

The Resurrection and Life John 11

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores Christ's declaration as the resurrection and the life, emphasizing His power over death and the significance of faith in Him.

Scripture: John 11:25

Topics: "Power of Christ", "Resurrection"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the power of Christ as the Resurrection and the Life, illustrating how Jesus confronts death and sin through the raising of Lazarus. Despite being rejected by many, Christ demonstrates His authority over death, showing that He is not only able to heal but also to give life where there is none. The relationship between Jesus and Martha highlights the importance of faith and communion with Christ, as He reassures her that death is not the end for believers. Darby explains that through Christ's resurrection, believers are freed from the dominion of death and sin, and that true life is found in Him. Ultimately, the sermon underscores the transformative power of Christ's love and grace in the face of death.

Transcript

The Lord had been now rejected, both in His words and His works. In chapter 8 He convicts by His word. "Before Abraham was, I am." There was in that the full manifestation of who He was; but they rejected it. In chapter 9 He shews His works; but this testimony is also rejected. And then He shews how all is in grace and in chapter 10 speaks of gathering His sheep. When He said, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones again to stone Him; and then He goes again beyond Jordan. In chapter 11, in connection with the raising of Lazarus, He is spoken of as the Son of God; afterwards, in chapter 12, as Son of David and Son of man.

What is here specially brought out is Christ's exercising power - life-giving power. Not so much His holiness or His love; though they were there as perfect as ever, but not what He was specially manifesting. He has come where death was; and He was going to raise out of it, first, the soul, and then the body. "Because I live, ye shall live also." This brings out something of the character of Martha. Martha loved the Lord, and the Lord loved Martha. She received Him into her house. He made His home there, as it were. There was confidence in His kindness, and that kind of care and interest between them that, directly Lazarus was sick, they sent to tell Him, taking it for granted He would come because of the intimacy they had. "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." They were a believing family; and we find that,

when people are believers, there are different characters. We see here what Christ delighted in - what fruit of the Spirit was acceptable to Him. He said of Mary, "she hath chosen that good part." God may make men as active as possible, like Paul or Boanerges, when He wants them; but communion is the most precious thing to Him. There is a difference between Peter and John. His heart rested with satisfaction on him who leaned on His bosom.

Christ had come into this world, when moral death reigned, to bring in blessing from Himself. But here is a death which could come in and take a man out of the reach of the blessing of healing which He Himself came to give.

Death was the harbinger of judgment. No man could recover from it; no man could cure it; no man could escape from it. And they knew that it would carry on to judgment; for it brings with it the testimony of sin. God could kill and God could make alive. Nature always shrinks from death, because there is this consciousness of its being the effect of sin. Christ comes into this place of death; and the mere relieving man's misery down here, which He did, never could touch death. Man having now rejected Him, it was needful to shew that, if man was a murderer and would even put Him to death, He had a power which could deliver out of death. Death had lost its power in His presence who was come to bring in life. During all His course He had been ready to heal the sick with a word, and they expected He would do so with Lazarus. But now He would let the evil go to its fullest extent, that we might see His title to do it all away. The Lord, though He heard that He was sick, remained in the same place. When He was coming, He said, "Lazarus sleepeth." The moment we see death coming to believers we can say, This is no judgment; "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." In connection with Christ, no evil can triumph; but even death can turn for the glory of God. And, mark, it was not for some vague good at a distance, but "that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." The power of life has come into the very place of judgment. We have not to wait till we get to God, but God comes in delivering power to us who were "dead in trespasses and sins."

146 Chapter 8 is the truth of God and the Son of God connected; "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And, besides that, life came by the Son. He could have healed Lazarus and remained safe in Jerusalem: but now He does this miracle in the most public way. And He did this that all the purposes of man might be brought out. Contrast the way in which He raised Jairus' daughter - in private.

The foundation of the faith of God's people is in resurrection - "for your sakes," v. 15. They were to believe in Him, "the resurrection and the life." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law was not truth. The law put man on his responsibility; but now man was taken up as dead already: this was truth. The law put a man on doing - "do and live." It told him the rightness of what ought to be, but did not tell him what he really was. It answered the purpose for which it was sent; for it made the "offence to abound." The law did not tell man what he is, nor what God is to man - love; but when I get the truth, it sets me free. While I am under a yoke, I am made to toil, toil, toil. The yoke draws me down, and I have no power under it. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" There is no deliverance in that; but if One comes in who says, You are a wretched sinner, dead in trespasses and sins; but I can deliver you by bringing in a righteousness of God - which sets me free in heart and conscience. I can stand in God's righteousness before a God of truth and love. "If ye continue in my words"; these words He addressed morally to all.

147 There is another thing. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever," but comes in on the condition of conducting himself well in the house, and, if not, to be turned out. "But the Son abideth ever." We are made free, and may "go in and out and find pasture" as children of the house. "If the Son shall make you

free, ye shall be free indeed." Christ is the proof of God's love - righteousness the proof of what Christ is. I have a place as a son because of what Christ is as a Son. He came in the power of life; not dealing with man as he is, and trying to mend him; but giving life, thus treating him as dead. "Martha said, I know that he shall rise again," etc. But Christ spoke, neither of the resurrection of believers, nor of the resurrection at the judgment. He would shew her that death was nothing in His presence. "I am the resurrection and the life." She said a true thing when she said, "He shall rise again at the last day." But this did not touch Lazarus' case. If you have to be called up at the last day, you do not know but you may rise to be condemned then. Besides, his mere natural life would be subject to death again if he were raised up now, unless He who raised him were "the life" as well as "the resurrection."

Christ does not say, I am the life and the resurrection, but, "I am the resurrection and the life." Death has come in; therefore He must bring in resurrection first. He is the life-giving One who has come in and destroyed the power of death. Death shall have no more dominion. Death had dominion over the first Adam; but the last Adam gained dominion over death. And He has quickened us together with Him, and has taken us out of that state as having nothing whatever to do with it.

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