

I AM THE RESURRECTION  
(A funeral meditation)

Matthew 11:25

“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.”

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Death seems to be the inevitable experience which all must face. But there are different ways of facing it. That is evident in the conversation between Martha and Jesus, following the death of Lazarus.

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus grieved as though there were no means of comfort nor hope. But Jesus introduced a new expectation and a new hope when he said:

“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”

First, note that Jesus brought comfort to their hearts, and He makes the same comfort available to us when He draws our attention to Himself. As the only begotten Son of God, God manifested in the flesh, He spoke saying:

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

Secondly, He also brought comfort when He said that the dead live. In speaking of the departed He added these words: “Whoever believes in me, though he may die, yet shall he live.”

Our Lord was speaking of that great body of believers who had already died and to which body of believers Lazarus now belonged. “Though Lazarus was dead yet shall he live.” That was the promise given for those who had died in the hope of salvation.

Yes, it is true that we speak of them as dead, meaning that they are no longer in the sphere of this temporal and earthly life. By death they have been separated from us. Yet, Jesus said that the dead live, for though the body may have died, the soul yet lives unto God, and His Christ. To them, life is more real than the sin, the sorrow, and the burdened life of the inhabitants of this earth. Life to them is a joyous one without care; no weariness and no pain. Beyond that, life to them is full, and rich and deep, a life so unclouded that they forever rejoice before the throne of God.

Thirdly, please note the additional comfort Jesus brought as He turned to the living and said,

“Whoever lives and believes on me shall never die.”

Does that sound like a contradiction to the facts of life? Does that mean that the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ need never concern himself about the grave? Jesus was not denying the dissolution of the body and the soul. But He was saying that believers in Him will never have to taste death in its fullness; for death in its awful reality is eternal damnation - separation from God - punishment for sin.

The believer need not experience that because Christ already suffered that for His Saints when He cried out on the cross:

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” The answer to His question is that He was forsaken because He was bearing the punishment and banishment from the Father for our sin, yours and mine.

Death for the believer is the passing through the veil that now separates us from God. Death for the believer is the ascension of the soul to Zion’s holy hill- the habitation of the living God. And all this - because of Jesus Christ, the one who says: “I am the Resurrection and the Life - he that believes on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die.”

Our Lord then turned to Martha, as I now turn to you:

“Do you believe this?”

William Allen Zulker