

Sermon Notes
John 11:17-27
'I am the resurrection and the life'

Death is an ogre that follows each one of us everywhere we go.

- An unnatural monster we try to ignore, battle with medicine or pretend isn't so bad. But he persistently follows us.

Jesus makes wonderful promises about death in our passage.

- He is meeting with a grieving woman whose brother has died
- In her grief we will see 2 mistakes she makes before hearing Jesus' 2 promises.

Mistake 1: Presuming that Jesus will always heal v21

There is much that is good about what Martha says

- She is coming with faith
- She knows Jesus' power - that he can heal the sick
- She knows Jesus' love - that he would want to act for their good

But she has taken a further step – an understandable step

- But a step which is not supported by a promise of Jesus
- She assumes he would have healed if he could – which left her bewildered.

But as the reader we know the reason Jesus wasn't there earlier

- v5-6 – notice the 'so' at the start of v6. He loved them so he stayed where he was.
- v14-15 – it is better for the disciples that Lazarus died.
- So what was it that kept Jesus away – his love for Lazarus, Mary and Martha and for the good of his disciples.

Martha, you see knows Jesus is powerful and knows Jesus is loving, but she hasn't fully grasped his wisdom.

- Jesus has not promised us that we won't die physically or that he will always heal our sicknesses in this life.
- If we hold on to that we can give ourselves needless grief and terrible doubts about Jesus' power and love.

Mistake 2. Trusting in a resurrection that doesn't need Jesus v23-25

Martha is saying – 'I know there will be a resurrection, I'll see him again.'

- Jesus corrects her – he points emphatically to himself (re-read v25 and 26 and underline when Jesus says 'I' and 'in me')

Now again we need to learn from her mistake

- As we said a few weeks ago many who aren't Christians believe in a general feeling of 'everything will be alright in the end'.
- And I wonder whether many who call themselves Christians go along with that view.

But Jesus is very clear – he mustn't leave Martha with that false understanding

- Just as you need a passport when going abroad so we need Jesus to for resurrection and life.

Jesus' Promise 1: I am the resurrection v25

- Jesus states 'I am the resurrection' and explains it in v25 and then '...and the life' is explained in v26.
- So we see the explanation of Jesus being the resurrection when Jesus says 'The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;'
- For those who believe in Jesus death is not the end.

Though the heart monitor may flatline – you will still live, if you believe in Jesus.

- DL Moody quote: 'Some day you will read in the papers that Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now.'

Why is this only the case for those who believe in Jesus

- The ogre of death can't be defeated by us, you and me.
- We need a champion – someone to fight death for us
- Jesus defeated death on the battle-field of Golgotha
- He defeated death by dying for us
- How does that help?
- We need to see that death is in the world because of sin – see Romans 6:23
- When Jesus died he took our sin for us and so had to die.
- But death could not keep its hold on him (Acts 2:24)

- The ogre of death was defeated – his power taken from him because for those who come to Jesus their sin is dealt with and their death taken.
- And it is resurrection bodies we look forward to receiving – we thought about this a couple of weeks ago in the all age slot so won't dwell on it now.

Promise 2: ...and the life v25-26

The explanation is in v26...

The NIV translation here is not literal but it gets at the meaning.

- The life in v26 is not merely physical life
- It is the life received when someone becomes a Christian. (Read John 5:24-25 and notice when someone goes from death to life)
- It is not the case that this physical life ends and then our life with Jesus starts.
- Rather there is an overlap – we cross over from death to life when we believe (which means before someone becomes a Christian, they are dead!)
- And that life never ends.

For the one who comes to Jesus – the ogre is defeated

- He may still take us physically, but for those who believe in Jesus he has been turned from a monster into a gate keeper to eternal life which starts when we believe in Jesus.

As the hymn goes:

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.