

Introduction:

- One teacher asked her fifth grade class, “Why was Jesus put in a borrowed tomb?” Answer: “Cause He only needed it three days.”
- 3 Buddies were discussing death and one asked the group: What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?
 - First guy: “He was a great humanitarian, who cared about his community.”
 - Second guy: “He was a great husband and father, who was an example for many to follow.”
 - Third guy: “Look, he’s moving!!”
- *“Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?””* (John 11:25-26, NLT)

I. Death Stalks Us All

- A. Death began in the Garden of Eden. In the Garden death was stalking them-serpent. Just because you are born again and filled with God does not mean that death is not stalking you. The serpent was stalking Adam and Eve waiting for opportune time.
 1. *“except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”* (Genesis 2:17, NLT) Adam’s sin brought us death. They were driven from the Garden. They were driven from the Presence that gave them life. They died and all men with them.
 2. As a result of their sin you and I are born spiritually dead.
 - a) *“When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.”* (Romans 5:12, NLT)
 - b) *For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many.* (Ro 5:15) NLT
- B. Death continued to follow man
 1. It followed Adam, Able, Abraham, Moses
 - a) Adam was stalked. God said to Cain. *“You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”* (Genesis 4:7, NLT) verse 9, later while in the field Cain attacked and killed his brother.
 - b) Abraham. Gen 23:19 Sarah dies and is buried. Gen 25:8 Abraham breathed his last and died. In his life death stalked him: famine, as an outsider, wars, rescuing Lot.
 - c) Moses faced Pharaoh threatened with death. Famines, desert, enemies, etc.
- C. Death’s goal was to kill Son of God. And it succeeded there on the cross of Calvary. But I have more to say on that later.
- D. Death is stalking all of us and humanity right now. Famines, war, disease, hunger, foolishness, and old age. Nothing has changed except the possible outcomes! The moment we are born we start moving towards death. Death is always looking to take us out.

- E. The context of our message today is found in John 11.
1. Death was stalking Lazarus. 11:2 “Lazarus was sick.” vs. 3 “very sick”
 2. Vs 8 Disciples to Jesus “They want to stone you in Judea.” Death is stalking.
 3. Vs. 11 Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus has died. It stalked him, and killed him.

II. Faith Is Our Defense

- A. *Do You Believe This?* This is a question we must all answer this morning. Jesus is directing us in what to believe. This moment has come to bring us to a place of faith that will bring glory to God. vs. 4, 40.
1. *Do you believe this?* vs26
 2. Believe what?
 - a) That I am the Resurrection and the Life.
 - b) Those who believe in Jesus will live, even after dying.
 - c) Do you believe this? Jesus was there to make a point. John the Apostle recorded these words to make a point: I Am the Master of death! It obeys Me! His goal is to cause Martha and Mary to believe that He is the resurrection. His goal is to cause his disciples to believe. vs 14 *“Now you will really believe...Come!”*
- B. Faith is the key to appropriating resurrection life. We come today because we believe or we want to believe or because someone we know believes. Either way God is asking you personally, “Do you believe this?” Lets learn from Martha and Mary.
- C. Martha had faith. How do we know? John 11:27 Look at what she believed: *“You are...:”*
1. You are the... Messiah! The Chosen One, the anointed one. The word itself means to apply oil or to anoint.
 2. You are the... Son of God! This is the famous testimony of Peter. You are the Christ/ Messiah, Son of the Living God.
 3. You are the... One sent from God! He has been commissioned by God! Martha has faith in who He is! Her comment and another testimony of faith is...
- D. *“If only you had been here”* Jn 11: 21 Martha; Jn 11:32 *“If only you had been here”*
1. The same statement by Martha and Mary are not statements of doubt but of faith. It was actually a strong conviction of faith. Their understanding was limited.
 2. The understanding was limited by what they knew.
 - a) They were aware of the miracles that Jesus had done. The centurion servants, the Pharisees daughter. Both were long distance miracles without Jesus being present. They were aware of what God had done for others but it had not crossed their minds it would work for them. They were limiting Jesus in understanding. Are you limiting Him?

- b) They were limited by their experience/senses. Four days dead a man stinks. Their understanding was limited because death and grave and rotting flesh were too “final” for a man to live after that.
- c) They were limited by their knowledge of what God can do. For as much faith as Martha had in Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, and the One sent from God, she still did not know Him as the Resurrection and the Life! I am Resurrection!!!

III. Know That Death Has A Master

- A. Here is the beauty of this passage! Jesus knew who He was!!! He knew that death had a master and that it was not Satan! Lets hear these words in verse 25 again... **“I AM THE RESURRECTION!!!”** Do you believe this.
- B. Resurrection was standing outside the tomb!!! Jesus wanted Martha, Mary, the Disciples and us to know...Resurrection was standing just outside the tomb!!! What tomb does the enemy have you holed up in? Death was hiding in that tomb because Resurrection was just outside. Oh for the church to realize that the Resurrection is just outside your sickness, your addiction, your prison.
 - 1. “I am the resurrection!” Screams:
 - a) “I am Master of Death and the Grave!”
 - b) Death, in the presence of Jesus, is no longer death.
 - c) Death, in the hands of Jesus, is robbed of all its terror. And though it may take an outward form, it is no longer death as we think of it. For in the presence of life, death can no longer be death. It has no authority!
 - 2. Resurrection Speaks, *“Lazarus! Come out!”* Lazarus came out! Think of what would have happened if Jesus forgot to say Lazarus’s name!
 - 3. Resurrection has authority! Authority to bring a man 4 days dead out of a tomb. Lazarus was raised from the dead not resurrected.
- C. We are celebrating today that death has a Master...Resurrection!
 - 1. *⁵⁷As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, ⁵⁸went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.* (Mt 27:57-60) NLT
Who was sealed in the grave? Resurrection! Who was put in the tomb? Resurrection!
 - 2. Jesus was Resurrection and Life before the cross...not after! What were they thinking?
 - a) They nailed the Resurrection to the cross...how’s that workin’ out for you?
 - b) They put the Resurrection in the tomb...how’s that workin’ out for you? They put the Resurrection in the tomb...not sure how smart that was???
 - c) Jesus was the Resurrection before the cross not after! He was alive before He was dead. He was so alive that when He was dead, death could not hold Him!

- D. The Spirit of death stalked Jesus: at his birth, in the wilderness, throughout his ministry, and to the cross. IE. Jesus put the real light saber into the heart of darkneses.
1. *“But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.”* (1 Corinthians 15:20, NLT) All who believe in Him will live and not die.
 2. You can’t kill the Resurrection and the Life!
 3. The resurrection life is given to all who believe. *“...when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ...⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* 1 Cor 15:54-57
 4. The Resurrection gives the believer victory!

Conclusion:

- *“Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?””* (John 11:40, 4. NLT)
- The Resurrection and Life stands here in our midst today! He is right outside your tomb! vs40
- If you do not know Jesus as your personal Savior this may all seem foolish and foreign to you. But to those of us who believe we know it is the power of God to salvation