

Topic	Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life
Reference	John 11
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Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

- Allow death to drive us to life
- Believe in Jesus because He is the resurrection and the life
- Take hold of eternal life now

1. ALLOW DEATH TO DRIVE US TO LIFE

The scene that is set in John 11 isn't a very nice scene, Jesus is at a funeral. Now nobody likes to go to funerals. If we backtrack from the scene at the funeral, John puts us in the context,

*John 11:1-2 (ESV) Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose **brother Lazarus was ill**. 3. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, **he whom you love is ill.**"*

This Mary actually came to Jesus and anointed his feet with 8 months' worth of pay with such a precious nard. That's the one that Judas criticized. So she really loved Jesus and her brother was Lazarus who was ill. She said to Jesus that the one whom you love is ill, so therefore there is a subtle pressure that you got to do something, your best friend is ill you got to come and see him. So our first instinct is to prevent death.

We are going to look at Jesus both from inside and outside. What you see outside and what you see inside are two different things. So therefore John mixes inside and outside. As far as it is concerned, you have got two ladies, their brother is dangerously ill and the sister sent to him saying, the one whom you love is ill. What will Jesus do?

*John 11:5-6 (ESV) Now **Jesus loved Martha** and her sister and Lazarus. 6 **So**, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he **stayed two days longer** in the place where he was.*

John emphasized that Jesus loved the family and therefore he waited for two more days. So this is from the outside. Strange behavior on the part of our Lord. Then Jesus comes to the funeral late. When Jesus came

*John 11:17-20 (ESV) Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had **already been in the tomb four days**. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.*

So Lazarus has already been dead, the drama is over, he is being packed up. In fact, 11:39 says

*John 11:39 (ESV) Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be **an odor, for he has been dead four days.**"*

This means he is well and truly dead, no doubt about it. There are two kinds of responses here; here you actually have Martha

*20 So when **Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him,***

Martha comes out to meet him, she wants to interact with Jesus. This is the one whom she has put all her hope on.

*but **Mary remained seated in the house.***

Mary is saying you were supposed to come Jesus and you didn't come, what is this and you tell me you love me and the horrible response that we actually have of death. Some people are proactive and some people just collapse and get angry inside like a passive aggressive reaction. The sisters' responses are identical though in one sense. When they both meet Jesus, the first thing they said

*John 11:21-22 (ESV) Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would **not have died.**"*

*John 11:32 (ESV) Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother **would not have died.**"*

There is a feeling inside that Jesus would've come and saved and because he did not save the brother, they are now beginning to doubt about his love. Mary might be thinking, I spent 8 months of my bonus on him and he didn't even come, he comes two days late and then the other people looking outside. It is like when you as being Christians are in trouble, your friends that are non-Christian will curse you and ask you where is your God now

*John 11:37 (ESV) But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man **also have kept this man from dying?"***

You are talking about Jesus, you are talking about Resurrection Day and your God has let you down. Steven Fry is a comedian in Britain. This is what he writes,

I love how when people watch I don't know, David Attenborough or Discovery Planet type thing, know where you see the absolute phenomenal majesty and complexity and bewildering beauty of nature and you stare at it and then ... somebody next to you goes "And how can you say there is no God? Look at that!"

Five minutes later you are looking at the life cycle of the parasitic worm whose job it is to bury itself in the eyeball of a little lamb and eat the eyeball from inside while the lamb dies in horrible agony and then you turn to them and say "Yeah where is your God now?"

Isn't that what the world does, because you are looking from outside and as we celebrate Resurrection Day, they are going to turn around and say, where is your God out now because you are going through such difficulties.

David Watson is a famous author. He wrote a book 'Fear No Evil' and is very telling and he told a story of two men whom he counseled during his time. Both men lost children at the age of about 10 and 12 years old. One lost the son through leukemia, the other son's drowned. One was a Christian and one was not a Christian and the ironic part of this entire testimony was that the atheist, the one who did not know God because of this death came to know God and the other one who was a Christian, believe God owed him life and protection over his son lost his faith.

