

LIFE IN CHRIST

In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John we have an account of Jesus attending a funeral. It was the funeral of one whom He loved, His friend Lazarus. Lazarus had two sisters, also beloved of Jesus, Mary and Martha. They sent word to Jesus when Lazarus was sick. Apparently they knew it was serious, perhaps terminal, and they sent for Jesus in hopes that He would come and heal their brother. Jesus, however, didn't come immediately; He waited. After Lazarus had been dead for four days, Jesus arrived on the scene. As you would expect, there was great mourning. Lazarus was dead. Hope for the present was lost; or was it?

Jesus was confronted first by Martha, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She didn't understand the Lord's delay in coming. Yet, the next words out of her mouth revealed some measure of hope in Him still. "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." What an amazing display of faith. In the mist of such emotional anguish and intellectual lack of understanding Martha still believed that there was hope in Christ.

And what an amazing answer from our Lord, "Your brother will rise again." It's the promise of life. "Your brother will rise again" is the same as to say, "Your brother will *live* again". Martha responded, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." What a hope! Future resurrection! He is dead but he *shall* live! We all will die, but if we are in Christ we *shall* live again! That's a great hope, is it not?

But Jesus' response to Martha reveals a greater hope. "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" The promise of life in Christ is not only future, it is present. Martha speaks of another day, but Jesus speaks of *now*! Martha was missing something. And I fear that too often the same could be said of us. What was she missing?

Martha viewed the promise of life as being something apart from Jesus; a gift given (v. 22), or an event to look forward to (v. 24). But Jesus said "*I am* the resurrection and the life." In the Greek the phrase "I am" is emphatic, *egw eimi*, literally, "I, I am." That is to say, "I am it" or "It is Me". Martha spoke of the resurrection as if it were some far off event. She spoke of Jesus' promise of life as though it were distant. The life that she hoped for was face to face with her and she didn't recognize it. Jesus *is* the Resurrection! He *is* the Life! In John 14:6 He states it in absolute terms, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Again, in John 17:3 Jesus defines eternal life for us with these words, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." It is the knowledge of Him! Not merely to know *about* Him, but to *know* Him.

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:12)

Pastor Skip Rainbolt
Fillmore Baptist Church
skip@fillmorebaptist.org