

# “I am the Resurrection and the Life”

## John 11

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” <sup>4</sup> 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.”

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

## I Am the Resurrection and the Life

<sup>17</sup> Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles<sup>c</sup> off, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup> So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.<sup>d</sup> Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup> She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

## Jesus Weeps

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> 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.” <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved<sup>e</sup> in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup> And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

## Jesus Raises Lazarus

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> 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." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> 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." <sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup> 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."

## **The Plot to Kill Jesus**

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

<sup>54</sup> Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

<sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" <sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

::Auto Transcription::

### **Dr. Tom Stewart:**

So we're in the promises in John. "I'm the resurrection and the life", John chapter 11. But first, let me tell you about Nick and I, in our basement during our COVID experience, Nick is young and healthy, and he only lost his sense of taste. That is a bummer on Thanksgiving though. We did eat very well during our exile. I felt tired, achy, but really never even developed a full fledged fever. It's a strange disease that seems to hit some people very hard, and others it just grazes them. I'd say we were grazed. When you're out of circulation, you'd like to feel missed though. One devastated family members seem to take our cause seriously though, Sadie, our dog. She just knew that things were not right. And even though something was off, she started jumping on the furniture, which is something that she never does. She noticed that we were not there, Nick and I, and we were just down in the basement, but she never came looking for us. She did go to the top of the stairs and whimper though, and so eventually we call her down and, you know, gave her an overdue back and belly scratch. She didn't stay long, but she seems satisfied. It's kind of funny how animals have a sense that things are not what they're supposed to be in your family. You know, I was well taken care of during my illness, lots of good food and drinks, clean clothes that just seemed to appear. My wife was good to us. COVID, it's a disrupter, isn't it? You know, it's had profound effects on many of our community. In the 30 years that I've been

practicing, I've never completed so many death certificates as in the last few weeks. COVID seems to prey on the most frail among us, the elderly, with multiple medical problems. And efficiently, wherever it surges, it brings death. Seems providential that the promise we're studying is one of Jesus' greatest promises. "I am the resurrection and the life." You know, we find tremendous hope in this promise. That's because we all have to deal with death, all of us will face death physically. And hopefully, all of us will face death spiritually, and find hope in the message of the gospel. It's important to remember the attitude of the people as we're reading in John. Do you remember in John chapter 10, just last week Pastor shared, there was the attitude that the Jewish leaders had towards Jesus. Do you remember what that was? Look at chapter 10, verse 33. They wanted to stone him to death because of blasphemy. He had, in their eyes and accurately, claimed to be God, John 10:33. They sought to arrest him in verse 39. "And Jesus crossed the Jordan to a place where John had been baptizing." This is probably about 12 to 14 miles from Bethany, where our story will take place. In John 11:6, we learned that "when Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer". It was not Jesus' intention to heal Lazarus from his sickness. It was his intention to raise him from the dead. Verse 11 tells us that. It says, "Lazarus, our friend has fallen asleep", which means he's died. "And I go to awaken him". I go to resurrect him. And Thomas says, "Sure, let's go, we can die with him," John 11:16. And that shows you a bit of the gravity, he sees the danger that's there. I think my namesake a bit sarcastic, don't you think?

The real danger is that they are after Jesus. Let's read the passage together. We're going to read from John chapter 11. I'm going to read from verse 17 through 44. We're not going to go through all of this in depth, but we'll skim through most of them. John chapter 11, verse 17. "Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is coming into the world. When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, The teacher is here and is calling for you. And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who are 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. 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. 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. And he said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. So the Jews said, See how he loved him. But some of them said, Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying? Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. 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's been dead four days. And Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? And so they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 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. When he had said these things, he

cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus come out. The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, Unbind him, let him go.”

