

I AM: I Am The Resurrection and The Life' John 11:17-44

FAMILY DEDICATION:

Thank you, Candye. I'm truly grateful for you. Families, I am also so very grateful for each of you. I am encouraged by your being here today. We live in a world in which the family is under attack from the enemy and here we have several families making a commitment to build their family as a gospel-centered family. Now, church family, aren't you encouraged by this today?

You know, family dedication is a very biblical thing. It is modeled for us in both the Old and New Testaments. If you were with us earlier in the year, we studied through the book of 1 Samuel. And that book opens with the prayer of a woman that desired to have a son. Hannah prayed that The Lord would open her womb and she made a promise to God that if He did, she would give her son back to God all the days of his life. And we read where Hannah did just that. She dedicated Samuel to The Lord.

Then in the New Testament, when Jesus' earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, presented Jesus in the temple, they dedicated Him to God. So, the regular practice of Family dedication is deeply rooted in Scriptural examples. And these families are following in those footsteps.

And family dedication is not just these parents making a commitment to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord. Family dedication is also a time where we, as a church, commit to coming alongside these families and providing support and encouragement.

Families, there is power in making the commitment you are making today. Today, you are beginning a journey that can and will have a profound impact on future generations. Consider the example of Timothy in the Bible. Paul considered him a son in the faith, but Paul also acknowledged the power of the faith of Timothy's family. In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 4 and 5, Paul is writing to Timothy and says, *"4As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith [a genuine relationship with Christ, a sincere faith. Paul recognizes that Timothy has that. But look at the rich history of faith...], a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and [then in] your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."*

This is the generational impact of faith that you, parents, are beginning today. And remember, 100 years from now, nothing is going to matter except faith. It's not going to matter how hard they can hit a baseball, or softball. It's not going to matter how well they perform on their SATs. It's not even going to matter what their profession was. But what is going to matter 100 years from now is what they did with the person and work of Jesus. And that tells us what is of most importance.

Today, you are creating a marker in your parenting journey. Today you are letting your church family know that you are committing to raising your children to know and love Jesus. You are recognizing the primary focus of your parenting; to teach them about The Lord and His ways.

Church family, today you are letting these families know that your support them in this journey. You are making a commitment to pray for them, encourage them, serve them, and help them in the overwhelming task of raising kids in the nurture and admonition of The Lord.

I'd like for us to voice these commitments this morning vocally. I'm going to ask our parents to commit to their role and then ask our church to do the same.

Parents, do you promise to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord, to the best of your ability, pointing them to know and follow Jesus? If this is your promise state, "We will."

Church Family, do you promise to come alongside these families, to pray for them, encourage them, and to serve them as they raise their children to know and follow Jesus? If this is your promise to these families, state, "We will."

There you have it. You need to know that you are not alone in this journey of parenting. You have a church family that has committed to stand behind you. And we can't wait to see how The Lord is going to work in and through your family.

We are going to pray over you this morning. I'd like to do something a little different, if you don't mind. I want to invite the families that have come here today in support of these parents to just stand so that we can recognize you as well. Parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents. This is the heritage of faith we read about in 2 Timothy. Just remain standing for just a moment.

Church family, I want to ask you to stretch out your hands toward these parents as a sign of lifting them in prayer as I voice a prayer over them. [PRAY]

INTRODUCTION:

Again, good morning. It is good to see you today. And if you are a first-time guest with us, we'd love to get to connect with you. You can provide contact information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. You will receive a link via text that will take you to a form that is less than a minute to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

MOTHER'S DAY:

Today is also Mother's Day. I'd like to take a moment and recognize the women in our lives that have had such a profound impact on us. Our moms, teachers, mentors, and ladies that care so deeply for us. I'd like to ask moms here today to just stand so that we can recognize you this morning. Aren't you grateful for these moms? I know I am grateful for my mother, and I know she is joining us online today.

