**John 11:1-45 (ESV)**

[1] Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. [3] So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." [4] But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

[5] Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [6] So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. [7] Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." [8] The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" [9] Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. [10] But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." [11] After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." [12] The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." [13] Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. [14] Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, [15] and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." [16] So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

[17] Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. [18] Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, [19] and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. [20] So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. [21] Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [22] But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." [24] Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." [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. Do you believe this?" [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

[28] When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." [29] And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. [30] Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. [31] When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. [32] Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." [33] When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. [34] And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." [35] Jesus wept. [36] So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" [37] But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

[38] Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. [39] Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." [40] Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" [41] So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. [42] I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." [43] When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." [44] The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

[45] Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,

**“Nothing Lost”**

Grace to you Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come (Rev 1:4), Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen. There are plenty of issues to speak to today for a culture spiraling out of control. There are more than enough acts of mercy to share with those having direr needs. There are loads to do and consider in any given day to better life in this world. However, Lent teaches us that the Christian confession of faith is ultimately more than about things that only last for a time. Kingdoms rise and fall, the poor are always present, and the world continues to have one trouble after another.

With so much divisiveness and division today, Lent tells us the truth. No matter how diffused and chaotic things may be or whatever comes of the future. All in this world have one thing in common for none escapes death. The Sunday before Holy Week reveals oneness that unite all not in death, but life. Jesus had promised long before the ordeal over Lazarus. “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live… **28** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come out…” (John 5:25-29). Jesus is the resurrection and the life the One who makes us one by faith in Him.

1. **First, note the condition of those in our text. Death is the problem all must deal with one way or another.**
2. Jesus’ disciples misinterpreted the power of death.

* They figured Lazarus “falling asleep” meant he was overcoming his illness.
* Those disciples knew what it was like to tough it out in a world where only the strong survive.
* Yet, that is the problem; survival of the fittest comes down to the fact of none being fit to survive.
* How insensitive are we to death around us when Job tells us, “Remember that my life is a breath (7:7).

1. Mary and Martha were distraught over what death did.

* Stripped from their lives was their beloved brother Lazarus.
* Martha buried the pain in order to hold things together while Mary was a shipwreck of emotions.
* Yet, both in their grief expressed the same concern to Jesus, “If you had only been there!”
* Death kills us with “ifs” about life and even makes it seem like God is distant and cold.

1. The crowd assembled because death struck out against life.

* They came because these sisters were significant to the community.
* Family and friends mourned and gave support no less than many still do.
* Most come to Christians funerals today confused over Jesus or just mock everything all together.
* The crowds go where the dead go, so self-made funerals, eulogizing and other spiritualties of a person now seek to replace Jesus.

1. Lastly, Lazarus was dead so what was he going to do about it?

* His will could not will him back into his body.
* Death proved to be that enemy he could not defeat.
* As St. Paul understood this well even as a Christian, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:24)
* The most heinous views today want to treat death as another form of life, but graves show us like the valley of dry bones, that something is missing.

1. **Now, consider the one who** **stands out in our text. Jesus is the resurrection and the life that makes us one.**
2. As Rabbi, He declares truth to the disciples with all joy.

* Lazarus’ illness and death was the opportunity for the Father in heaven to glory Jesus to be the Son.
* The works righteous disciples had to hear, “Lazarus is dead” only because they needed true righteousness that alone came from Jesus.
* Survival of the fittest is actually sinners fit to die with Jesus in order to live with Him. (Lazarus believing was no secret)
* Like the disciples, following Christ is to repent and go the way of the cross seeing death now serves Him who died for us.

1. As the God of love, Jesus draws near to Mary and Martha with all comfort.

* The hurting and helpless are the ones to hear, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)
* Jesus held things together for Martha to believe that, “I am the resurrection and life” just as Mary and everyone else were not to cry without His tears.
* “If you have been there” had no answer from Jesus, because it was to believe He was always there no “ifs and buts” about it.
* Like Martha and Mary, the brokenness of death is to drive us to God who is close for Christ even says, “This is body, this is my blood given and shed for you!”

1. As Savior, Jesus does the heavy lifting so all know to believe in Him.

* The crowd could mourn and give support, but Jesus went beyond family and friends to appeal to His heavenly Father as the Son.
* His prayer was for those living with death saying, “I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”
* Christian funerals declare God saves His baptized alone in Christ so not raising the dead, but baptism is the miracles of eternal life.
* As many try to redefine death or remake a funeral, without Christ and faith in Him there is no life to celebrate, no hope of heaven, no peace for sinners.

1. As Lord, Jesus delivers Lazarus without even getting His hands dirty.

* He puts mud on the eyes of a blind man, but Jesus only lets His voice echo into the tomb, “Come out.”
* The Word who created this world, is the Word who has cried out for all in this world, and who by His word will raise us from the dust of this world.
* Lazarus’ death and resurrection is a crash course before Holy Week to trust in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
* We can rest with eternal life at any time like Lazarus for, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Christians have the call to make good use of their earthly lives because by faith in Jesus we already have eternity. There is actually time to waste for acts of mercy, ways to bear witness, and cross-filled love for others. Luther says the baptized, “has a mighty helper who holds out his hand to him, namely, His Lord Christ; He has left the grave entirely a long time ago, and now He takes the Christian by the hand and pulls him more than halfway out of the grave; only the left foot remains in it!”[[1]](#footnote-1) We are united in life more than death, yet to the world it will look more like death than life. Jesus is the resurrection and the life the One who makes us one by faith in Him. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. *Luther’s Works, vol. 28, page 133* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)