

John 11:1-44 - The Resurrection and the Life

Saturday, January 21, 2012
11:43 AM

Readings:
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Ephesians 2:1-10

1. Introduction

Introduction:

The old adage goes, "only two things are certain in life - death and taxes"

Of those two, taxes are relatively uncertain

All humans are united in one thing - the anticipation of death

All of human history has seen humans preoccupied with the concept of death

Arguing about what happens afterwards

Building amazing and impressive houses for the dead

Committing suicide and murder (e.g. suicide bombers) in order to gain a better life after death

Etc. Etc.

In the passage that we are going to read this morning, though, Christ claims that He is the one that has authority and power over death

Scripture Introduction:

- Although we're only 1/2 way through the chapters, we're actually nearing the end of the timeline of John
- The rest of John all happens in the last week of Christ's life and a couple of chapters after the resurrection
- So, here in John 11 we see the last and greatest miracle of Christ before he goes to Jerusalem to die

Scripture: Read John 11:1-44

Proposition: If Christ has power over death, we ought to run after Him wholeheartedly

Outline:

- 1) We will see how the passage illustrates Christ power over death
 - i. A Person
 - ii. A Pity
 - iii. A Purpose
 - iv. A Picture
- 2) We will see why this means we ought to run after Him wholeheartedly
 - i. A Requirement
 - ii. A Revelation
 - iii. A Response

2. Who is this that has power even over death?

a. A Person

Christ reveals who He is in this passage

References (the strongest statements in the passage):

- **Verse 25 - "I am the resurrection and the life"**
- **Verse 11 - "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."**

This story is about Christ, not about a miracle

- This story is about who Christ is and what He is doing/about to do
 - Remember we discussed signs in John back when we did John 2
 - Signs are about demonstrating who Jesus is
- This fits into the timeline of the story
 - The last of the 'great acts' in John
 - The last act before going into Jerusalem for the final Passover
 - The last 'public' 'I am' statement
 - This was the final great act of Christ to declare who He was and what He was about
- So, we should focus on who Christ is here and not be merely amazed at the miracle

So, who is Christ?

- Christ is the Son of God
Verse 4 - 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."
- Christ is God (Verse 4)
 - If the Son of God is glorified then God is glorified!
- Christ is the Messiah - the promised deliverer
Verse 27 - "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."
- Christ is Emmanuel - God with us (Verse 27)
- Christ is the resurrection and the life
Verse 25 - "I am the resurrection and the life"
 - Christ is the power of salvation
 - Christ is the source of salvation
 - Christ is the firstfruits of salvation

If the powerful person, Christ, is the focus here, what do we see Christ doing? (next three points)

b. A Pity

Christ pities Lazarus and those affected by his death

References (see how often it is highlighted in the passage):

- **Verse 3 - he whom you love is ill**
- **Verse 5 - Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus**
- **Verse 33 - When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who were with her weeping, He was deeply moved**
- **Verse 35 - Jesus wept**
- **Verse 36 - "See how He loved him."**
- **Verse 38 - Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb**

i. We can get rid of any notion that God is without emotion (we can clearly see it in Christ)

- 1) God's lack of emotion is sometimes taught under the doctrine of impassibility - literally that God cannot experience pain or pleasure associated with other beings
 - a) Derived from the aseity of God - the idea that God is 'of Himself'
 - b) Since God does not need other beings, God must not be affected by other beings
 - c) If God is not affect by other beings then God must not experience emotions relative to other beings
- 2) Although this is often argued by good theologians for good reasons (to uphold the asiety of God), we can clearly see here that Christ has deep emotions related to those around Him
 - a) Side note - being too philosophical about the Bible and getting farther away from the actual text is often dangerous
 - b) Our feeble and fallen minds may be able to falsely argue many things from the Bible

ii. We can see the emotions that Christ felt toward His friends

- 1) Love - Christ loved those who were His
John 13:1 - Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
- 2) Pity - Christ was compassionate toward their weakness and infirmities
Matthew 9:35-36 - And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Isaiah 53:4 - Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Matthew 8:17 - This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."

iii. We can take hope that Christ has these emotions toward sinners

Christ loves sinners that He is calling to Himself

Romans 5:6-8 - For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person---though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die--- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ pities sinners that come to him for salvation

