

# Death and resurrection (Quality: Good, Incomplete)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [ 0 : 00 ]     My text is found in the gospel recorded by John, the 11th chapter and the 25th verse.
- Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.
- He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.
- Believest thou this? What an important question that is, that the Lord asked this dear person, Martha, who was so dear to him.
- One of his true believing people. And yet he asks her this question. This wasn't addressed to an unbeliever.
- [ 1 : 29 ]     Not to an outsider. With no desire, perhaps, to learn anything of Jesus Christ.
- This was a question put to the choices. One of the most earnest followers of Jesus.
- One whom we might look up to and think was so secure that never needed any questioning about faith or belief or what they might believe.
- And yet the Lord addresses this question. This question to this very person. Believest thou this?
- Well, the very thought should bring us, each one of us, however much we might know or think we might know, it should bring us very humbly to our rightful place.
- [ 2 : 42 ]     And beg that the Lord might teach us and help us this day to believe in the great and glorious things concerning him and his resurrection.
- We are not of a custom to take notice of times and seasons. But how can one pass a time like this without referring to one of the greatest things that ever could have taken place?
- One of the greatest things that ever could have taken place? One of the great events of time. One of the great causes of hope for all who truly believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- One of the great things that ever could have taken place. And here he says, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he bear.
- I want us to look this morning at some of the incidental circumstances that surrounds this event in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [ 4 : 17 ]     And indeed in the life of Mary and Martha, these two dear servants of the Lord who lived at Bethlehem.
- I want us to look at the cause of this statement or declaration that the Lord Jesus Christ makes.
- What was behind it? It's always very important to try and trace the circumstances and the causes that lead up to some of the great things in our own experience.
- I think if we tried more to trace the events right from their origin, we should avoid that panic condition that prevailed in the humble home at Bethlehem when Lazarus lay on a sick bed.

As we read in the early part of this chapter, this was really the cause of all this that went on between the Lord and Martha.

[ 5 : 45 ] Lazarus had been laid low with sickness. We read at the beginning of the chapter, now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and his sister Martha.

very simple statement. But how much came out of it? A very little insignificant event.

Very few people would even notice it. And if they even came into knowledge of it, would pass by and think no more about it.

All of us are inclined or liable to sickness. But here was something very special.

Here was an event that was going to be unfolded in a very striking and wonderful way. Here was something very ordinary, very insignificant in itself, but what was to come out of it?

[ 7 : 01 ] That's the great, the all-important question. Now we shall see. Then again, secondly, we notice that there was a crisis in this little home at Bethany.

There was a crisis there. And this crisis arose, not simply because the breadwinner, their beloved brother Lazarus, had been laid low in sickness, it was not only that fact that caused the disturbance in this home at Bethany, but it was the fact that their Lord and their Master, in whom they trusted so much, and whom they relied upon so greatly, had seemingly taken no notice.

when they were in such need, he was absent. Surely he must know what was going on in their own home and in their circumstances.

And he was absent from the Lord. This was the cause of the crisis. It was far more a cause of their panic than the sickness of their brother.

And when you come to bring these things home into your own hearts and lives, you can see very greatly, perhaps, a parallel condition.

[ 8 : 55 ] If you come into any trouble, you feel the Lord has taken no notice. The prayers are not answered.

Seemingly, the Lord has ceased to take any interest in the Lord. And has left you to just proceed and go on alone, unattended by his presence and by his help.

If anything causes more pain and sorrow and difficulty and perplexity in the mind of a believer, it is just that.

feeling that we are in trouble and the Lord seemingly does not take any notice of us. That was the position in this place at Bethany.

The sisters send a message urgently to the Lord and yet even with that relieving incident, they still feel a terrible anxiety of mind and heart because he seemingly has not taken any notice of them.

[ 10 : 28 ] If he who knoweth all things would certainly know that Lazarus, their brother, was sick, how is it then that he is not here present with all his power, all his influence to take control of this situation.