Ladies, we have a couple gifts for you this morning. In the fellowship area, there are chocolate roses specially designed by The Sweet Shop for you to take and enjoy. Those are out on the table in the lobby area. Please take one.

Also, out there on the table are these cards. And ladies, I'd like for each of you to take one of these. This card is something our ministry team designed to help you pray Scripture over your kids. It has a prayer prompt for each day of the week as well as a sample prayer to pray for that day.

It is also made to a certain size so that it can fit in your Bible or even on the visor of your car so that it can be in front of you on a daily basis. It is our prayer that this serves as a resource for you and your family.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in the middle of a teaching series where we are taking a look at the 7 "I AM" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Today we come to a powerful statement where Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life." So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with me to the gospel of John, chapter 11 as we look at verses 17 through 27 this morning.

One of the key principles in understanding and interpreting the Bible is knowing the context. We live in a society that takes sound bites out of context and when that happens the truth of what was said is mistaken. Context is vitally important. So, I want to give a bit of background to what is a familiar passage for many of you.

BACKGROUND:

Jesus was ministering in another place when a messenger came to Him and the disciples telling them that Lazarus was ill. While the Scripture does not let us in on the type of illness, it was obviously a terrible sickness. It appears to have come on suddenly, and progressed quickly, and ultimately Lazarus died.

The messenger, speaking on behalf of Lazarus' sisters, appealed to Jesus' love for Lazarus. He said, in verse 3, "*Lord, he whom you love is ill.*" Jesus had a history with this family. He visited them often. Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, are depicted as being close to Jesus.

But Jesus received the message and said that the purpose of the illness is to glorify God. He probably already knew that by the time word came to Him that Lazarus was already dead. As a result, Jesus stayed where He was for two more days.

After those couple of days, Jesus tells His disciples that they are going to head back to Bethany to check on the situation. They protested that as they were just recently driven out of Bethany under the threat of their lives. Jesus says that Lazarus has died so we are going to go. And off they went.

When they arrive in Bethany, it is a desperate scene. The community was filled with death, decay and distress. The family and friends of Lazarus were in shock, expressing great sorrow and grief. And by the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus had been buried for 4 days. It is this scene, a funeral, in which Jesus makes the claim we study today.ⁱⁱ Let's pick up the story there in verse 17.

MESSAGE:

17Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now this is an important detail because there was a Jewish view that a person's spirit would hover over the body for three days.ⁱⁱⁱ So, the detail about four days passing is important for us because at this point, all hope for a resuscitation is lost. Lazarus is dead and he is gone. It is a hopeless situation, and this family is reeling from grief. Verse 18.

18Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. This is where we see the hopelessness of the circumstance. Verse 21. *21Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.* In other words, Martha is saying, "Lord, I wish you were here. You could have healed my brother."

These are words of disappointment. Things could have been different. If only you had showed up in time. I'm going to come back to this in a moment. But have you ever felt this way? I mean, Martha and Mary went to Jesus with the matter. They sent a messenger. Get Jesus, He can work in this dire situation. But Jesus showed up too late.

Have you ever prayed a prayer and God didn't answer it the way you wanted or in the time you wanted? I know people that are angry at God. They would say that they tried to pray to God, but nothing happened. This is the situation that Jesus walks into.

And here's what Jesus does, He brings hope. Yes, if you know the story, you know that Jesus will raise Lazarus from the dead. But I want us to see three things about hope in what Jesus does here in this passage. And I pray that this is an encouragement to you today. The first thing we see about hope is that...

1) Hope is a Person.

Look at verse 23. Martha says, "If only..." and, "I know you'll comfort us somehow." And to those things, verse 23, *"23Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."* *24Martha said to him, "[Yeah, yeah,] I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."* And it is to that statement that Jesus says, verse 25, *"I am the resurrection and the life."*

There is an I in the I Am. A person. Jesus said that there is hope because hope is a Person. Hope is found in Jesus.

I know that many of you have been right where Martha is. Maybe you're there now. Disappointed, wondering what could have been. Maybe even angry at God because He didn't come through for you when you thought He should.

