

“Live as One who IS Resurrected!”

Last week Jesus healed the man born blind – and this week, He resurrects Lazarus from the dead. In both cases – Jesus did what He did – “so that the Son of God might be glorified through it.” And man doesn’t see what Jesus is up to.

He who created this man’s life – couldn’t He have given him sight from birth? And Lazarus! Couldn’t He who loved Lazarus – not dilly dallied, and waited (on purpose) for him to die – couldn’t He have come right away and healed Lazarus’ illness so that he would not have died?

These things happened – as they did, and at their appointed times – “so that the Son of God (Jesus who is the resurrection and the life) might be glorified through it.”

According to His own time, and purpose – Jesus comes. Martha sees Him drawing near to Bethany and goes running out to meet Him. “Lord, IF you had been here, my brother would not have died,” she says. And Jesus replies, “Your brother will rise again” – words that we use to comfort those who mourn the death of their loved ones.

“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day,” Martha says. She’s not wrong – but for her – the resurrection is far off, something only in the future. For now, death reigns.

There once was a “certain man” – whose x-rays stopped his life on a dime. When asked what he did when he got the news – he said – “I went skydiving, I went Rocky Mountain climbing, I went 2.7 seconds on a bull name Fumanchu. And I loved deeper, and I spoke sweeter, and I gave forgiveness I’d been denying ...”

Actually, those are the lyrics of Tim McGraw’s song – “Live Like You Were Dying.” What makes this song hit home is that it expresses the idea that – if you knew you could die at any time – you’d live differently (and apparently, more fully).

Jesus comes along, singing His own tune. “I AM the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

That is a BIG question! Jesus IS the resurrection and the life – and even though HE dies, yet shall He LIVE. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus, God's own Son, died – and was raised to life again on the third day – never to die again?

Those who believe in Jesus Christ are IN Christ – they are united to Him. As Romans 6 says – we are baptized into His death and His resurrection – dying to sin, raised to new life, never to die again. That, folks, changes the way you live!

Not a life in which it's your last chance, so have a go at it. Not, take the opportunity to see all the things you've wanted to see, head for the Rocky Mountains. Not, do something risky, exhilarating, death-defying.

Rather than trying to eke out every last bit of enjoyment for yourself – as one who IS RESURRECTED, you are free to live for others. You want to do something risky? You don't need a bull name Fumanchu – try helping the person in need on for size.

You don't need to escape from where God has placed you – rather, see the beauty and wonders that God has surrounded you with – your wife, your children, your grandchildren – His daily bread which provides for all your needs of body and life – the Divine Service, where the Resurrected Christ gathers you to serve you.

The voice of Jesus which called forth Lazarus from the dead, is the same voice which formed Lazarus in the womb. Resurrection is raising from death those who were created to live. It is sin that binds us. It is sin that brings forth death. When Jesus says, "Unbind him, and let him go" – Lazarus is not just relived of his grave cloths – he is forgiven, set free – free to live as one resurrected.

It is the voice of that same Jesus, the Son of God, who unbinds you from your sin this very day. He who shed His blood to pay the penalty of your sin – who died your death – now says concerning you, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Dearly beloved, in Christ, you ARE forgiven. And where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation. Or, as we confess in the Creed – the forgiveness of sins leads to the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Do you believe this?

Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” – “whoever [that includes you] believes in [Jesus], though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in [Jesus] shall never die.” You who are in Christ Jesus by faith – are resurrected – you have eternal life.

Oh, by the way, don’t feel sorry for Lazarus – being brought back to life in this sin-fallen world, where others would soon threaten to kill him – for he went on living as one RESURRECTED with Jesus, to live eternally. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.