narrative in which our text is found. There is something very striking and pleasing about the character of Martha.

I think this incident in her life brings out the best in her character.

We have been rather inclined to relegate to relegate poor Martha into an inferior position. We remember how the Lord spake to her on one occasion and even went so far as very tenderly, but nevertheless to rebuke her.

[7 : 58] She said, Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary, your sister, has chosen that better part which shall not be taken away from her.

Poor Martha was silent, and we are tempted to relegate her to a place of inferiority among these three persons who lived in this home at Bethany.

But I feel this, that this narrative here brings out about the solidity and the excellence of her belief and of her character, because I want you to just join with me this evening in observing one or two things that show so clearly what a kind of person she was.

Martha, the sister of Mary, whose brother Lazarus was now dead. And we read this about her, soon as she heard that Jesus was coming and if you look into the the word, the scripture, you'll see perhaps in your margin that it says Jesus is coming.

She speaks or the word is here spoken as if it was in the past tense, but it is in the present tense, really, in the original. And as soon as she heard then that Jesus is coming, she goes out to meet him.

[10 : 05] let us just think of what that meant to Martha. She was encompassed at this present moment with the sorrowing companions, friends, relatives, they'd all come, some of them from no doubt from great distances, they'd all come to mourn with her, entering into her house and weeping with her and seeking no doubt in all sincerity to show sympathy to this dear woman and her sister at this tremendous loss to both of them in their family.

She would there be really responsible for the entertainment of these people but she leaves them. They mean nothing to her now.

Her master is coming. She is sure of one thing. He is about to appear. She has no doubt there were no special tidings to inform her of his approach but she was aware of it.

I'm sure of one thing a believer is aware when the Lord is coming. when there he is drawing near to them.

They may be in great trouble as Martha was but if the Lord Jesus is about to approach they become wonderfully conscious and blessedly aware of the Lord's coming and she leaves this company of people she cannot allow them to hinder her now she has something to do some step to take she has to go on a way of her own and she must do it and must go indeed without any hesitation hesitation or without any hindrance she went to meet him and as soon as she came she said Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died you see poor dear

[12 : 38] Martha was like a good many of us unless we can have a visible sight or a real sense that our prayers are being answered clearly visibly demonstrously we haven't enough faith to believe that they will be or that the Lord will eventually solve our difficulties and bring us out from under our problems and answer our prayers we say to the Lord like Martha did Lord if thou hadst been here then all this trouble that I'm in now would never have happened you see how limited we are sometimes in our faith and what is worse we limit the Lord who is omnipotent and almighty who can do everything and nothing being too hard for him we limit him by our poor feeble beliefs or attempt at belief like

Martha Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died so she put so much then of emphasis and value upon the presence of the Lord it is a wonderful thing to have the Lord's presence but you see she viewed it in this way if his bodily presence was not with them if he was not there in person then nothing could be done that she hoped might have been done in sparing her brother and preventing him from facing death death but she went out to meet the Lord and we read also how she expressed her faith in the

Lord and this again is a wonderful side of the characteristic of Martha when he had spoken the words of our text to her as I mentioned them this morning she said Lord I believe oh what a wonderful change had come over Martha in those very few moments after she had met the Lord and heard his words she was now a transfigured person so to speak she was no longer wondering or thinking along these lines of the visible presence of the Lord that that was the utmost necessity if anything really was to be done we needed his visible presence now she says this I believe that thou art the son of

God who should come into this world I believe therefore thou art the sent one of God I believe thou art the Messiah I believe everything is in thy hands God has placed everything in thy hands what a change what a difference in a few moments of time my dear friends Christ will make these differences in us if he comes to us and if we go out after him he'll make all the difference in the world belief is the most wonderful thing people despise it they laugh at it they look down upon those who are who call themselves believers they think they are the poor creatures who've never had any enlightenment they think that they do not really know what it is to live they've missed the world they think they've missed the best in life that we are grasping and which they will find in the end to be but a bubble with no substance and no reality but they look down upon believers as if they are poor empty people which know not life in its true nature and reality but these people know the secret of the