Jesus is laser focused on God’s plan. Martha hasn’t gotten it yet. And how could she, this is unprecedented. Jesus has raised people from the dead but not somebody has been dead four days. It just has never happened before. Yet, verse 24, she tells him “I know that he will rise at the resurrection on the last day”. So Jesus is talking resurrection here and now. Mary’s talking about future resurrection on the last day. It’s still amazing, still true. But it seems to take away something from the situation at hand. Jesus seeks to challenge Mary and bring her back with this promise. The fifth of the “I am” promises in the book of John. “I am the resurrection and the life”. It’s meant to bring Martha back to the reality of who Jesus is. He is the source of life, the life source, he brings dead things back to life. He is Deity, the God-man, the only one who can claim this. Jesus is calling Martha to trust Him as the only one who has the power over death. “Whoever believes in me though he die”. Who does that refer to? “Though he die”, it’s Lazarus, who’s before us, he’s dead. “Though he die, yet shall he live.” Lazarus shall live and to everyone who lives, that is Martha and Mary, that is all of us. Every believer, “everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.” If you believe in Jesus Christ, you will never die. Though we all experience death, or rapture, all of us will live eternally with God. “Martha, do you believe this?” And this is not just about Lazarus resurrection. It’s asking, Jesus is asking her, Do you believe I am the source of life? Do you believe I am the resurrection power? He gets in her face. And this passage is meant to get in our face, too. He wants to ask us this same question. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is the life source, the resurrection power for all humanity? He wants us to trust him. Do you trust Jesus with your soul, with your destiny? Verse 27, Martha says, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God”. This is a great testimony in Scripture. It’s just, it’s one of the best. It’s not what Jesus was asking exactly, though. She still didn’t quite get it. But she will. She will. She goes back to get Mary at Jesus request. And verse 28, “The teacher is here. And he is calling for you.” He will not leave Mary to mourn alone. He calls for her, Mary seemed a bit quiet and reserved. But look at verse 29. What does she do? She got up quickly, right? She’s on it. Oh, Jesus said he wants to speak to me. I’m going, I’m all about that.

So does she go alone? It says that the Jews went with her. They probably thought she was going to grieve Lazarus’s death. And they would go with her. For many, it was probably their job. There were paid mourners in the day. And Mary and Martha and Lazarus were people of means, they had some money. So they probably were able to hire mourners, especially for a prominent death like a brother. There was a 30 day mourning period that was observed usually. The first seven days were the more intense and many of the mourners would remain with the family the entire week. So this explains on day four, why there are still many Jews with them. And God needed many, because he needed some witnesses to be spectators of this greatest miracle so far in the book of John. So they were with Mary “supposing she was going to the tomb to weep”, verse 31. “And Mary came to where Jesus was”, notice in verse 32 what she does. What’s her posture? She falls at Jesus feet. You gotta love Mary, don’t you? I mean, it’s like she just embodies humility. Even though she questions, just like her sister, she does it in tears. “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died”. But she’s heartbroken. She’s got a tender spirit, she weeps as she says this. And Jesus sees her weeping and the weeping of the Jewish mourners. And at this site, Jesus is deeply moved in his spirit and he’s troubled. Jesus, the God of the universe. He sympathizes with their grief.

And you know,

when we grieve, when we're hurting, Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, Hebrews tells us. We can go to him. He's a human being that will understand, he's experienced this. He's not Mr. Spock, who has no emotion, but he's fully human in all of his emotions. He's a manly man, but he's affected by deep human pain and in verse 35, the shortest verse in the Bible, he weeps. Now he doesn't uncontrollably weep, he doesn't fall apart and become immobilized, but he shows his emotion. And that's an example for many of us men that struggle with showing our emotions. Jesus didn't shy away from that. He doesn't get carried away, though. He's still on task. Verse 34, he asked the question, "Where have they laid him? And they say, Lord, come and see". The Jews have two responses here. One, "see how he loved him!", this man that's not even a relative, see how he cares so much. He cares deeply and genuinely for this man, Lazarus and his family. You know, Jesus is not your natural relative. But he deeply and genuinely cares for you. He gave himself for you. As we would trust him. He gave himself for us when we were enemies, in our minds by wicked works when we were last when we were children of wrath, nothing to commend us to God yet, He loved us and called us and chose us by His great grace. Praise His name. Second response is like Mary and Martha's response.

You know, he healed

the blind man, that just happened a couple of chapters ago in John, we remember that, it was miraculous, and here's this guy, Lazarus, he's a friend, certainly could heal him.

He could have done that.

Why did he do that? They don't know the plan of God. They don't have a clue. Verse 38, Jesus comes to the tomb, which was a cave and there was a round stone placed over the entrance to keep animals and grave robbers out and verse 39, Jesus said, "Take away the stone". The law had forbidden contact with dead bodies.

Any contact would make a person unclean. Jesus isn't going to break the law here, though. Martha tells Jesus, there's going to be an odor, this body's been decomposing four days,

there's going to be a bad smell. I'm telling you. If you were to look at a corpse, there's visible changes by this amount of time. I studied some pathology. And there are certain things which happened to a body after dies. First, the blood settles to the bottom of the body, in whatever position it's in, it's called lividity. And your joints, if you're there for more than 24 hours, they become rigid and fixed and whatever position you're in, you're not going anywhere, your joints become stiff and rigid. And then there's the decomposition. The person will not look the same as they did before. Martha wants to spare Jesus and the others this and she's trying to defend her brother, her brother's memory. She doesn't want people to have a terrible memory of this last time they would see him. Verse 40, Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe you would see the glory of God?" If you trust me, Martha, you'll see maximum glory. You're going to see glory like you've never seen before. God will be glorified in a greater way than he has ever been before to this time. Verse 41, "So they took away the stone." Then Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven to thank his Father for hearing him. Now you know, he didn't already speak to him about this, but they're one mind He and the Father. And he knows, before we speak it, what we're