Oh, it does seem to speak great volumes to you and to me this morning. Unless we can find the Lord working out for us our problems, bearing our troubles and our cares, taking them off our own hearts and our own minds, unless we can feel that, we are plunged into the greatest woe and anxiety and perplexity that is almost unimaginable.

Then, another thing we must notice in the background of this most striking and wonderful event is the apparent contrast in the record of the Holy Spirit between the love the Lord had and it says here very clearly in the Word of God that Jesus loved Martha, fifth verse, Jesus loved Martha and his sister and Lazarus.

it doesn't often tell us in the scriptures that Jesus Christ loved any particular individual. We know that he loves with an everlasting love all who belong to him, but here the Word of God tells us that he loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.

Now, is it consistent with that love that he should still abide in this place where he was for two vital days.

[ 12 : 35 ] That is what he did. After the Holy Spirit tells us that Jesus loved these two women and Lazarus, their brother, who was now, which the Lord knew perfectly, was now on the very verge of death, and yet he abode two days still in Betharbor, where he was, where John at first baptized.

Now, how can we account for the apparent indifference of the Lord concerning such whom he loves? What is behind this apparent callousness on the part of Jesus Christ?

Let me say instantly, my friends, it's only apparent there's no callousness on the part of Jesus for any one of his people.

He knows all about you, he knows everything that concerneth you, he knows your present state, he knows what you will be and where you will be tomorrow, he knows every detail, and yet it may please him to appear as if he knows nothing about you, and cares nothing about you.

Now, why does he do this? We believe, as it is very clear here, that he does it for one great purpose and end, to make his own people realize more and more that he has everything in his control, and that he is working out, though they may not be able to see and follow clearly, the working is out of his plans, he is nevertheless working out his plans and purposes for each one of his people.

[ 14 : 57 ] These two days that he remained stationary, apparently, unmoved, without any apparent attention of intervention upon these circumstances, these two days were important days indeed, not only in the lives of Mary and Martha, but also in the lives of these disciples.

Now, there was something that Jesus Christ intended to teach his disciples, as well as Martha and Mary.

You see, this is one of the wonderful things about the Lord. We get our troubles and we think we're the only people in trouble. We think there's no one else that is needing any help or any prayer or any consideration.

We're the only ones. We've got our real problems. And there's nobody in the world that has at this time at least a problem compared to ours.

We think the Lord, therefore, should take all interests solely and completely on us. Well, if we think that we are woefully wrong, the Lord will show us, too, that there are other people that need his help equally with ourselves.

[ 16 : 41 ] There was Martha and Mary, indeed, they were in real great trouble. But there were these disciples just as equally in trouble. And what was their trouble?

Their trouble was unconcerning and indifference with the position that prevailed over Martha and Mary.

Why do I say that? for this reason, if you look very carefully in the word of God, you will see this. Jesus said, spoke about the going to Judea in the seventh verse.

He said, let us go into Judea again. You see, he shows to his disciples what his intention was. It was to go to this place, into Judea, to Bethany in particular, to help Martha and Mary, and he tells the disciples that is his intention.

Now what happened? They tried to put him off. Oh, of course they're sympathetic towards Martha and Mary. They knew these two people like the Lord knew them.

[ 17 : 57 ] Of course they wanted all the sympathy to be shown to these two people. They did hope that they would come through that difficult, but they didn't want to go with the Lord to help them.

And why didn't they want to go? Because they could see the danger of being persecuted. They could see that if they did go with the Lord, they were putting, they were exposing themselves to all kinds of danger.

Just recently they had been in this place with their Lord and Master. And what had happened? They had received stones from the multitudes who opposed his teaching.

And they being his disciples came under the great persecution with their Lord. They didn't want a repetition of it. They were thinking of their own safety and their own skins and their own peace of conscience.

They weren't thinking of Martha and Mary. Not really. This is one of the reasons the Lord stayed two days. It was to teach these disciples the great need of self-sacrifice, the need of devotion to the cause of Christ.

