

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

We Long for More

LESSON 1

"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die."

John 11:25–26



WELCOME

What is something you wish you had more of?

BACKGROUND

Everyone has longings, aches and desires. If asked, most would probably say they long for more out of life or more of “something.” Jesus understood this innate longing for something more and He provided the ultimate answer: Himself. For people facing the struggles and uncertainties of both life and death, Jesus’ statement that He is the resurrection and the life is a promise of “more” (**John 11:25–26**).

Resurrection¹ did not have a strong presence in the Old Testament; however, there are three times when the miracle of resurrection is recorded: **1 Kings 17:17–24**; **2 Kings 4:18–37**; **13:20–21**. “There is no Hebrew word for ‘resurrection,’ and there is little in the Old Testament that explicitly describes a doctrine of general resurrection. The only clear passage is **Daniel 12:2**, where Daniel prophesies a coming time when ‘multitudes who sleep in the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.’”²

In New Testament times, there were two main ways of thinking regarding resurrection, and they were held by the two groups of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious court: the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were a group of Jews who came from influential families, including priests, merchants and aristocrats. They accepted only the written law of God (the first five books of the

¹ The most basic definition of resurrection is the bringing back to life of someone who has died. Merriam-Webster.com

² Mounce, William D. *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Zondervan, 2006. 586

Bible). Therefore, because resurrection was not mentioned in the law they did not believe in it.³ The Pharisees were typically ordinary Jews who believed not only in the written law of God but the entire Old Testament. They were pious and wrote countless additional rules (the Mishnah) about how to apply the law. The Pharisees did believe in the resurrection of the dead.⁴

Ultimately, those who did believe in resurrection believed that it happened after death when people will rise in the last days. But, they did not believe it was a power for life that was available in the here and now. Jesus was about to change all of that.

1. What are your thoughts on the concept of resurrection as you approach this lesson?



WORD

As you come to the Word, pause and ask God to make it come alive for you.

Context: At the end of **John 10**, Jesus had been teaching in Jerusalem and had angered many people listening to His message. They were so angry that they tried to stone Him because He claimed to be God. Before they could arrest Jesus, He and His disciples left for a place beyond the Jordan River. It was there that Jesus received news about His friend, Lazarus. Read the story in the passage below:

John 11:1–44

¹ A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ² This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. ³ So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

³ Youngblood, Ronald F. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. HarperCollins Christian Pub, 2014. 936

⁴ *Ibid.* 830

⁴ But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this."⁵ So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus,⁶ he stayed where he was for the next two days.⁷ Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

⁸ But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

⁹ Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world.¹⁰ But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."¹¹ Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

¹² The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!"¹³ They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

¹⁴ So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."¹⁵ And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

¹⁶ Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.¹⁸ Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.²⁰ When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus told her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.**"²⁶ **Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.** Do you believe this, Martha?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."²⁸ Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you."

²⁹ So Mary immediately went to him.

³⁰ Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹ When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. ³² When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Then Jesus wept. ³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" ³⁷ But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹ "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

⁴⁰ Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" ⁴¹ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." ⁴³ Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

2. As you read **John 11:1–15**, what aspects of Jesus—His words, actions, interactions—drew your attention and why?

3. If you were to put yourself in Martha’s shoes, how do you think you would have responded to Jesus when He showed up? (**11:17–22**)

4. What was Martha’s understanding of resurrection? (**11:24**)

How did Jesus expand on her understanding of the word “resurrection” in **11:25–26**?

5. Describe Jesus’ reaction to the people gathered at Lazarus’ tomb (**11:30–40**). What do those reactions reveal to you about the heart of Jesus?

6. What do you notice about Jesus’ interaction with His Father as He raised Lazarus from the dead? (**11:41–42**)

7. Jesus' statement in **11:25–26** and His miraculous raising of Lazarus was a glimpse of what was to come. In **Luke 24:1–7**,⁵ Jesus Himself was raised from the dead by the power of God and He conquered sin and death for eternity, fulfilling His words to Martha.⁶ In the following passages, underline what Jesus' resurrection—being raised from the dead—accomplished.

a. **Romans 10:9**

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

b. **Ephesians 1:19–20**

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

c. **1 Peter 1:3–4**

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

d. **1 Corinthians 15:22–23, 54–55**

Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting!"

⁵ Jesus' resurrection is also recorded in **Matthew 27–28**; **Mark 16:1–8**; **John 20**.

⁶ "Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die." (**John 11:25–26**)

8. Jesus' statement in **John 11:25–26** put a new spin on what resurrection meant to those listening. Not only is Jesus the one who provides eternal life, but new life in the here and now can also be experienced because of His resurrection. What do you learn and appreciate about the life-transforming power of His resurrection in the following verses?

a. **2 Corinthians 5:17**

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

b. **Romans 5:10–11**

For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

c. **Romans 6:6–11**

... We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

9. Because Jesus rose from the dead, Christians have power to live a new life of freedom over sin while still in their mortal bodies. This new life is both a current reality and an ongoing process. **Colossians 3:1–11** helps explain the journey of dying to the old self and being raised to new life in Christ. Underline the invitations to and expectations for new life you find in the passage.

¹ Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. ⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

⁶ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. ⁷ You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ¹¹ In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

- a. What aspects of the new life in Christ are challenging for you? (Note: what you find challenging may not be listed in the text above.)
- b. What aspects are reassuring?⁷

⁷ See also **Ephesians 1:19** and **4:23**.

c. What practical steps can this passage motivate in your life?

10. As you complete this lesson, state at least one thing you have learned about resurrection from the dead (eternal life) and about your new life in Christ today.

How does this understanding of “the resurrection and the life” impact your longing for more?



WORSHIP

Take a moment to enter into a time of worship—both on your own and with your community—to show praise, adoration and love for God.

Immediately following Jesus' "I Am the resurrection and the life" statement, He asked Martha a pointed and important question, "Do you believe this?" (**John 11:26**)

He is asking the same question of us.

For some, the concepts of resurrection and eternal life can create a lot of confusion and doubt. Jesus is not afraid of this. After Jesus was raised from the dead, one of His disciples, Thomas, struggled to believe it to be true until he saw and touched Jesus with his own hands and eyes (**John 20:24–25**). When Jesus did appear to Thomas, He did not condemn him. (**John 20:29**)

If you struggle with any doubt or confusion, Jesus does not condemn you; He welcomes conversation. Take some time to tell Jesus exactly how you are feeling.

As an act of worship, if you are ready, declare your belief in Him and His life-giving resurrection power, which is available to you today and for eternity.

You could write it out as a statement, use an artistic medium to express it, quietly speak it out loud to God, etc.—however you best interact with Him.



WITNESS

Believers are called to reflect Christ in the world. This section will help you engage with how to be a witness—reflecting Christ—this week.

When we live in new life—the resurrection life found in Jesus—it transforms the way we act, think, talk, listen, love, etc. and reflects Him to those around us.

How is Holy Spirit calling you to live this week as a witness to Christ’s resurrection life within you? (See answers to question 9).

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Consider using one of the conversation prompts this week to begin having a spiritual conversation with someone in your life.

- What do you wish you had more of?
- When you notice something about your life you don’t like, what things do you try to do to change it?
- What do you think happens after you die?

TAKE-AWAY SUMMARY

As you have worked through this lesson and listened to Holy Spirit, what is your one significant take-away?

Write a brief summary of your take-away on page 102.

SERMON NOTES

Lesson 1

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