



The Voice of Life that Awakens the Dead:

*"I am the voice of life
that awakens the
dead. I am the good
odor that takes away
the foul odor. I am the
voice of joy that takes
away sorrow and
grief...I am the comfort
of those who are in
grief. Those who be-
long to me are given
joy by me. I am the joy
of the whole world. I
gladden all my friends
and rejoice with them.
I am the bread of life."*

—Athanasius

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Around the Word BIBLE STUDY Eastertide, 2016

The I AM sayings of Jesus John 11:1–44

Session 5: "I AM the Resurrection and the Life"

Johnny Cash once famously sang: "Ain't no grave can hold my body down." Everywhere we look, from our favorite books and movies to the music we listen to, people are battling the three-headed dragon of guilt, suffering, and death. And out of those three, death is the ugliest of all monsters. Don't let all the skull and cross-bone clothing fool you. People are afraid of death, and are willing to go to great lengths to cover up their fear.

We grieve and mourn for our loved ones who have died just as Mary and Martha did for their brother, Lazarus. Even Jesus weeps over death. And in the face of death, Jesus declares to Mary, Martha, and each of us: *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.* Jesus' words accomplish what he promises. This is why Jesus was in Bethany, and why he went to the cross: for Lazarus, Mary, Martha, the disciples, for you, and for the world. In Jesus' death, Death is dead. Victory is won! Jesus is your resurrection and your life.

Opening: Psalm 121

¹I lift up my eyes | to the hills.*

From where does my | help come?

²**My help comes | from the LORD,*
who made | heaven and earth.**

³He will not let your | foot be moved;*
he who keeps you will not | slumber.

⁴**Behold, he who keeps | Israel*
will neither slum- | ber nor sleep.**

⁵The LORD is your | keeper;*
the LORD is your shade on your | right hand.

⁶**The sun shall not strike | you by day,*
nor the | moon by night.**

⁷The LORD will keep you from all | evil;*
he will | keep your life.

⁸**The LORD will keep
your going out and your | coming in*
from this time forth and for- | evermore.
Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit.
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read John 11:1–44

v. 2: It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

Mary and Martha make several appearances in the Gospel accounts. Read Luke 10:38-42. What does this event tell us about the importance of Mary and Martha in the life and ministry of Jesus?

What John narrates here in v. 2 takes place later in John 12:1-8 when Mary anoints Jesus with expensive ointments and oils. What was the purpose of anointing in the Old Testament? See Leviticus 8; 16:29-34, 1 Samuel 16:1-13, and Isaiah 61:1-3. In the New Testament, Jesus is spoken of as the anointed one, or Chosen One; see Acts 10:34-43 and Hebrews 1:1-9. How does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament offices of priest, prophet, king, and sacrifice?

In the context of John's Gospel, why is it significant Jesus was anointed just before he entered Jerusalem? See John 12:12-19.

v. 4: But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

How can Jesus say that Lazarus' illness doesn't lead to death? How will Jesus reveal his glory in the raising of Lazarus?

v. 5-6: Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

It seems strange that the reason Jesus waits to go see Lazarus is because he loves Martha and Mary. How does this reveal Jesus' love for them and for all people?

v. 11: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,

but I go to awaken him.”

How does Jesus speak of death in this verse? In what way is death like a sleep? See also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Why is referring to death as sleep a comfort to Christians?

v. 14-15: Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

Again Jesus says he is glad he is not there with Lazarus. What/who is he teaching his disciples to believe in?

v. 17: Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

It seems like a rather mundane detail, but what is the significance of Lazarus being in the tomb for four days?

v. 21-22: Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”

No doubt, we’ve asked the same question of Jesus that Martha asks. How does he answer her and in what manner? How does Martha confess hope in God’s promises even in the face of death and grief? Do Christians grieve differently? How so and why?

v. 24: Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

How is Martha correct? Where do we confess this same reality each week in Divine Service?

v. 25-26: 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?”

Jesus’ proclamation is the climax of the dialogue in chapter 11. How has the conversation been building to these words since the very beginning? How does Jesus move Martha, and all who hear these words, from focusing on the future resurrection of the dead to present life in Him? What does it mean that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?

Where else in the Old Testament do we hear promises of life in the face of death? See Job 19:23-27, Psalm 27, and Jonah 2.

v. 33: When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

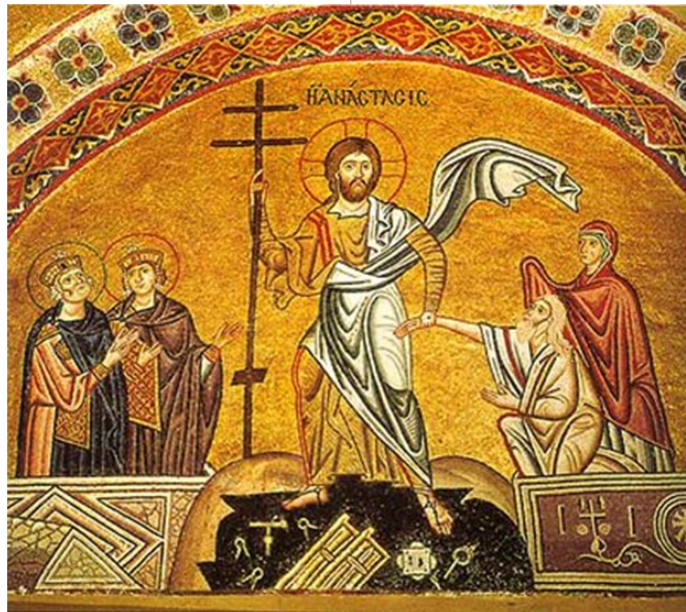
BIBLE STUDY

The I AM Sayings of Jesus
John 11:1–44

Why is Jesus greatly troubled? How is this a comforting scene in the midst of grief and sorrow over death?

v. 35-37: Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

What does Jesus’ weeping tell us about his person and work? In addition to his love, what does these verses reveal about who Jesus is and what he came to do for us? In verse 37, some of the crowd cast doubt and aspersion at Jesus. Are they right? Could he have kept Lazarus from dying? Why didn’t Jesus? What does their question reveal about their faith?



v. 40: Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”

What is the glory of God that is witnessed by Mary, Martha, and those gathered at Lazarus’ tomb?

v. 41-42: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Who does Jesus pray this prayer for? What does Jesus pray for here? How does this prayer reveal Jesus’ unwavering trust in the Father? Why is this prayer good

news for us when we mourn the death of loved ones?

v. 43-44: When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

How is Lazarus’ resurrection a preview of Jesus’ resurrection? What does this mean for our own life in the face of death? How are Jesus’ words a comfort to us still today? What other passages bring comfort and hope to those who mourn? John 20. 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Peter 1:3-12. Revelation 7:9-17.

Closing: O Christ Who Shared Our Mortal Life (LSB, 552; st. 1, 9, 10, 4)

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