Lord they know the wonders of having Christ the object of their belief they know how transforming he can be and will be in their lives their outlook their thinking just as it was with Martha a few minutes only but a very few minutes and here is this dear woman saying Lord if thou has been here we've totally missed we've failed almost suggesting that he had failed because he was not present and anyway the whole thing has fallen down on us this terrible tragedy has come all because thou was not here the next moment she's saying lifting up her eyes to the blessed Lord she said Lord I believe I believe thou canst do everything and anything that thou askest thy father he will do it what a change here we see the reality of a believing heart when that belief comes from

[19 : 05] God then again she sees how his power over life and death is supreme I know she says that my brother will rise again in the last day I believe this there will be a resurrection and he will be raised immortal to that eternal kingdom but she did not expect him to be raised there and then she still had a limitation to her faith and the Lord was to correct that so wonderfully he entered into it he took her up on that very ground he said in effect

Martha you are thinking of a resurrection that will be while here in your very presence you are speaking to him who is the resurrection there would be no resurrection if it were not for me and there will be no resurrection unless Jesus Christ calls his own people out of their grave the dead the unbelieving dead will be raised again but oh how dreadful to stand only before the great throne of judgment and hear the dread sentence depart from me I never knew you she says I am he says I am the resurrection and the life and now

I want you to notice another thing about Martha what a difference this made to her and in her what does she do now apparently the Lord never said to her anything about Mary at least there's no record of him saying anything about Mary but Martha when she had received this wondrous revelation and we'll call it that that's what it was she could see now here standing before her was the Lord of life who had the power over all things living and dead here was the Lord the master what must she do first and foremost she must go and tell her poor broken hearted sister who was weeping among all the friends and neighbors that had come to comfort them she must tell him that the master was come and she adds something

I don't know whether she had any warrant for this but she had faith to believe that it would be a true word and it was a true word and calleth for thee the master is come and calleth for thee we have to be very careful how we address people I always feel very sensitive about some of our hymns they put language into people's mouths which they cannot really truly sing of course there are beautiful hymns that a believer can sing and ought to sing but there are also hymns which if an unbeliever sings it's a travesty really of the truth and you cannot really say to people whom you know not anything about

Jesus died for you you cannot say to a person who bears no evidence whatsoever of having any measure of the fear of God in their heart or in their life God loves you it may be true but you have no warrant to utter such words really now Martha had faith and so she goes to her sister Mary and she says to sister mother master has come and calleth for thee she was assured of this that that blessed lord and master who had welcomed her so wonderfully and had spoken to her so graciously would not leave dear

[24 : 29] Mary out of it but as equally embrace her as he did and then we read another wonderful thing in this chapter we read the shortest verse in the Bible you boys and girls you young young people you can never exhaust the wonders of the Bible and here is one of the great wonders of the Bible the shortest text in the Bible is in our chapter and this is what it is Jesus wept shortest text and the most profoundest too because of this fact it shows the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ he was human oh he was ever so human he had a body like unto our own body except our sin there was no sin in the

Lord Jesus he was holy he said you know the prince of darkness cometh and hath nothing in me if there was a single taint of sin in the Lord Jesus Christ he couldn't have said that the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me and Jesus wept I say this is a marvelous demonstration of his humanity and yet as we go on through the chapter we see the great demonstration of his divinity because he raises his voice aloud and says Lazarus come forth and the dead came forth bound hand and foot in grave clothes you see humanity joined with divinity is to be seen in the scriptures of God in the person of the

Lord Jesus Christ now we must hasten how is this belief to be established Christ said you see in our text he that liveth and believeth now this gives us a very clear indication as to how belief is to be established by our lives by the life of faith and the life of faith has its beginning and that beginning is in the new birth none but those that are born of God can ever live the life of faith the life of faith is not made up of ordinances it's not made up of so called sacraments it's not made up of duties or performances the life of faith faith that is a living principle comes from

God and is installed in the believer at the new birth when they're born again it may not be very evident but it is there and without it there can be no belief in the Lord Jesus but if there is a new birth then there's one thing that is bound to follow that and that is this there will be growth just like an ordinary birth natural birth when a babe is born we begin to watch and look very carefully and observe closely to see the growth the movements indications of an interest perhaps of being manifested for the first time these are wonderful things they please the parents immensely because they're signs of life growth is a sign of life and growth in grace is a veritable sign of life the life of