But don't miss what Jesus does here. He moves Martha's focus.^{iv} In a powerful statement, in just one sentence, Jesus moves Martha's focus from her problem to a Person; Himself. I am. Your brother will rise again. Yeah, I know, Jesus. But my brother is gone. Martha, "I am."

Peter experienced something similar when he got distracted walking on the water. Remember, so long as he was focused on Jesus, he was walking on the water. But the moment he took his eyes off of Jesus and noticed, "I'm in a pickle here. The winds and the waves. Oh no! This isn't good." But that's when he began to sink.

So many times, we get focused on the wrong things, don't we? We are just like Martha and Peter. We believe that a change in circumstances will take away the hurt we are feeling. If we only had what was missing, then things would be peaceful. We have a tendency to place our focus on the circumstances surrounding our lives when Jesus wants to change our focus. He wants to shift the focus of our lives from our circumstances to Him. And it's when we make that shift, that we find hope.

The writer of Hebrews says it this way, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, *"1Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight [our difficult circumstances], and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking [where?] to Jesus [changing our focus to Jesus who is], the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In the midst of difficult and challenging circumstances, grab ahold of hope. And that hope is a person, it is Jesus. Hope is a person. Secondly, Jesus being the resurrection and the life means that...

2) Hope is Present.

What fed Martha's hopelessness was that she was focused on the past. "If only..." But she was also focused on the distant future. "I know he will rise on the last day." The last thing on Martha's radar was a resurrection of her brother. She was dwelling in the past and longing for the future in such a way that she was missing the present.^v Jesus said her in verse 25, "**I am.**" "Right now, present."

Even as believers we have to remind ourselves of this. Right? Martha had heard and most likely witnessed the miracles of Jesus. She understood the great things He had done in the past. And as a result, she believed in him for her future, eternal, life. But she just wasn't quite sure about her present.

I'm sure that we could go around this room and share all the ways The Lord has worked in our past. And we are here this morning celebrating the fact that because He lives, we can face tomorrow. But I think the lesson we learn here is to not miss the present.

Don't miss out on today's blessings. Don't get stuck in the past or focus solely on the future in a way that you miss what God is doing in your life today.^{vi} I don't know what you are walking through, but I know this, Jesus wants to be the resurrection and the life for you today. Not just in your past, and not just for your future, but today. Now, it doesn't mean that He will show up and work things the way you wish in the time that you want, but it does mean that He will show up.

Hope is a person, and hope is present. Thirdly, Jesus being the resurrection and the life means that...

3) Hope is Promised.

One of the things that makes Christianity distinct from other world religions is the hope and assurance it brings concerning our future. All other world religions have at their core a works-based salvation. That means that they have to do certain things in order to get in good with their god. And my question has always been, "When do you know you've done enough? Who gets to make that determination?" And what is sad is that they go to their deathbed hopeless, wondering if they've done enough to be in their heaven.

Christianity is entirely different. Not because we have earned salvation, but because Jesus purchased it on the cross, we have a promised hope.

Verses 25 and 26, ²⁵*Jesus said to her, "I am the **resurrection and the life.** **Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,** ²⁶*and everyone who lives and believes in me **shall never die.*** How's that for hope promised?*

I want to point out a couple things in this verse to help us grab ahold of what Jesus is saying. First, in the original language that this was written in, the word translated as "resurrection," literally means "a standing up."^{vii} To go from down to standing up again. It's a change in status.

When we place our faith in Jesus, we experience a change in status. Ephesians, chapter 2, highlights this change. Verses 1 through 5. ¹*And **you were dead** [not just struggling, you see. You and I were dead...] **in the trespasses and sins** ²*in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—* ³*among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.* ⁴*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,* ⁵***even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ** [Resurrected, a standing up] **—by grace you have been saved.**"**

In Jesus' statement, "*I am the **resurrection and the life.** **Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,**" He is saying that those that place their faith in Him have a status change. A moving from death to life. I change from dead to being stood up. And even though we die, we shall live. That is hope promised backed up by Jesus Himself.*

But there's another thing here about this hope promised. As a part of this I Am statement, Jesus says in verse 26, ²⁶*and everyone who lives and believes in me **shall never die.*** This is a promise made by Jesus. If you are in Christ, you shall never die. There is an assurance, a resolve, that comes in knowing Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life.