Mark 1:40-42 - And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

(The leper as a picture of the sinner)

c. A Purpose

Christ has a purpose for what He is doing

References:

- **Verse 4 - 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."**
- **Verse 40 - Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"**

- Verses 5-7 - Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

- i. This point comes as an answer to a question and points us to an even bigger truth
 - Why did Jesus 'stay two days longer' if He loved Lazarus and pitied his infirmities?
 - Jesus stayed because He had a bigger purpose to fulfill - to show the glory of God

- ii. Everything Christ did was for this bigger purpose - to glorify God

John 12:27-28 - "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

- iii. Everything Christ did was for the corollary purpose - to glorify Himself
 - **Verse 4 - It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it**
 - There is a strong claim to Christ being God here - if Christ is glorified then God is glorified
 - **John 12:23 - And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."**

- iv. Everything about salvation is for the glory of God
This anticipates the next point - the picture of salvation
If, as I will argue in a moment, the miracle here is a picture of salvation
Then salvation's purpose, particularly, is to glorify God

Isaiah 48:9-11, 20 - "For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another...Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it out to the end of the earth; say, "The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob!"

Ephesians 1:11-12 - In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

II Corinthians 4:1-6 - Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

d. A Picture

Christ demonstrates His power over death

Reference:

Verses 43-44 - 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. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

A three sided picture

i. Christ has power over physical death

- This is the clearest picture in the passage
 - ◆ Christ comes to dead man and raises him back to life
 - ◆ He has such a power over death, that it is simply His powerful word that restores life
- Thus, Christ truly is 'the resurrection and the life'
- Therefore, in Christ, we can anticipate our final resurrection
 - ◆ **Verse 23-25 - 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,**

ii. Christ has power over spiritual death

- This is a more debated point - is this a picture of salvation?

Verse 25-26 - 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?"

- ◆ Every Christian since the time of Christ has in fact died
- ◆ So, what can Christ mean when He says, 'everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die'?
- ◆ He must be talking about a spiritual resurrection!

Ephesians 2:1-5 - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience--- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 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---by grace you have been saved

- ◆ Paul talks about salvation with the same picture
- ◆ We are dead (like Lazarus!) and God, in Christ, makes us alive
- ◆ The conclusion: Yes! This is a picture of spiritual resurrection

□ If this is a picture of salvation, what can we learn?

- ◆ Salvation is first a unilateral act of Christ
 - ◇ Lazarus did not participate in his salvation - Christ simply spoke
 - Christ did not offer to raise any dead person back to life
 - Lazarus did not raise his hand and say, 'me please'
 - ◇ The dead man cannot choose to be alive, he can't choose anything
 - What is the meaning of free will?
 - The dead man can't will himself to be alive, it is outside of his nature

Jeremiah 13:23 - Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.

- ◆ Salvation is a powerful act of Christ
 - ◇ Christ simply spoke and it was done
 - ◇ In creation, God spoke and things that did not exist obeyed
 - ◇ So, in salvation, Christ speaks and things that are dead obey

II Corinthians 4:6 - For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- ◆ There is a response in salvation (It is first a unilateral act, it is second a bilateral act)
 - ◇ Lazarus obeyed the voice of Christ
 - When Christ said come out, Lazarus came out
 - ◇ Did Lazarus have a choice?
 - Maybe
 - But it is a nonsensical question
 - The dead man who has been made alive will never choose to stay dead
 - The dead man who has been made alive will never choose to stay in the tomb
 - Just as before, when the dead men could not choose to be alive because it was outside his nature, now the alive man cannot choose to stay dead because it is outside his nature
 - ◇ So, those who have been made alive will respond to Christ
 - And this response is obedience

John 14:21 - Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

3. How do we respond to one who has power even over death?

So seeing the Powerful Person, the Heartfelt Pity, the Divine Purpose, and the Multifaceted Picture of Salvation, what ought we to do?

