

John 11:1-44 – “I am the resurrection and the life”

Who is Jesus? John wrote his gospel to tell us what he had seen and heard as an eye-witness, when “the word became flesh” (1:14). This saying, “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25) is the fifth of the “I AM” sayings in John's gospel. Again, we ask – what did Jesus here reveal about himself?

1. Martha revealed her faith

Jesus loved Lazarus, and his two sisters (Mary and Martha), v3. But he did not come to their village (Bethany) until Lazarus had died (v17). This, he said, was for the glory of God – God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). When Martha came to meet Jesus, she showed her faith – if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would have stayed alive; and even now, Jesus could do anything. Jesus so far did nothing, but reminded Martha of a truth: Lazarus would rise again. The Bible teaches that there will be a resurrection of all people at the end of time and especially a resurrection of believers to glory (Daniel 12:2, Job 19:25-27). Martha believed this truth, and confessed her faith. Faith means believing truths from God that we cannot yet see. Do you know the truth? Can you confess the truth, even in times of darkness? Jesus wanted to see that. But, it was not enough...

2. Jesus revealed himself: in wonderful words

Now that Jesus saw Martha's faith, he revealed something new and wonderful to her. The resurrection is not just an event at the end of time. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (v25). True resurrection life is found in Jesus: it all comes from him, and all comes because of him. He died for sinners who repent and believe, so that they could live. He gives his own life to them: they are joined forever to him. He himself will raise them. He is the Son of God, and everything that God has for us is in him. This means, v25b, that believers will live again physically after dying. It also means that spiritually they will never die at all – because Jesus himself can never die, and believers belong to Jesus.

In fact, all of Jesus' sayings have been about life: he is “the bread of life” (John 6:35), “the light of life” (8:12), the gate that leads to life (10:9-10), the good shepherd who gives his life for us (10:14-15). Martha believed this, and so she confessed (v27). Do you believe? Then you must also confess it.

3. Jesus revealed himself: in divine power

Now Jesus went to the grave. He was “deeply moved” (v38) and “wept” (v35). Death is a terrible thing – it does not belong in God's world and only entered because of sin. Jesus is full of compassion. Martha was surprised when Jesus told her to have the stone removed, but she obeyed. We must exercise faith *before* we are allowed to see the promised blessing. Jesus then prayed to his Father, who always hears him. He then commanded, “Lazarus – come out!”; and he did! This physical resurrection shows us what Jesus does spiritually for dead sinners today. He himself gives them life – life that never ends. Have you heard his voice?