The word hope is an interesting word for us today. Modern day dictionaries define hope as "a feeling that something desired may happen."^{viii} But biblical hope is different. Biblical hope is not just a **feeling** that something **may** happen in the future, but rather, it is a confident expectation for something good in the future. Biblical hope not only desires good in the future, it expects it.^{ix}

Hebrews 11:1 says, “*Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” There is a peace and an assurance that comes in trusting the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus says that if you believe in Him, you will never die. That’s peace, comfort, and assurance.

Hope is a person, hope is present, and hope is promised.

CONCLUSION:

I want to invite our worship team to come back up and lead us in a time of response. As they are making their way, let me ask you a question. Are you looking for hope today?

Maybe you are here, and you are needing guidance and direction for something that is weighing heavy on you. Maybe you are here this morning, and you are unsure about your future. I can tell you that hope is found in a person and that person is The Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps you are even here this morning, and you are looking for assurance of salvation. You’re not really sure if Jesus is Lord of your life. We can settle that today. During this time of response, we will have elders here at the front ready to receive you and visit with you about what it means to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. You come this morning.

I’m going to pray, we will sing, but let’s also respond to the prompting of The Lord on our hearts. [PRAY]

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*,” Moody Press: Chicago, 2006; Gary M. Burge, “*The NIV Application Commentary: John*,” Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000; Lloyd J. Ogilvie, “*The Communicator’s Commentary: John*,” Word Books: Waco, 1985; Jonathan Pokluda, “*I AM: The Resurrection and The Life*,” sermon preached at Harris Creek Baptist Church, Waco, TX, April 9, 2023, accessed online: <https://www.harris creek.org/sermons?sapurl=LytmYzAwL2xiL21pLys3d2c3NnM4P2VtYmVkPXRydWUmcmVjZ W50Um91dGU9YXBwLndiY11hcHAubGlicmFyeS5saXN0JnJlY2VudFJvdXRlU2x1Zz0lMkx2ZjN3amti>; Esteban Shedd, “*The ‘I AM’ Statements of Jesus Course*,” published by The Gospel Coalition; accessed online: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-i-am-statements-of-jesus/#course-introduction>; Michael Youssef, “*There is an I in I Am: The Resurrection and The Life*,” sermon preached at The Apostle’s Church, July 21, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/listen/teaching/series/there-is-an-i-in-the-i-am/part-7>; David Thomas, “*I Am The Resurrection and the Life*,” published by Sermons by Logos, accessed online: <https://sermons.logos.com/sermons/571175-i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life>; Matt Chandler, “*I AM: The Resurrection and the Life*,” sermon preached at The Village Church, March 27, 2016, accessed online: <https://www.thevillagechurch.net/resources/sermons/the-resurrection-and-the-life>; Skip Heitzig, “*Expound: John 11:1-35*,” taught at Calvary Albuquerque, October 26, 2016, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/295/sermon/3784>.

ⁱⁱ Description taken from Michael Youssef’s sermon.

ⁱⁱⁱ More discussion on this can be found here: <https://www.jewish-funerals.org/shemira/>.

^{iv} Pointed out by Michael Youssef.

^v Matt Chandler has a great discussion on this in his sermon listed above.

^{vi} Phrasing borrowed from Michael Youssef.

^{vii} Strong’s Concordance, 386.

^{viii} Dictionary.com, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hope>.

^{ix} Adapted from John Piper’s message, “*What is Hope*,” published by Desiring God on April 6, 1986, accessed online: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/what-is-hope>.