going to say, and he knows the heart of his son, with absolute confidence, he says, He speaks not for God's benefit, but for these people that are there. He wants to draw men to the Savior, he wants them to believe the truth that he is the Messiah. The greatest signpost, we've talked about these signposts, these miracles along the way, and this is the greatest signposts to his identity so far. This verifies that he was sent by God. Now, who did they say before that, when He performed miracles, by what power? Do you remember? Whose power did they say? By Satan's power. It's not by Satan or any other force. As we look at him here, he doesn't speak any charm or incantation, he speaks simply and clearly, a prayer to God, with his eyes towards heaven. There can be no mistaking this, that they may believe that you father have sent me. Verse 43, "After he says these things, he cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus come out". Notice he does not just say, come out, to the graveyard, because it would empty out the graveyard. But he's specific, "Lazarus come out". At that moment, it strikes me. Lazarus, who'd been called back from Paradise may have had some apprehension. You know, he may have thought, Oh, man, I was home. They want me back. Are you kidding? I'm sure God gave him grace to deal with it and I'm sure it was an honor because Jesus was calling him and a privilege but this had to be disappointing. I was at rest and I was going to be with God. I go back, it's a mess there. Let me tell you, you're gonna see, they're gonna want to

kill me.

This must have been a blessing though. In Lazarus body, in a moment of time, all the decomposition stopped. And a reverse in the lividity and the rigidity and the putrefaction of his body was all reversed and made whole, as before, returned by the resurrection power of God. Verse 44, he comes hopping out hands and feet, still bound and linens with his face wrapped with a cloth and Jesus is not taken up by the crowd. He doesn't bow for applause at this greatest of miracles, but he shows concern for Lazarus. He's focused on Lazarus. He commands his wrappings be unbound. And the miracle, life spoken out of death, is the greatest so far, but there will be one greater. That's going to be Jesus resurrection from the dead, when the Trinity will raise him up. When John the Baptist disciples came to Jesus asking him, how do we know this one, the Messiah. Jesus said, "Go and tell John what you've seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news preached to them", Luke 7:22. What do you think the response was to this greatest of miracles among the Jews? How did they receive it? Some believe. But many, if we go a little further to John 11, verse 53, we see that they make plans to kill Jesus. The Chief Priests, a little earlier, prophesies that one man will die for the people. Wow, what a prophecy. That's Jesus he's talking about. And verse 57, they're still seeking to arrest him and they expand their hatred in John 12:10, they expand their hatred to include Lazarus, they plot to kill him as well. How twisted is that? You're gonna kill him? And I'll raise him again. What are they thinking? As God's plan becomes more evident, hatred grows for Jesus and those who are his friends. It's like these two things grow together, the witness and the power of Jesus, and the hatred, the opposition, by Satan, as they come against each other. So as we consider this promise, "I am the resurrection and the life", there's a few different applications we can get from this. The first one that should probably come to our minds is what? "I am the resurrection and the life", how does that affect you? Because you were in darkness, sin, and God did what? Paid for your sins. And raised us from death. So it's a life, spiritually salvation. In Ephesians, 2:1 it says, We are "dead in our trespasses and sins". Ephesians 2:2 & 3 "we followed Satan, the prince of the power the air, we lived in passions of the flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind. And were by nature, children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins".

But verse 4,5,6, “but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead, in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” resurrected, spiritually, “by grace, you have been saved, and raised up with him and seated with him in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus”. Jesus bore the penalty for our sins, to cleanse us white as snow, to make us acceptable to God, and to give us even his own righteousness

as we trust him. Second, in sanctification, do we have to die to ourselves? Is that part of the Christian walk? We’re told that in many places, in Romans it talks about that. In Luke, chapter 9, verse 23 & 24 it says, “if anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life, will lose it. But whoever loses his life, for my sake, will save it”. So what does it mean to take up the cross daily? What do I have to do to do that? Do I have some desires? And some of them are so good, right? Habits, sinful things that I want. What do I have to do with that? I’ve got to say no to that right? To put off the old desire and to put on what is right, put on Christ and what he would have me do. It means to die to myself. I like my sinful habits though. I’m attached to them. It’s painful to do this. I’ve got to die to myself to do this. You know, this year, it’s been a big string of cancellations. Right? I’ll just include a few, the Big 10 football canceled, pro football games put off, Thanksgiving. Did you have a Thanksgiving? We didn’t have a Thanksgiving really at our house. I didn’t even know if I was gonna get turkey. But God supplied, through our neighbor across the street. It was wonderful. But it wasn’t Thanksgiving like I remember. What about Christmas? It’s not going to exist like it has at our house, like it has in the past. We’re not getting 25 people together this year. We’re going to be hit and miss. Is that true for you too?