Now this is not unusual, this is very real. When business turns bad, the first thing that devil is going to ask you, where is your God? Could the God who saved you couldn't get you out of this business problem. So we have this problem. The normal response is Mary who remained seated in the house, mourning, passive aggressive, we don't know what is in her mind. Ernest Becker actually changed our ideas about death and he wrote,

"the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity — designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man"

Ernest Becker says, much of culture today, everything that you actually do hinges on one thing, we are grappling subconsciously with the fact that we are finite and we are going to die. A man in Las Vegas shooting said,

"I said to myself, 'These girls aren't going to die. I'm not going to die. I need to get home to see my daughter. This is not happening. Not happening,'" he said.

Just because you close your eyes and bullets are flying and you say, it is not happening, it doesn't mean it is not happening. That's the ironic part about it. Woody Allen says, *life is full of loneliness and misery and suffering and unhappiness and is all over much too quickly.* Whatever life is, we still like to hang on to it. We as Christians shouldn't be denying death, because we have an answer to death. So therefore what should we do?

The active ones like Martha rushes up to Jesus, Mary will sit down and say, "oh my goodness I will try to suppress this". Martha comes up and she wants to do something, the active kind of person and so what we do. Years ago when they cloned the sheep called Dolly, everyone was thinking about cloning themselves. Some think that getting many children is a good idea of preserving yourself, but whatever it is your kids can do whatever they want but you will be

dead, just because you share a couple of genes doesn't mean you are there with him. There is an urge inside all of us to stay alive.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 (ESV) For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die;

It is a fact, Ecclesiastes guides us and tells us what it is and some people accept it and embrace death. Steve Jobs wrote,

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because death is very likely the single best invention of life. It is life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true. Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

He embraces death, it makes him more powerful. He lives to the limit, however; when he died his autobiographer Walter Issacson wrote on Job's reaction to pancreatic cancer. Steve Jobs ignored the diagnosis and he went for alternative therapy, he delayed it for 18 months and it was the kind of cancer that could have been cured and he missed the cure. This is what Issacson wrote,

"I think he felt: if you ignore something you don't want to exist, you can have magical thinking. It had worked for him in the past. He would regret it.

Just because you ignore death, ignore the diagnosis doesn't mean it will go away.

*Eccles 3: 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put **eternity into man's heart**, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end*

Manchester bombing this last year, a very tragic story. It was at the Ariana Grande concert and suddenly there was an explosion caught on video camera and they lost over 22 people and over 100 were injured and this is largely in a secular country like Britain. The British people reacted, they are not going to take this lying down and they actually had another concert, it is called Love Manchester 2 and I can remember the last scene in Love Manchester 2 where Ariana Grande stood up and started to sing and she sang and people went into tears,

*Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high
And the dreams that you dream of, once in a lullaby
Somewhere over the rainbow, blue birds fly
And the dreams that you dream of, dreams really do come true*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star
Wake up where the clouds are far behind me*

*Where trouble melts like lemon drops
High above the chimney top
That's where you'll find me*

*Somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly
And the dream that you dare to
Why, oh why can't I?*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star
Wake up*

You see a nation in defiance, stands up and the best they can offer is a dream of a faraway land, which actually the songs comes from a subconscious of human being but then there is a twist. The Greeks tell of a story of a myth called 'Pandora's Box.' According to them a god called Prometheus created mankind and what he did was he loved mankind and he stole fire from the god Zeus and gave it to mankind. Zeus got very upset, condemned Prometheus to be tied up to a big rock and birds will eat his liver. Zeus created a beautiful woman and with this woman in her dowry box is a box full of all the evils in the world and Zeus knew that being woman should be very curious and one day she opened the box and when she opened the box all kinds of evil fell out and flew off and infested the entire world and this is how the Greeks see the world. We have Adam and Eve; they have got Pandora. There was one evil in the box that was left inside the box, it wasn't revealed, it didn't escape and that evil was 'hope'. But for centuries people wondering, hope is good. How can hope be an evil that didn't escape the box. The point is, hope is the feeling you have just before you are disappointed. Hope is the feeling that Mary and Martha had just before Lazarus died, but hope never materialize and that kind of hope destroys your faith, destroys your belief that life is worth living and that was the evil that was left behind.

