

**“Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life”**  
(John 11:17-27, 38-44 – Lent 5 – March 22, 2026)

John 11:17-27, 38-44 – <sup>17</sup>So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. <sup>19</sup>And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. <sup>21</sup>Then 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 of 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 at the last day.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup>And whoever 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 to come into the world.” ...

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, 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 him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup>Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup>And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” <sup>43</sup>Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” <sup>44</sup>And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

Dear Redeemed in Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose again for our salvation:

Of all the things that cause anxiety, fear, and sorrow in this world, death is the worst. Death is a dreadful robber, forcibly taking precious life from us, tearing loved ones from our arms. In our text, Lazarus has died. His sisters, Martha and Mary, are grieving deeply for their loved one. But Jesus comes and demonstrates His almighty power as the Son of God over death. He raises the dead man from the grave and returns him alive to the joyful arms of his loved ones.

As the Lord of Life, Jesus came into the world to reverse the terrible curse of death. He came to restore to us the hope of eternal life, and the joy of a heavenly reunion with our loved ones in Christ. Jesus was on His way to the cross to win the victory over death for us. But it would cost His own life. He would take our sin and death; and in the power of His resurrection, He would give us His forgiveness and eternal life. As we see so powerfully in our text: **“Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life”**: 1) He disarms death and 2) He gives life.

## 1) He disarms death

Scripture tells us that death is the result of the fall into sin. Before the devil tempted Adam and Eve, there was no death. They would have lived forever in a perfect creation. But after they fell, death entered the world. Romans 5:12 says: *“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*

Sometimes we use euphemisms to describe death in softer terms, to try to make it easier. The deceased has passed on, has fallen asleep, is at rest. Morticians try to match these peaceful descriptions as they prepare a body for a funeral in the best looking way. But you cannot cover death in nice clothing. It is a horrible, sin-caused interruption in the way God meant life to be.

Death can be described in terms of separation. First, sin brings physical death. This is the separation of the body from the soul. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says: *“The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”* This is the death Lazarus experienced. As a believer in Jesus, his soul had gone to be with his Lord, safe and sound in heavenly glory. But this side of heaven, in the vale of tears, things looked very different. When Jesus came to Lazarus’ tomb asking that it be opened, Martha objected: *“Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days”* (vs. 39). The ugliness of sin is clearly seen in physical death.

But there are worse kinds of death. In addition, sin brings spiritual death. This is the separation of the soul from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18 speaks of those who have *“their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”* This describes the spiritual condition of the unbeliever, the darkness of a soul that has no spiritual life, existing apart from God even in this world. It is the soul that is ruled by sin and Satan, until it is saved through faith in Jesus.

Even worse, sin brings eternal death. This is the separation of body and soul from God in hell. In Matthew 25:41 Jesus describes Judgment Day, when the King will say to unbelievers: *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

There is no way of speaking of death as a natural part of life. There is no way of painting over it with a thin veneer of euphemisms. Jesus did not do that. He Himself grieved over death. It says: *“When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept”* (vs. 33-35). Even the Son of God felt sorrow in the face of a loved one’s death. When Jesus came to the tomb, it says He was *“groaning in Himself”* (vs. 38). These words indicate that Jesus felt, not only sorrow, but also indignation in the face of death. How dare death take His beloved! Behind death, Jesus saw the devil’s evil work, tempting Adam and Eve and causing them and all of us to fall into sin and death. How dare Satan cause this to His beloved, whom He had created to live forever!

But Jesus came to disarm death. As the almighty Son of God, He could stare death in the face and say: “I’m going to conquer you! I’m going to set My loved ones free!” Hebrews 2:14-15 describes this purpose in His coming: *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Jesus came to face the dreadful robber behind death, the devil. He came to face the dreadful curse behind death, by taking away our sin.

Jesus was on His way to the cross to win the victory over death for us. He would take death upon Himself to free us. He would carry our sin that caused death – all our disobedience and rebellion against God – so He could be the one to suffer the curse and die in our place.

When Jesus went to the cross, He felt the separation of death in every way. He felt the separation of spiritual death. Though He is perfectly innocent, God saw Him carrying all our sin – all our filthy and hateful thoughts, all our disrespectful and unloving words, all our selfish and hurtful actions. As a result, God the Father shunned His own Son instead of us. He treated Jesus as the sinner who had separated Himself spiritually by sin from the life of God.

With all our sin laid on Him, Jesus also felt the separation of punishment and eternal death. The Father stepped aside and let Jesus’ enemies inflict punishment on His body, beating Him, mocking Him, nailing Him to the cross. The Father stepped aside and let Satan and his demons afflict Jesus in His soul with all their wickedness. But worst of all, Jesus felt His Father remove His loving presence, as God poured out all His fiery wrath against our sin on His own Son. In this most miserable separation, enduring the agony of the damned in hell, Jesus cried out: *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* (Matthew 27:46)

And with our sin on Him, Jesus felt the separation of physical death. When He had finished suffering for all our sins, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (John 19:30). He let His body die the death caused by the fall of Adam and Eve and all of us. This is how it came to be that the Lord Himself was laid in a grave, and His loved ones mourned even His death.

But that was not the end of the story. Death could not keep its hold on the Lord of Life. Jesus sloughed off death like one awaking from sleep. He rose to declare His victory over Satan for us. Jesus has taken away all our sin by His death. So Satan has no claim on us; he has nowhere to sink his teeth into our souls, now that we are cleansed by the blood of God’s Son. In Jesus’ resurrection, God powerfully declares that we stand forgiven, restored to eternal life and fellowship with Him.

In view of the victory Jesus came to win, here He stood outside the tomb of His friend calling: *“‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go’”* (vs. 43-44).

## 2) He gives life

“*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Jesus has saved us from the curse that the law pronounces on sinners. Our crucified and risen Savior gives us the victory in His forgiveness. He disarms death; He gives life!

When we find ourselves mourning a loved one’s death, like Martha, let us take to heart Jesus’ words of comfort. “*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 of 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 at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die’*” (vs. 21-26).

Like Martha, in our grief we may not understand why things happen as they do. Why did Jesus let our loved one die this way? Why did He not come sooner to end the suffering and provide a cure? Yet this is not the end of the story for our loved one in Christ. The believer’s soul has separated from the body, yet it is safe and sound with the living Savior, at home in heaven. And on the Last Day, Jesus will raise the body from the grave. This is the faith Martha expressed even before Jesus raised her brother’s body from the tomb. This is the faith we can express even before we see our loved ones raised on the Last Day.

There are many places in the Bible where it speaks of death for the believer in Jesus as nothing more than a sleep of the body. This is not a mere euphemism. On the Last Day, Jesus will raise our body from the grave and reunite it with our living soul in heaven’s eternal glory. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 says: “*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.*”

What a glorious occasion it will be on the Last Day – to see Him who disarmed death and gives life, raising us with glorified bodies. To see all the effects of sin – all sickness, pain, and death – gone forever. To see our loved ones in Christ raised together with us, as those who rise from sleep – but with perfect bodies that will live forever. “*And thus we shall always be with the Lord*” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Thanks be to Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life. He has disarmed death; He has given us eternal life!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.