[ 19 : 28 ] He was stirring them up to show that it was not self-safety and the consideration of their own interest that should be paramount in their consideration.

What his will was, what his service is, should be the first, the chiefest purpose and desire in their hearts.

They said to him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?

Goest thou thither again? Wilt thou put thyself again in the danger that thou hast just escaped out of? is it worth for the sake of these two people, these two women, is it worth exposing thyself to the great dangers of being subjected to ruthless persecution?

And then how does the Lord teach them? He says there are twelve days in which men may work, twelve days when we have the, twelve hours when we have the light of day.

[ 20 : 54 ] He says when the night cometh no man can work. What he is teaching us is teaching you and me. It's very easy to profess religion when everything is going well.

It's quite nice we can call, we can say we've got wonderful faith when there's no difficulties in our path. When there's no problems to undertake and overcome.

we can talk about religion then. We can say how faithful we are and how firmly do we abide by the things we believe.

But let there be darkness in the path or in the circumstances. Let there become, let there come a midnight scene in the experience.

Where will the religion be then? That is what the Lord is teaching you see. He says there are twelve hours in the day.

[ 21 : 54 ] If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him.

it's in the night season that we need the light of God. We have no light of our own. We need the light of Jesus Christ.

This is where religion is real when it can support a believer in those times of real darkness, uncertainty.

When everything seems to be blotted out, all hope and all comfort and all light seems to be excluded completely from the whole scene of our experience, it's then we shall need true real religion.

We shall then need faith in Christ. We shall then need the resurrection. resurrection. We shall need him who says, I am the resurrection and the life.

[ 23 : 10 ] Now, the fourth thing that we would notice in this connection is this. He discloses his own will and purpose, the secret will of the Lord in the 15th verse.

He says, strange words, he says, Lazarus is dead and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.

To the intent, ye may believe, nevertheless let us go unto him. Now, this was the secret will of the Lord, you see.

he now begins to show to his disciples what all this has meant, why he has delayed his going to Bethany, why he permitted Lazarus not only to be sick, but also to die.

He knew that he was dead. He says, without being informed about it by any creature, he says, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.

[ 24 : 32 ] What a strange, wondrous thing this is. And yet what wonderful purposes there are seen in this.

The wonderful purposes of the Lord Jesus. you might think, well, why didn't he put forth his power and stop the sickness and prevent Lazarus from dying?

he knew that he was to raise this man from the dead. And he also knew that there were those around him, his own disciples, who needed resurrection in themselves.

They needed faith to be raised up in their own heart. Martha and Mary needed faith to be lifted up in their heart, in the Lord Jesus.

And therefore the Lord says, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad to your sickness. Oh, my friends, what a wonderful thing it is when we can see this clearly, that what takes place in our lives, though we cannot understand it, we cannot unravel the mystery of it, yet if we are one of God's people, it's for our savings, it's for our best interest, for our well-being, and for our eternal good.

[ 26 : 16 ] All things work together for good to them that love God, and are the call according to his purpose.

Now, what to come to the words of the Lord himself, I am the resurrection and the life.

Notice this, he uses the term or the title that is applicable to deity, I am.

Wonderful words, those two words are, I am. Those were the words that God spake to Moses when Moses saw the burning bush and heard the voice of the Almighty speaking out of the fire.

He said, who shall I tell the children of Israel, hath sent me. He said, say to them, I am hath sent me.

[ 27 : 24 ] What does this mean? It means that he is that ever was and ever is and ever will be.

That is the meaning of the word, the term, the title. It's one who claims to be ever from the beginning, and ever shall be everlastingly and is the one who is all eternal, the same yesterday and today and forever.

I am the resurrection. Now, this is an important word because for this reason, we're so inclined to look for some event.

We think of it in many ways. We think when we're in trouble, we want to escape out of trouble or to use a term that is so often used in these days.

