

Sermon Series: Jesus' Great 'I Am' Statements—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—5/16/04

Title: The Resurrection and the Life

Text: John 11: 20-27

(Print and read John 11: 25-26)

Intro.: Ills.: Is that your best reason to keep on living?

Theme: Confessing Jesus as the Savior of our tomorrow involves believing He is the Savior of today.

Confessing Jesus in the midst of life's gale-force winds

- Even when Jesus seems to disappoint you (*print and read vs. 21*)
 1. "If you had been here" ---- **BUT YOU WEREN'T!** (can almost see the bold caps if Martha was e-mailing Jesus)
 2. Do we sometimes say in our heart, "Jesus, if only . . . (failed marriage, death of child, health decline, career crash)"
 3. Confessing Jesus is being willing to *die to myself* and *to my agenda* so that he can raise up a new one in its place
- Even when your prayers go unanswered (*print and read vs. 22*)
 4. Martha felt a stinging rejection in Jesus' tardiness
 5. Thought, "Well my prayers didn't get it done because Jesus didn't value them—maybe his can get it done."
 6. Often because of past "**unanswered prayers**" our reaction and bitterness gives a counter confession to Jesus
 7. "For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope at all." Romans 8: 24
- Even when Jesus' promise only seems good for tomorrow (*Print and read vss. 23-24*)
 8. Martha had a faith—but it was a dimly lit wick of hope for tomorrow not a Gibraltar-like confession for today
 9. Spiritually, many of us are still at the place in our faith where we don't see the Jesus as **THE LIFE/MY LIFE**
 10. Our verbal confession of Jesus as *the Resurrection and the Life* is most vividly painted before our world (friends, associates) if we as Christians *live today as if we have a tomorrow* (*Print and read vss. 25-26*)

1. Ills.: The Bedtime example

Confessing Jesus as if He is MY Life

- Life in the face of death (*he who believes in me will live, even though he dies vs. 25*)
 1. Lazarus' death was a very scary thing for Mary and Martha (the breadwinner of their home)
 2. Jesus potential death was a very scary thing for his disciples
 1. "Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?" Jon 11:8
 3. Death is a very scary thing for us to face (loss of spouse, loss of child, your own death)
 4. Jesus has come to retake life from death and give it back to us
 1. *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Heb. 2: 14-15*
- Living as if you will never die (*whoever lives and believes in me will never die. vs. 26*)
 5. Often we play life safe with mediocrity — too reserved, too scared, afraid of change, counting life backwards
 1. Ills.: Disney true life test (taken from Chuck Swindoll's book "*Living above the level of Mediocrity*")
 6. Like Martha it is easy to put off "*faith-living*" until tomorrow
 1. *Martha said, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (vs. 24)*
- Living and dying as if you will rise (*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. vs. 25a*)
 7. What do you have to lose, if after you have lost it, Jesus can raise it back up and give it back to you? (now or future)
 8. Living life well because you are living it for the One who controls all things for your good
 1. *For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." Romans*

14: 7-8

9. Confident living in *the Resurrection and the Life* to keep his words of promise
 1. **To provide all our needs** (*And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*" Philip. 4:19)
 2. **To answer our prayers** (*Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.* Isaiah 65: 24)
 3. **To give us rest** (*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" Mat 11: 29)
 4. **To be with us always** (*Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age.*" Matt 28: 20)
 5. **To raise us up on the last day** (*For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*" John 6: 40)

Is that the best reason you have for living?

Years ago, a seasick passenger was aboard an ocean liner during a long and rough Atlantic crossing. Before long, he succumbed and leaned over the rail, turning, several shades of green. A steward came along and tried to cheer him up by saying, "Don't be discouraged, sir! No one's ever died of seasickness yet!" The nauseated passenger looked up at the steward with baleful eyes and replied, "Ho, don't say that! It's only the hope of dying that's kept me alive this long!"

The Bedtime example

In his book *The Best Is Yet to Be*, Henry Durbanville recalled that as a boy, when the shadows of evening lengthened and darkness fell, he would hear his mother call, "Henry, it's bedtime!" Typical of all small boys, he resisted the idea of leaving his friends, putting his toys away, and going to his room for the night. Yet deep within his heart he knew that the deep peace of slumber and peace beckoned him to recline. Durbanville made this spiritual application for the Christian who senses the end of life drawing near: "Death is both affectionate and stern. When the right moment comes, she says to us, "It's your bedtime." Oh, we may protest a little, but we know very well that the hour for rest has come, and in our hearts we are actually longing for it." The thought of dying can fill even a strong believer's heart with mixed emotions. When we think of leaving our loved one, it may cause the tears to flow. The breaking of close human ties does hurt. ON the other hand, there is the anticipation of resting from our labors and being in the presence of the Lord, forever.

Disney's true life test

In early days of his movie making empire, Walt gauged whether an idea for a movie or for his company was worth pursuing if when he presented it to his board of directors, it was unanimously **OPPOSED** only then was it worth pursuing.

John 11:20-27

²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ²¹"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."²⁵**Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"²⁷** "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."