

John 11:25-26

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"I am the resurrection and the life" Jesus spoke these words of comfort to Martha, one of two sisters who were left to mourn the death of their only brother, Lazarus. Martha's home had been the scene of many a happy meeting, for Jesus frequently stopped there when in Bethany. This household believed and confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, who had been promised to come into the world. Happy indeed is every household where Jesus is a familiar and frequent guest.

One day this happy home was visited by sadness, for it happened that Lazarus was taken sick. At first they did not consider the sickness serious, but as time went on Lazarus grew worse and died. During their brother's sickness, Martha and Mary were no doubt tempted at times to think that Jesus, the all-healing Physician, had forgotten them. For after sending word to him about his condition, Jesus did not return to them. But he had not forgotten Lazarus. The all knowing and ever-present Savior knows all about the sickness and grief of all of his children. This Jesus who has come to bring salvation to the entire world will not leave any of us comfortless. Even before he went to Lazarus, he

told his disciples what had happened by announcing to them that Lazarus had died.

Four days after the burial of Lazarus, Jesus came into the village of Bethany. Upon hearing of his arrival, Martha immediately went to him and said that if he had been there - Lazarus would not have died. In comforting Martha, Jesus is speaking to Christians of all times. He says: **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26**

The events that happened centuries ago in that little village of Bethany and by which it became famous, have happened in our city and in our time. Jesus would today comfort and strengthen your faith by the same words. Death indeed causes pain. The death of a dear one inflicts a deep wound in the hearts of the bereaved and yet, you should not weep as those that have no hope. There is healing for your wounds and comfort for your heart in the words of God found in the Bible. The same Savior that comforted the departed - has now taken him to himself in heaven. The departed clung to Christ as his only hope in life and in death. This same Savior is now pleading for admittance into your grief-stricken hearts. Jesus today comes to you with these words: **“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33**

These words contain a blessed truth. These are not the words of a mere fallible person, but the words of Jesus Christ, Son of God. Jesus by his miracles declared himself to be the Son of God with power, not a mere mortal. There was no doubt about his divinity. Jesus' disciples firmly believed in his divinity and that his Father in heaven called him divine. God declared the same from heaven on the day that Jesus was baptized. Even his enemies, the would-be-wise among the Jews, secretly admitted it. He was, is and ever will be the almighty God. And it is he that speaks the words of our text: **"I am the resurrection and the life."**

This Jesus, who is God and man in one person, begotten of the Father from eternity and born of the Virgin Mary, took upon himself the sins of the human race. All transgressions of God's Commandments were placed upon his shoulders. **"...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6** People violate the divine Law daily - but Jesus takes all of these sins upon himself and suffered their punishment. The sins of all, yours and mine, made him bleed, suffer, and die. **"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:5** He was delivered for our offenses. He died for us and on the third day broke away the bands of death. He then rose triumphantly from the grave. By his divine power, he conquered death for us. **"Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life." John 11:25** What a blessed truth.

He is the resurrection and he imparts the same to others, so that they need not die. Therefore: **“He who believes in me will live, even though he dies ...” John 11:25** Those that believe in him, even though dead - will live and not perish. Death for the believer is the soul’s entrance into everlasting life in heaven. The body we bury out of sight, it turns into dust and earth - but this dust will rise again to glory.

How glorious to have true faith in Jesus Christ. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16** **“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” John 3:14** **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:17** **“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life...” John 3:36** These were promises made to all of us. If you believe, you will possess eternal life and everlasting happiness will be yours to enjoy.

The words of Christ grant comfort in our own hour of affliction. We have every reason to believe that the departed was a believer in Christ Jesus. Jesus said: **“I am the resurrection and the life.” John 11:25** **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6** He continued steadfastly in the hearing of God’s Word and taking part in the

Lord's Supper. As a lost and condemned sinner, he recognized his need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. He was a faithful and life-long member of this church, not only interested in the work of the church at home, but also abroad, being a staunch and faithful supporter of the Synod. I had the privilege to proclaim the Gospel to him, and he received it with joy. He confessed that he was a sinner but also that his sins were forgiven through the atonement and death of Christ. By dying in this faith he has entered into life, for: **"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."** John 11:25-26

We have no reason to mourn the death of a Christian, knowing that a temporal death is followed by an eternal heaven. Our tears in reality are out of sympathy for ourselves, that we have been deprived of him for our short stay here on earth. All that die in the Lord have reached that goal for which we all strive - that crown of eternal glory in heaven. This vale of tears is not our abiding place. Here we are pilgrims and strangers but our eternal abiding place is in heaven. Heaven is an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and a place that will not fade away.

These words of our Savior: **"I am the resurrection and the life."** (John 11:25) contain a lesson for all of us. Human life is short

and Scripture correctly pictures life on this earth as just a *“little while”*. We all know that we will die, but not where or when. The death of the departed, in a way, came unexpected - but he was prepared and ready for the summons. How necessary for us to be ready for our own summons. Every death exhorts us to prepare for our own death and to accept the salvation that is offered today. To that end let us faithfully, diligently, and attentively hear, learn and take to heart the Gospel. Jesus will prove himself the Author and Finisher of saving faith and teaches this to us through the Bible. Also in our weak hearts, he will save us from the steep and tearful road of the cross, affliction and even death. He wants to bring us to the glorious mansions of everlasting life above.