We want a revival and we begin to think, how shall a revival come about? Where will it come from? What will be the best way of bringing a revival about?

[ 28 : 50 ] Will it be by gathering a great number of people together? Will it be by adopting new methods, new plans? we talk about the circumstance and what we're doing all the time, we're forgetting the one who brings and alone can bring the power of a revival about, either whether it be in our own hearts, or in the world, or in the church.

It's Christ that is the revival. We think of the external, rather than the essential.

I am, he says to Martha, the resurrection and the life. Now, just very simply, in concluding this morning, what is resurrection?

Well, you know, Jesus Christ was the resurrection before the world began. I am the resurrection. He doesn't say, I have become the resurrection.

I am the resurrection. That means to say that he was the resurrection before there was any death. Before there was any death, Jesus was the resurrection.

[ 30 : 18 ] resurrection. What does it mean when he raises his people up from death?

What is death? Well, there are three kinds of death. There is death, which is the separation of the body and the soul, temporal death.

death. That must come to all eventually. Lazarus was raised from that death by the Lord Jesus Christ in a very short space of time from our text.

When he went to the tomb where Lazarus was laid and he said, Lazarus, arise, and he came forth bound hand and foot in grave clothes.

He was the resurrection then that brought Lazarus out of the grave. But there's another kind of death. There's spiritual death.

[ 31 : 33 ] Death which means separation from the favors of God. I would have you very much concern yourself with the dread of this kind of death.

You may fear, some of you may fear death. That's temporal death, corporal death. But I would have you fear far more that death which is separation from the favors of God.

Separation from the love of God. Separation from the grace of God. That's an awful death. That's a spiritual death. where there's no knowledge, no life, no feeling, no love, and no faith.

An awful death, dead in trespasses and in sins. There's only one that can ever raise a sinner up from that state, and that is him who says, I am the resurrection.

then there's the third aspect of death, and that is eternal death, which is eternal separation from God, his presence, and his glory.

[ 32 : 51 ] An awful state indeed, which all the ungodly will share. A death that is eternal. there can be no resurrection from that death.

If we experience resurrection, it'll be in our lifetime. It'll be by the putting forth of the power of Christ in our hearts, by his grace, and we shall be raised up from that terrible condition of spiritual death, by the risen Christ, Christ.

The power of his resurrection will be put forth in us, and we shall live. Just like that poor creature that we read of in the book of Ezekiel, that poor infant that was cast out, unmollified and uncared for, and destitute and dead, and one comes past, looks upon that poor polluted creature, and speaks but one word, and that word is live, and that creature is raised up, cleansed of all its filth, adorned with all the beauty of the one who raises up its soul into life, and enters into the fullness and blessedness of life.

I am the resurrection. There are some peculiar properties that are attached to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I just want to mention these as I close this morning. one thing is the property of the resurrection is incorruption.

[ 35 : 00 ] We are raised in incorruption. When Jesus Christ raises his people, he raises them to this, an incorruptible experience and inheritance.

An incorruptible, wondrous thing indeed. This is a property of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Another thing is the power. Oh, if you want some power, if you feel so helpless, if you feel you haven't any faith, then this is what you need.

Pray for it. Ask that you might have the experience that you perhaps cannot explain, but you feel you want, and that is the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is a property that becomes the possession of his people when he raises them out of death into life.

[ 36 : 18 ] And another property is spirituality of mind and heart. We are not spiritual people naturally. We don't adhere to or run after spiritual things whilst we are in nature and under nature's influence and power.

These things are not common to us. But if we have the resurrection, if the power of that resurrection is put forth in our hearts, then we come to realize the preciousness of spiritual faithfulness.

We love them, we need them, we enter into them, we value them, we plead to them.

These are properties of the resurrection. My dear friends, what a wonderful subject this is. It may be that it has just the answer that you and I may need.

Happy happy about you.

[ 37 : 46 ] Happy years to be the paradise