



Small group questions

Raising of Lazarus – I am the resurrection and the life – John 11:1-44

READ John 11:1-44

1. Why didn't Jesus rush to Lazarus when he was sick?
2. What did Martha assume when Jesus told her, that her brother would rise again?
3. What did Jesus mean when he said "I am the resurrection and the life?"
4. V33 – why was Jesus 'deeply moved and troubled in spirit' – which translates a word from the Greek that infers Jesus was angry or agitated?
5. Why do some people want to prolong life now at any cost?
6. How did Mark explain what it means to believe in Jesus?
7. How do we convince people that they are seriously missing out if they are not enjoying all the benefits of relationship with God for which they were created?
8. What will believers in Jesus experience when they die physically?
9. What difference does this make to the way we live and the way we die?
10. What was the best thing about Easter 2017 for you?
11. How has this series on the 7 signs of John's Gospel been helpful for you?

Easter Day 2017

I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

John 11:25-26

Either Jesus was a **fraud**, or what he says in the words I'm about to quote, is the most **amazing** and **wonderful** news ever...

Ready? Jesus said - *I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*

Living - even though **dying**...

...and never **actually** dying... what is Jesus **talking** about and how is this even **possible**? //

In the western world - all kinds of people are trying to live **longer**

...so there's a whole **economy** entirely dependent on people's desire to live longer...

- **Health care products** of all descriptions
- **Gyms**
- Personal **trainers**
- **Light -n- easy** type meals - all ready to go and delivered to your door for your convenience...
- **Anti-ageing** creams
- Millions of dollars poured into research about **cancer**
- Marvellous advances in **medicine** which means people are **already** living longer than they were 40-50 years ago /

Why do people want to **live longer**?

Why do people want to **prolong** life for as long as they **can**?

Often – not all the time – but **often** – because they have no hope of **any life beyond death** – and therefore no **hope**.

If people think that **when you're dead, you're dead** – than – **yes** – we must hang on to life at all **cost!** //

Let me tell you a little of the **context** of these words of Jesus

A dear friend of Jesus had died

His name was **Lazarus**. Lazarus had two sisters – Mary and Martha – and he was close to them as well – often eating in their home.

Now Jesus did a **very unexpected thing** when he heard his mate Lazarus was in really bad shape and close to death

He **didn't rush** to be by his side.

NOR did he come and **heal** him – as he was well able to do!

He finally and only turns up **four** days after he died!

And Martha says to Jesus – *Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died...*

She's sad... she's wondering why Jesus didn't come earlier - knowing that he could have done something

And Jesus says to her... *I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die and whoever dies believing in me will never die*

That's an **extraordinary claim!!**

Who does this guy think he **is** promising that if people trust him they'll **live** even though they **die**?

It's a claim that if you or I trust Jesus, then even though we die a **physical** death... we'll actually **live on** – never **really** die.... and that **after** the **physical** death – we'll find ourselves **still alive** in the presence of **Jesus** – eventually -- with new bodies (the Bible says elsewhere) ... ready to live for **ever** – that is – for **eternity** – without **limit** – without ever **dying**...!

That's an absolutely **bizarre** promise to make - who does Jesus think he is?

Is he **deluded**?

Is he a fraud?

Is he simply **mad**? ///

Or is he **profoundly speaking the truth**? //

How are we meant to work it out?

We need a **sign** Jesus... we need something to **go** on – something to help us **draw** our **conclusions!**

And that is **exactly** what he went on to do....

He said “*I am the resurrection and the life*” and he went on to raise his mate **Lazarus** from the **dead!**

He came to where Lazarus had been laid – a cave with a stone across the entrance...

“Take away the stone”, he said.

Martha was concerned – concerned about the **smell** seeing that he had been in there for **four days.**

Jesus prayed, then called out in a loud voice... *Lazarus, come out!* //

Can you imagine the **tension** in the air at that point?

If **nothing** happened – Jesus would look completely **foolish** – **powerless** – an **embarrassment.** //

Who knows how long it took Lazarus to **hop off the shelf** inside the cave and shuffle out with his **grave clothes on?!**

But Lazarus did eventually emerge and Jesus said *take off the grave clothes and let him go!*

Can you imagine?? What an **amazing** moment that must have been!!

Is he **coming??** Is anything **happening??** – I hear something... look – there he is – he’s coming **out!**

He **says** he is the resurrection and the life... he’s the **origin** of both – the **force behind** both – the **power** of both – and he **proves** it by raising Lazarus from the **dead!!**

It has been said that it was just as well Jesus used **Lazarus’ name** that day – otherwise **all** the dead would have come out!! ///

What do you **make** of Jesus?

If he is who he says he is – the resurrection and the life – I want to put it to you, that there

- Is **hope** for this world’s **darkness**
- that **this** life and all we see is **not** all there is to it...
- that there are some **answers** to this life’s **fundamental questions** about **purpose** and **meaning** – even about **justice** and **evil** and **suffering...**
- and for each and every person here – there is the **offer** – the **promise** – of **life beyond death** –

I’m sure **many** of you here **know** that, have **embraced** that... are **revelling** in that... - **especially** today – and are anticipating that **new life** in **eternity....** //

But how can you be sure it's yours?

Well the text says - *The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*

Please note what it **doesn't** say

It doesn't say

the **religious** will live

The **good** will live

Those who **try hard** will live //

It doesn't say

Those who don't do anything **major wrong** will live

Those who **keep all the commandments** will live

Those who get to church at **Easter** will live....

No... Jesus says - *those who believe in me will live... and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*

Jesus is on about **relationship**

To **believe** in Jesus is to **trust** him

To **trust** who he is

To **trust** that he's for **real**

To **trust** that his death on the **cross** is what brings you back in to **relationship** with **God**

To **entrust** your **life** to **him**

To trust that your life is better off lived **for** him than lived **WITHOUT HIM - better lived for HIM and not for YOU!**

Better off lived for **him** than to join the rest of the western world in living for more and more **stuff!!! ///**

Is **that** how you live?

Is he number **ONE** in your life or number **TWENTY ONE?**

Is a **component** of your life // or **IS HE** your life?

You've been created for **relationship** with him and until you discover and embrace all the **joys** of that relationship - you're not yet all you've been created to **be** - in fact your **very seriously missing out!! ///**

If you've **entrusted** your life to Jesus... if he is your **first** love.. than you walk off this beach this morning - out of this room - this church - knowing that even though you will face a physical death - you will **never actually die!!**

...and that life **until** that time - is the **best life possible** - because it's being lived in **relationship** with **God** - as he **intended** it be... //

I am the resurrection and the life said Jesus...

...and he raised Lazarus to show that he was no **fool** - nor **deluded** - but that he was who he said he was...

and on this day - this **Easter Day** - when he **himself** broke the shackles of death and broke **free** from the **tomb** - he says **all the more clearly** - he **shouts to us across the centuries** - **I'M ALIVE** - and because I'm alive - whoever **lives** by **believing** in me will **never die!!!** //

that day when Martha's heart was broken because her brother had died, and Jesus said - *I am the resurrection the life*... do you know what **else** Jesus added??

Four more words

"Do you believe this?" ...he challenged Martha.

And **I'm** going to finish with four more words... not addressed to **Martha** today - but addressed to **you**.

"I am the resurrection and the life" says the Lord....

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?