We find three applications in the passage here (and these grow out of each other):

a. A Requirement

Christ makes one response necessary to His person and His actions here - faith

References:

- **Verses 14-15 - Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."**
- **Verse 21-22 - 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."**
- **Verse 25-26 - 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?"**
- **Verse 40 - Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"**
- **Verses 41-42 - 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."**

- i. Christ emphasizes this requirement over and over again in the passage
 - 1) He even makes it very personal in verse 26 - "Do you believe this"
- ii. Why do we believe? Because belief is a response to the Powerful Person and the Heartfelt Pity of Salvation
 - 1) If Christ can raise the dead to life, then we ought to believe in Him
 - 2) If Christ has love and compassion for lost sinners, we ought to come to Him
- iii. So, we ought to believe in Christ
 - 1) Believe that He is the resurrection and the life
 - 2) Believe that He is the Son of God
 - 3) Believe that He is God
 - 4) Believe that He is the Messiah
 - 5) Believe that He is Emmanuel
 - 6) Believe that He has love and pity for sinners
- iv. "Do YOU believe this?"
 - 1) How can you tell? (Leads to the next two applications)

b. A Revelation

Christ says that the outcome of belief is a revelation of the glory of God

Reference:

- **Verse 40 - Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"**

- i. Christ says that in believing we see the glory of God
- ii. This is a response to the Divine Purpose of Salvation
 - 1) If Christ's purpose in salvation is to glorify God, then we ought to see God's glory in salvation
 - 2) If Christ's purpose in salvation is to glorify Himself, then we ought to see Christ's glory in salvation
- iii. So, we ought to strive to see the glory of God, the glory of Christ, in salvation
 - 1) This means our attitude must be to humble ourselves and exalt Christ
 - 2) This means our effort must be to see - to understand - the glory of Christ more and more
 - a) This implies study and meditation on God's word where the glory of Christ is revealed
 - b) This implies prayer according to the instruction of Christ - 'Hallowed be your Name'

- 3) This means our desire must be to display Christ glory
 - a) This means everything in life ought to be calculated to display the glory of Christ
 - i) (I say 'display' very carefully, we do not cause Christ's glory, but we can display it for all to see)

I Corinthians 10:31 - So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

- b) This implies that evangelism is about Christ primarily, displaying Christ glory

II Corinthians 4:7-15 - But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the 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 that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

c. A Response

Christ says that salvation alters all of life

References:

- **Verse 4 - 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."**
- **Verses 25-26 - 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?"**

- i. Coming back to Christ's first statement here, there is a marvelous truth
 - 1) Christ says, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God."
 - 2) If Christ has proved that this is true, what does it mean for us
 - 3) We can say that about anything, "this _____ does not lead to death"
 - a) This affliction does not lead to death
 - b) This persecution does not lead to death
 - c) This illness does not lead to death
 - d) This loss does not lead to death
 - e) My death does not even lead to death
 - 4) Why? Because Christ is the resurrection and the life
- ii. If we believe this truth, there is a life-changing implication
 - 1) If we believe that Christ is the resurrection and the life, if we desire to see Christ's glory displayed, and we believe that nothing leads to death - we can do anything to further Christ's glory
 - 2) We can lose worldly goods to display the glory of Christ:

Mark 10:29-30 - Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

Right after **Mark 10:22** - **But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.**

- 3) We can lose relationships that matter to us to display the glory of Christ:
Matthew 10:37 - **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.**
- 4) We can lose our reputation in the world to display the glory of Christ:
Matthew 10:32-33 - **So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**
- 5) We can suffer affliction to display the glory of Christ:
Matthew 10:38 - **And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**
- 6) We can lose our lives to display the glory of Christ:
Matthew 10:39 - **Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**
- 7) Why? Because nothing leads to death.
Romans 8:35-39 - **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."**
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 8) A possibility?
 - ◆ Verse 44 - Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."
 - ◆ This is the last thing recorded about this story - what does it mean?
 - ◆ One possibility (not trying to be too allegorical) is that it show that the formerly dead man must set aside the things that pertained to his deadness

4. Conclusion

We've seen that Christ does have power over death

Christ is the powerful person that has power over death

Christ has love and pity for sinners that motivates Him to exercise His power over death

Christ has a purpose in exercising His power over death - the glory of God

Christ's power over death guarantees our physical resurrection and our spiritual resurrection

So, we must run wholeheartedly after Christ

We must believe that Christ is who He says He is and that He has love and compassion

We must seek to see the glory of Christ in salvation

We must live only for the glory of Christ, losing everything else in the process

Matthew 13:44 - **"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**

If we believe Christ is the resurrection and the life

And if we see His glory

We will, in our joy! go out sell everything we have to obtain Christ