

Text: John 11:1-53

Theme: A Resurrection to Death

Sermon Outline

1. See the Lord of Life at work for the good of those He loves, comforts in death, mourns with them and Raises Lazarus from the dead
2. See the Lord of Life now slain for this very act, for your good.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to Saint John the eleventh chapter verses one through fifty-three.

Boys and Girls, I pray that you are doing well this morning. Have you ever been sad? I mean really really sad? So sad that you cried a lot? Maybe you were in pain because you became sick or frustrated because you couldn't go play on the slides or play with friends. That can be really sad. In our reading, we see two people that are really sad. Mary and Martha are sad because their brother Lazarus has died. He was no longer with them. They had asked Jesus for help but he did not immediately help them. Why not? How does Jesus comfort them and us still today when we are sad? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

1.

Mary and Martha are extremely upset. For good reason! Their brother, Lazarus, was only ill when they had asked Jesus to come in order to heal him. Lazarus was dealing with the effects of sin, but was still alive and still with them. A part of living in a sinful and fallen world is that we become sick and ill from bacteria and viruses. Yet, rather than immediately coming to them and healing Lazarus, as we might expect Jesus to do. That is how we would expect Love to compel our Lord to act. Jesus stays where He is for two whole days. Only after that does Jesus tell the apostles that they are going to Judea. The disciples are amazed because the Jews just tried to kill Jesus earlier, now He wants to go back? In their minds Jesus is going towards certain death. Thomas makes the great declaration, "Let us go that we may die with Him."

He cannot stand to be without his Master so it is better to die with Him than live apart from Him.

They arrive and Lazarus is dead. He has been dead for a while. Death happens as a result of sin. It is unnatural and an evil stain on God's good creation. Yet, until our Lord comes again, physical death is inescapable. Because we cannot escape it, we are concerned about death. It is all around us, just open up a newspaper and you will see how many people have died. As of the writing of this sermon, 41 people have died in a week's time. The poet Dylan Thomas wrote in his poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" that man should fight against death. "Rage, rage against the dying of the light," he wrote. But we can rage all we want, and it will not change the reality of physical death. We are conscious that death stands at the end of our lives, and this affects us. Someone once said that death "plays back into our lives." It affects us here and now. We see how it affected Mary and Martha in our text. They are beside themselves with grief at the loss of their brother, confused as to why our Lord delayed. They state that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. Indeed, no one ever dies in the presence of the Lord of Life.

Jesus comforts the sisters with words spoken at many a funeral. "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believes in Me, will live, even though he die." That our Lord is the One who has power over life and death itself. A power which shows itself fully. Our Lord is weeping beside the tomb before calling out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." And amazingly, Lazarus does so after four days in the grave. They are no match for the Resurrection and Life that Jesus claims as His own and gives to Lazarus anew.

2.

The resurrection of Lazarus is a resurrection to death. Specifically, the death of our Lord. This event is the culmination of the plots of the religious leaders. They state that Jesus has to die. If Jesus does not die, the Romans will come in and they will lose their seats of power and authority that they enjoy so much. Even Caiaphas the high priest that year, unknowingly prophesizes. "It is better for one man to die for the nation than for the whole nation to perish." Truly, it is better for this Man to die. If He does not, then you must. Yet, because of the death of the God-man Jesus Christ, in so suffering, bleeding, and dying upon the cross. Jesus bears the pain and punishment of your sin. He takes the full wrath of God in your stead. He who is the Resurrection and the

Life endures the pain of death in your place.

Joyfully, Our Lord's passion does not end at the Cross. Death cannot hold Him who is the Resurrection and life. Three days, that's all allowed. Three days and He bursts from the tomb, conquering death, hell, and all our foes for us. Jesus gives to us the great and wonderous gift of faith to believe that He suffered everything, defeated every enemy, all for us. He gives us, even in the midst of pain, suffering, and death, resurrected and eternal life. Just as He rose from the grave, so too will we. All of us here today would probably attest to the fact that we love the Lord Jesus, but our love for Jesus does not necessarily mean that we comprehend Christ's complete power for us in the resurrected life we live now and forever in eternity.

In the midst of our weak, frail, and powerless life on earth, we have a powerful Lord Jesus Christ whose resurrected life affects us today. We don't have to grieve without hope when a loved one dies. We have the power of the resurrection to know that we live in the newness of life, which holds hope and promise of our own resurrection from the dead.

Life for us does not end in death. We will rise again on the Last Day and forever celebrate the joy of life we have in Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life.