

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

David C F Wright, DD

Lazarus was a friend of the Lord Jesus along with his sisters, Mary and Martha. They lived at Bethany. This is set out in John's gospel, chapter 11.

When the Lord heard that Lazarus was ill, one might assume that He would go to him at once and leave Jerusalem which was about two miles away.

We often expect the Lord to answer us promptly but, as here, He clearly was not showing destitution (4), desertion (5-6) or denial (7). The Lord said that Lazarus's sickness was not unto death but for the glory of God and that the Son of God might also be glorified (4). When the Lord said, Let us go to him after two days, the disciples replied that the Lord was under threat of being stoned, and when the Lord said that Lazarus was sleeping, the disciples did not understand not realising that the Lord used the word sleep instead of death and the Lord had to explain this (14). It is clear that the Lord was going to empty a grave, give life, cause rejoicing and God was to be glorified.. Thomas's outburst in verse 16 showed a lack of insight.

When the Lord arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been buried for four days. Many Jews were there to comfort. Mary stayed in the house but Martha said to the Lord, If you had been here, my brother would not have died, and the Lord replied, Why, even now, what you ask of God, He will give it. Your brother will rise. Martha replied that she knew this and that it would happen in the last days (24).

Then the Lord spoke, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me though he dies yet shall he live. Whoever believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? (25)

Martha's reply is. I believe that Thou are the Christ, the Son of God. What a revelation this was from God.

Martha called her sister, Mary, and she went to the tomb. The sisters looked to the Lord for a cure for their sorrow.

The Lord came to the tomb and spoke, Lazarus come forth. And he that was bound in burial clothes came forth. It has been opined that had the Lord not called Lazarus's name all the dead might have come forth. Everyone saw how the Lord loved Lazarus and his family. We sometimes forget the love that the Lord has for all. He is not willing that any should perish but that all may come to the knowledge of all the truth (1 Timothy 2. 3-4., 2 Peter 3. 9). It is not always realised that the Lord had friends in addition to the disciples.

This was victory over death and the grave. It was to be further displayed at Calvary ! It will be further displayed when the Lord comes to rapture all believers as in 1 Thessalonians 4.

It cannot be stressed enough that the resurrection precedes life. Life after death. Resurrection to life after death. For the believer it is to eternal life of bliss in heaven but not so to non-believers who have rejected salvation.

The Lord used the expression I am many times. I am the water of life (chapter 4). bread of life (chapter 6), light of the world (chapter 8), the door (chapter 10), the Good Shepherd (chapter 10), the resurrection and the life (chapter 11), and, later, the Way, the Truth and the Life (chapter 14), and the True Vine (chapter 15).

I am is the Name of God (Exodus 3.14).

The water which the Lord gives is spiritual refreshment and will be a well of water inside someone that can spring up into everlasting life. The bread of life is the Lord Himself who has come down from heaven to give eternal life to believers who will be raised to eternal life. He is the light of the world and whoever follows Him will not be in darkness but shall have the light of life. The life of sin and being without Chris is the life of darkness (John 1. 3-5). The next two I am's are his statement that He is the door or, as some versions put it, the gate, the entrance into the fold of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Himself. The Lord had said, Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. These He will bring and they shall hear His voice and there will be one flock and one Shepherd. This refers to non-Jews that is to say Gentiles who will respond to the Gospel. He is the One who laid down His life for His sheep (John 10.17). We have seen how He is the resurrection and the life and, in chapter 14, He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is not only the way to heaven but the way to salvation. He did not only speak the truth. He is truth itself. He is the giver of everlasting life to all true believers and the only means of access to God the Father, the only mediator between God and man

There was no other good enough,
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven to let us in.

The Lord said, I am the true vine. This speaks of love and fruitfulness. We have seen how Deity loves and now the disciples are about to witness His love and fruitfulness as He prepares to go to the Cross. Christians are the branches of the true vine and are expected to bear fruit which can only be achieved by living in Him. We are to keep His commandments and abide in His love. If we love Him we will keep His commandments. We are to love one another just as Christ loves us. This love is respect not hugs and kisses.

This chapter is a real comfort.

(1009)

© COPYRIGHT David C F Wright DD 2017. No part of this article, however small, may be reproduced or stored in any system whatsoever. It must not be copied, altered or downloaded. Failure to comply is illegal being theft and contrary to International Copyright law and will render any offender liable to action at law.

CM17-16