

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Dead?

Have you ever wondered what it will be like at the moment you slip from this present life into the eternal one with Christ? Does this thought frighten you because you're not sure resurrection is a true promise, or are you simply not "right" with God?

In John 11:17-25, Lazarus has been dead for four days. By now, Lazarus has begun to decay, and smell, and therefore it appears to his sister Martha that all hope and prayers are useless. Jesus says to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Jesus thanks his heavenly father for hearing him and giving him the opportunity to demonstrate his power to those standing by. He then cries out: "Lazarus, come out!"

Within minutes Lazarus appears, his feet and hands wrapped in strips of linen and his face covered with a cloth. This event leaves many in the crowd gaping in wide-eyed wonder.

No doubt this was an astonishing scene to witness whether you were a friend of Lazarus or not, a believer or not. Can you imagine the power Jesus

demonstrated by bringing a person back to life again with a simple two-word command?

In today's world, we sometimes rely on medication, like aspirin, to ease pain. In extreme cases, we may undergo chemotherapy treatment or a transplant, enabling us to live an almost-normal life. It makes the miracle of resurrection much more astonishing!

Yet, it will happen to all believers as promised in John 11:25-26. Jesus says to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." Jesus follows this statement with the crucial question: "Do you believe this?" Well, there you have it. Do you believe this? Either you believe by faith it is so, or not. If you have doubts, you can look for references to resurrection in your Bible. Jesus rose from the grave, and there are witnesses testifying to that event. Many holy people who had died were raised to life at the time of the Jesus' death on the cross (Matthew 27: 51-53).

Mark 16:16 says that those who believe and are baptized will be saved. Resurrection life is an application promised to all believers.

Do you live in hope for a resurrected life, or is that something that you're going to think about later? What is keeping you from believing?

-- Week of September 5, 2010