It’s difficult. Can we trust God’s good providence, that he’s going to work through this Covid pandemic? In spite of the trashing of our plans? Can we choose to give up our lives that we might gain life in this sense? Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”. God gives us opportunities to speak to people around us that are hurting and depressed and disillusioned with all that’s going on. May we show them there’s life in Christ, it’s better, even though it’s difficult to follow him. Lastly, dying in affliction. It’s not our actual physical death, although it could be there are people that are martyred for Jesus, in these countries that we’ve been talking about. There’s opposition and people are killed for their faith. But more, let’s look at affliction or suffering that occurs as we go through this world. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7 through 12 says this, “but we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus.” So how do we do that? How do we carry in our body, in our lives, the death of Jesus. And we do that “so that the life of Jesus may be manifest in our bodies”. So we show forth death through affliction. For if we live, we are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh”. Romans 8:36 says this, Paul is speaking, “For your sake, we are being killed all day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered”. This is the sacrificing of our physical body as Christ suffered. We’re to suffer. And, you know, in our current society, there’s only a small risk, I’d say, of physical persecution, although that may be increasing. Our society is changing. And it seems to be becoming a little more hostile towards Christian things. Would you agree with that?

Yeah, it may be coming. There’s many places in the world right now. It’s a physical reality that if you claim Christ, you’re going to suffer for it.

It's a blessing to suffer bodily harm and persecution. And Matthew 5:10 said, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." I want to close with a story. I have been listening this last week to some biographies about missionaries. This was a set that was done by John Piper. And he speaks of a man named John B. Paton. John B. Paton was a Scottish missionary to the New Guinea Islands in the Pacific in 1858. He was told by family and friends and his church, don't go you'll be eaten by cannibals. Does that sound like sound advice? Unless it's just dramatic, but it wasn't just dramatic and these very same islands 20 years before, two men had went, they had gotten off the boat, and they had been eaten in minutes on this island. Paton's response to this, with this Christian blood we baptize these islands claiming them for Jesus. Paton was known for his courage in a straight up speech. An elder from his church confronted him about this very same thing, about going and being eaten. And Paton said, you know you're an older man. And soon you're going to be going to your grave and you're going to be eaten by worms. And if I'm eaten by worms or cannibals, it makes no difference to me if I serve Christ in the process, and I'll tell you this, too, that my resurrection body will look just as good as yours, no matter who eats us. So Paton took a wife and a child to an island and in the first year his wife and child died. He had to bury them by his own hand. He was sick, on and off, his wife had died to tropical illness. And he had that as well. He was chased and being harassed and threatened, he spent all night in a tree hiding to avoid capture. And he eventually was miraculously delivered after four years of threats by a boat that just showed up at just the right moment. And delivered him from that situation. He went back to England and to Australia, and he spoke of these islands, and many missionaries were born out of the encouragement of this man, to have people come back to these very same islands and so after four years, he went back. And he had married again and he went to Anewa. Anewa is a little island, it's only seven miles across. And once again, he claimed the island for Christ and he and his wife serve 41 years there. By God's grace, he said, Anewa has bowed and worship the Savior. The entire island basically was saved. Always carrying about in the body, the death of Jesus, help us not to fear physical afflictions, but to welcome them to further God's cause. Seems to be a forgotten thought in many modern missions. This affliction brings living fruit though these dead islands made alive by Jesus. He raises the dead. Let me share this last part with you, a bit of encouragement regarding those that we've lost. This is 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, verse 13 through 18, speaking about the death of Joan and Calvin, "we do not want you to be uninformed brothers, about those who are asleep, that's those who have died, that you may not grieve as others who do not have hope." We have hope. "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep".

We're gonna see them again. "For this, we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not proceed those who have fallen asleep", they get to go first, Joan and Calvin, they'll be at the front of the line. If we're alive, we'll be somewhere behind. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. And therefore encourage one another with these words." So we grieve not as those who have no hope. We have ultimate comfort and hope and our Savior, his life, his death, his resurrection for us, is life. So we're always going to be with the Lord. With Joan and Calvin, be encouraged. Let's pray. Lord, we're thankful that you have given us great and precious promises. This means so much to us, help us to understand more and more what it means to die to ourselves, to be afflicted, and to relish our salvation that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we've been raised to life by your son, by his sacrifice for us. Thank you for all that you do for us. Help us to honor you. Help us to glorify you with our lives. That we can give you glory in Jesus name, amen.

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