

**Just Like Jesus:  
Just Like Jesus in Resurrection  
John 11:17-26**

**April 4, 2010**

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**Text Introduction:** We are in a series entitled *Just Like Jesus*. The idea is that in certain specific events in the last week of Jesus' life we might learn to live like Him in similar episodes of our lives. Thus far, we have examined the topic of living like Jesus in our difficult circumstances and living like Jesus in the most disappointing moments in our lives. In considering the crucifixion of Christ, we have even considered how we can be "Just like Jesus in Death." Today on this Easter Sunday in which we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, I want us to think about something that we often do not think about in relationship to the resurrection and that is that we can be "Just Like Jesus in Resurrection."

**Text:** <sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was near Jerusalem (about two miles away). <sup>19</sup> Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him. But Mary remained seated in the house.

<sup>21</sup> Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. <sup>22</sup> Yet even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You."

<sup>23</sup> "Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her.

<sup>24</sup> Martha said, "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. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?"

**Introduction:** Many years ago I first heard the story of an eight year old boy named Phillip. Phillip's story is still one of my favorite Easter stories. Phillip was a special needs child. On Easter Sunday Phillip's Sunday School teacher brought all the students a large empty egg. Their assignment was to go outside and collect something that was a symbol of new-life. They were to go out, collect their symbol, and come back inside to share with the rest of the class their discovery. The teacher was going to explain to them the new life that we have in Christ. All of the kids were excited to go out and find their symbol. Upon re-entering the classroom they began to open their eggs. One student had collected a flower. Another collected a leaf. Yet another collected a bug of some sort. One got so lucky as to catch a beautiful butterfly. At each egg opening the classed oohhed and aahhed as you might guess 8 year olds would do. Then came Phillip's turn. Phillip opened his egg to reveal that nothing had been collected. The kids began to ridicule him. "He didn't do it. He never does anything right." On an on they went. Phillip though protested, "I did do it. My egg is the tomb of Jesus. It's empty." Phillip did get it right!

Our text today comes from the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. The miracle helps us to discover several things about the resurrection even though Jesus' own resurrection obviously has not

occurred at this point in His life. Lazarus' resurrection actually serves as a foreshadowing of sorts that God has power even to raise the dead to life.

In case you are not familiar with the story, Jesus has been called to come to the house of his friend Lazarus, who is sick. The text very specifically indicates that Jesus did not immediately leave to go heal his friend. In fact, before leaving Jesus announced to the disciples that Lazarus had already died. I've always thought about this text that Jesus uses this experience to bring a greater understanding of His power. People already knew that He could heal the sick. What they did not know is that He could raise the dead.

So, this account in Scripture gives us several ideas about God's ability to raise the dead or to think of it in terms of our own existence—the power to give Eternal, Everlasting life!

### **God provides our resurrection through Jesus.**

The first thing that we ought to see in this text this morning is in Jesus' statement, "I am the resurrection and the life."

#### Validating the Resurrection of Jesus:

We could talk about so many things. We often talk about the empty tomb as proof and indeed it is. We often talk about the eyewitness accounts or our own personal relationship with the resurrected Christ. All of these things validate the resurrection in some way. Today, let me mention these three things as validating the resurrection.

#### (1) Prophecy of Jesus—Jesus announced His death and His resurrection.

- After Peter's Confession Matthew 16:21
- At Mount of Transfiguration Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9-10, Luke 9:22
- At Galilee Matthew 17:22-23
- Before journey begins to Jerusalem Matthew 20:18-19
- At the Last Passover Matthew 26:32
- At Temple Cleansing John 2:18-22

Jesus not only announced His resurrection, but predicted the number of days of His resurrection.

#### (2) Public Appearances

- Acts 1:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 (Note His appearance to 500)

New Testament scholar Merrill Unger indicates that Jesus made 14 different public appearances between His resurrection and His ascension.

#### (3) Power of the Early Church—The church grew and grew even in the midst of great opposition and even persecution.

I came across this quote this week. “Hope raises no dust.” I don’t know the exact origin of the quote or what the original author might have meant, but here’s what I take from this saying. Hope for hope’s sake is meaningless. I could hope for example that I could throw a football like Drew Brees or hit a golf ball like Phil Mickelson, but all the hope in the world is not going to make those things happen. Hope for hope’s sake is not what we are talking about in relationship to the resurrection. The provision of our resurrection is in Jesus Christ Himself.

**God promises resurrection to those who believe.**

Verse 25 and verse 26 say essentially the same thing from two different perspectives. I believe that Jesus was driving home the promise of eternal life to those who believe.

**Along with resurrection comes life!**

*In devotional piece for [Kyria.com](http://Kyria.com), an evangelical website for women, Christian recording artist Carolyn Arends shared a unique Easter insight, passed along to her from her pastor. She writes:*

*A couple years ago, during a jubilant Easter service, our pastor said something that stopped me in my mental tracks: "The world offers promises full of emptiness. But Easter offers emptiness full of promise."*

*Empty cross, empty tomb, empty grave-clothes ... all full of promise. If I were writing the Easter story, I don't think I'd choose emptiness as my symbolic gesture. But then, I also wouldn't be talking about strength being made perfect in weakness ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)), foolish things confounding the wise ([1 Corinthians 1:27](#)), the meek inheriting the earth ([Matthew 5:5](#)), or the poor in spirit getting (in every sense of the word "get") the kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 5:3](#)). And I certainly wouldn't be talking about dying in order to live.*

*What is it about God that makes him so favor this kind of paradox? I guess this is what we should expect from the Servant King—the God who decided that the best way to save the world was to let it kill him. I don't understand the way God thinks. But on those days when I feel hollowed out and broken—half-dead, even—it makes me glad to remember that for Easter people, even death is full of promise.*

*The world makes a lot of promises. Smoke and mirrors, mostly. Frantic, cartoonish attempts to distract us from the gaping holes in the middle of our souls (or to sell us the latest product in order to fill them). There's no life in those promises.*

*So I'm hoping that ... I'll be a little more willing to die to that stuff. I'm praying I'll become more aware of the empty space within, and that I'll resist the urge to fill it with any old thing I can find. I'm going to wait, carved out, vulnerable, a cracked and crumbling jar of clay, on a life God's offered to deposit anywhere there's room. I'm going to believe that if I'll just leave my empty spaces empty, he'll fill them. That, I'm convinced, is a reasonable expectation.*

*Carolyn Arends, "What's So Good About Good Friday?" [Kyria.com](http://Kyria.com) (4-10-09)*

**God poses a penetrating question. “Do you believe this?”**

Notice these things about this question.

- Individual question—This is a question “for you.”

- Simple question—Don't think you have to know everything. I didn't know everything about my wife to declare my love for her. I probably don't know everything about her now after almost 18 years of marriage.
- Faith question

It is said that Winston Churchill planned for his funeral to conclude in the following way. First, he wanted Taps played—the universal signal that says the day is over. But then immediately following the playing of Taps, he wanted Reveille played—“It's time to get up, it's time to get up, it's time to get up in the morning.” Churchill's funeral testimony was that Taps is not the last word, but instead Reveille is the last word. The worst things are never the last things. (Craig Larson, *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*, 52.)

Remember little 8 year old Phillip. The story goes that not long after that Easter Sunday School lesson in which all the kids brought a symbol of life, Phillip died. At his funeral, what do you think that teacher led her class to do? She marched them all up to the altar not with flowers, but for each to lay on it an empty plastic egg.