



Week 13 – March 31, 2013

Easter Sunday - Alive Again

John 11:30-44

³⁰ Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹ When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. ³² When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Then Jesus wept. ³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" ³⁷ But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" ³⁸ Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹ "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible." ⁴⁰ Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" ⁴¹ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." ⁴³ Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

Alive Again

Mary had great faith in Jesus – that he could have kept Lazarus alive (verse 32). Great things happen through great faith.

Jesus was angry (verses 33 and 38). Anger isn't a bad emotion. It is a natural emotion. Experiencing anger happens to humans. Our response to the anger is paramount. Jesus channeled his anger in constructive ways. Jesus was sad. He actually wept (verse 35). Like anger, sadness is part of life. The aim of life isn't avoiding sadness – that is impossible. The aim is to deal with sadness in healthy and helpful ways.

Jesus could have moved the stone in front of the tomb by himself, after all he was about to raise somebody from the dead, but instead he had people do it. Such is the story of humanity's interaction with God. God does his part but people must cooperate and respond.

It is important to know that Jesus prayed before raising Lazarus from the dead. Another important truth about the interaction between God and people: Prayer opens up possibilities. Big prayers can lead to big results. Many prayers are not answered because they are not spoken.

Questions for Reflection

1. Mary had great faith in Jesus. Faith is believing what we cannot see. How are you doing with your faith in God? Do you believe in God? Do you believe God? That He keeps the promises He makes or that He can help you do things that you haven't been able to do before. How would your life be different if your faith was deeper? What steps are you going to take to grow in your faith?

2. Jesus experienced anger. What things—whether in society or in your life—make you angry? Is your reaction to anger usually constructive or destructive? What are some things you can do to channel your anger in a way that honors God and respects people?

3. Jesus asked for people to move the stone. Obviously he could have done this himself. In what ways are you cooperating with God's grace and power? In what ways are you being resistant to God's grace and power? What specific tasks is God asking you to do or not to do to cooperate more with Him?

4. Jesus prayed before raising Lazarus from the dead. How is your prayer life? In what ways are you doing well? In what ways are you struggling? What steps are you going to take to connect with God more fully through prayer?

This Week's Prayer Focus - But It's Easter

Pray this prayer daily during the week. Spend additional time focusing on a short section of the prayer. Spend a few moments in silence listening to God and being attentive to the ways God is speaking to you.

Dear God,

The morning begins with darkness and despair.

My transgressions. The sin of the world. The hatred of many.

Fear is widespread. Satan delights in Christ's death.

My worries. The helplessness of the world. The hopelessness of many.

But it's Easter.

Satan's party has come to an abrupt and amazing ending.

The once broken and lifeless man has emerged from the tomb.

Christ is alive again!

It's a new day.

Faith calms fears. Love replaces hate.

Goodness repairs evil. Light overtakes darkness.

Grace forgives sin. Life resurrects death.

I celebrate this day.

It is a day You have made. I rejoice!

The day Jesus rose from the dead.

Neither death nor life will ever be the same again.

The day death died.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

The tomb couldn't hold Jesus.

Nor can it hold those who follow him.

You redeemed the world.

The cross was once a symbol of disgrace.

It now represents restoration and hope.

Erase my mistakes and fill me with Your grace.

You comforted the world.

When the fatality and fragility of Friday comes into my life –

Remind me of the sweetness and salvation of Easter morning.

Heal my brokenness and let me begin again.

You entered the world.

To seek out the lonely and lost. To serve the least and the little.

To save the sinner. To send out the saints.

To show humanity how to live and love.

You changed the world.

You gave direction to the searching.

You forgave the prostitute of her sin.

You raised Lazarus from the dead.

Enter my world and change my world.

Give me focus and direct my path.

Forgive me of my failings and sins.

Resurrect me to new levels of life – now and forever.

Amen.

This Week's Bible Memory Verse

Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" –John 11:43

This Week's Resources

A book we have available this week at The Water's Edge:

This Week's Challenge

The message of Easter is that Christ has turned death into life. Think of one area in your life—for example: A belief, a negative habit, an attitude, your part of a relational dysfunction, an addiction that needs addressed, or spiritual apathy—that needs to die. Pray, trust, and cooperate with God as this brokenness dies and something greater is resurrected.

Next Week – The Circle Maker: Dream Big