God in the soul and therefore Christ was right indeed he was when he said he that lives and believers in me yes and if there is a growth eventually there will be an interest real interest in the things of God in Christ's word in Christ's name oh I do think it's needful to have an interest one of the great things that seem to be absent today among so many professors of religion is a real interest oh it will go a little way but it will not go very very far a real interest interest in ourselves in how we perform in how the things of

[30 : 39] God are working out in us interest in what we aim at an interest in where we hope to come eventually in that glorious kingdom you know you can go and talk to people some people and as you talk to them you may wonder whether they ever think whether there is a heaven and whether they will ever reach it as far as an interest in it you can hardly discover the semblance of the presence of such an interest but my dear friends if we are believers in the Lord Jesus we ought to be all ever concerned and interested in what he will do for when we see him we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is when the work of grace is done surely we have an interest in that state which shall follow and succeed the work the state of grace for whom the

Lord giveth grace he giveth glory no good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly then again to have the belief in the Lord established in our hearts and lives is to be aware of our interest aware of our privileges oh I do think it's a great thing to be conscious of our privileges as a Christian we've got an enormous amount of privilege you know if we belong to the Lord we can go to him we can tell him all about our way and our needs we can lay everything in his hand we needn't carry our own burdens cast thy burden on the Lord he says to us and while we try to carry our burdens we're only doing exactly what he says we should not do cast thy burden on the

Lord he shall sustain thee and he tells his people that he cares for them we need to be aware of our privileges to worship what a privilege that is good many people would today give all that they had to have the privilege of worship but they have been denied it by their fellow men we need to value the worship of God and to be aware of the greatness of its privilege then as I must hasten now to the final word what is its effects well to be very brief on this point Christ said here he shall never die and that word never is a tremendous emphatic word in the original it has all the weight and all the power far beyond what we can imagine is attached to it shall never die never die you know how the

Lord Jesus speaks about those who believe in him he says no man shall pluck them out of my hand now our translators have put that word in that scripture that word man because really you know it limits that wonderful truth because if it was in the original I don't know why our translators put it in as a supplied word but they have and we always quote it but if it really was in the original it would mean this whilst man cannot separate or take or snatch a believer out of the hand of Christ the devil might but no that scripture embraces all devils men and all powers that can oppose or seek to destroy he says none shall pluck them out of my hand what a wonderful

God what a blessed Jesus he says here to Martha he that liveth and believeth shall never die never die they're delivered from death's terrible scourge urge and power as Paul said we are we have the sentence of death in ourselves that we might be delivered from death you see a believer has to stand as it were at the bar of their own conscience and there they come under the God the judgments of God and then they hear this sentence there is now no more condemnation to them that are in

[37 : 12] Christ Jesus who are passed from death unto life they are passed from death death can hold them no longer the sting of death for the believer has been extracted if you had a bee we'll say and you that bee if the sting of that bee was extracted you could hold it in your hand you could caress it it would be harmless it would be but a poor little insect that could do you no harm whatsoever now death is like that the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus

Christ you see he has taken that sting out of death for his people and therefore they shall never see death from this dread monster then they are delivered and they shall never die now there are two aspects of this that I must conclude one is this Christ embraces in this wonderful promise spiritual death condition of death here on the earth there are good many people who put on a profession of religion but they are really dead they are dead in a profession they profess to know God and yet they deny him in truth and in reality now Christ says they shall never die not my believing people they shall never come into that awful condition of being professingly alive and yet be dead that's one thing the other is they shall never know what it is to taste that terrible state which the unbeliever will have which is eternal death so let us take to our hearts then with all earnestness and sincerity this beautiful word of our blessed

Lord when he said to dear Martha whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die believest thou this and that's my last word this evening believest thou this amen amen amen and amen amen hello nice 652.

667. Immortal, honoured, rest on Jesus' head. My God, my portion and my living bread. In him I live. Upon him cast my care. He saves from death, destruction and despair. 667.

[41 : 06] 677. 675. 62. 647. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[44 : 55] Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord Jesus, we would pray that thou by thy good spirit may retain in our hearts thine own word.

We may forget the words of the minister, but let us never forget thy words. And, O Lord, help us to believe and to live our belief day by day, dependent upon thee.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter be with us now and evermore.

Amen.