*John 11:21-22 (ESV) Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even **now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.***

Martha, death drives towards the only solution in the world and she goes to Jesus Christ. We need to believe in Jesus because he is the resurrection and life, everything else is false hope. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. This is broken into two parts;
Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (resurrection)
26. and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. (the life)

So basically Jesus is saying that death is off the table, it is no longer an issue because if you die you will be raised, if you are alive you will never die and here we have the reaction

*John 11:33-44 (ESV) When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was **deeply moved** in his spirit and **greatly troubled**.*

This has troubled theologians for years, Jesus is going to raise Lazarus in about five minutes, so why would Jesus be deeply moved and troubled? Was he wondering whether he could do this or not? It is unlikely to have felt that. The word is 'embrimaomai', which means in extrabiblical Greek, the snorting of a horse, indignant, outraged and angry. What Jesus was angry about? He is angry about two things; the ugliness of sin, moved by the people's grief and tragedy of death caused by sin, just because you can fix it doesn't mean you are not angry, doesn't mean you are not angered by the unbelief. Jesus sees sin and death and by John writing this he tells us the heart of God that when you go. Jesus at the funeral was deeply moved, angered and sad and not only that the shortest verse in the bible says, **Jesus wept**

This is the heart of God, even though the cross is there, God cries, he feels our pain as we go through life and the ravages of sin, but the crying is a little bit different from the woman. Jesus cry is actually a lament before a calamity, it is not a cry that there is no hope.

Now let's look behind the scenes. Jesus Approach to Death:

*John 11:3-4 (ESV) So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "**This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God**, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

That means Jesus sees in death some light, we see in death misery, emptiness and disaster but Jesus behind the scene says, it is for the glory of God.

*John 11:5-7 (ESV) Now **Jesus loved Martha** and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed **two days longer** in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

Loved make him deliberately delay. Then he talks to the disciples,

*John 11:11-15 (ESV) After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has **fallen asleep**, but I go to **awaken him**." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had **spoken of his death**, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake **I am glad** that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."*

So the issue here is when Jesus arise four days later he could be confronted to two situations, he could be confronted with resuscitation or resurrection. If it is resuscitation, he just died, maybe he is not really dead because in those days they don't have ECG, EEG. There is not much glory in that. So Jesus make sure that you are well and truly dead, four days got smell. So therefore the glory that comes is for the glory, so it is unmistakable that Jesus has the power to raise the dead, it extenuates the glory. Then why did Jesus allowed the death, you either cure him or you don't cure him. Curing yes, Jesus healed the blind, Jesus healed the sick every day, so what but this is the seventh miracle in John. The seventh final miracle is no cure, but

miraculous resurrection power of God. It is for the glory of God so that the son of man maybe glorified.

Some of us might feel, why is God so proud, everywhere He is looking for his own glory, to look good. If you had a church member like that, you better run away because it is all about him and I think sometime when we talk about glory of God deep in your heart you feel, oh my goodness I am not allowed to boast but God is allowed to be boastful, but if you look very carefully there is a reason for the glory.

*John 20:30-31 (ESV) Now Jesus did **many other signs** in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

The fire extinguishers are always colored red because it pops out, it stands out, it is glorified. It draws attention. So that the glory of God is for the good of man. If the red signs isn't there then you don't know, you won't run towards it when you are dying.

*Ecclesiastes 3:14 (ESV) I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, **so that people fear before him**.*

So everything is done, every evil in the world is turned so that people will reach for the exits, God is glorified, the son of man is glorified so that people will reach out for him and be saved. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

There was a Fox News, they write if want to live forever you just have to make it to 2050. So Fox News predicts if you live long enough to 2050 from then onwards you will never die. They are going to double the lifespan by gene therapy. They say maybe we can reverse aging. Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro doesn't have to go to give the sermon, he just speaks and his robot animates. You can transplant our lives into some augmented reality.

There was a survey done in the US some time ago of 2000 respondents, **if you could stop aging after 25, how many more years would you like to live?** Most people surprisingly chose 76-100 or 51 to 75, they didn't choose to live forever, amazing. Why? Eternal life by itself isn't quite worth it.

Bryan Appleyard wrote a book, "How to Live Forever or Die Trying" and he writes, *"I think there's a point that the immortalists don't understand, and it's that one exhausts one's own personality over a certain period. It's a weird idea that you would go on and on, still being interested in being yourself. I don't think anyone would. I think you'd get excruciatingly bored of being yourself."*

So the issue here is when he says I am the resurrection and the life, this life is not the normal life. There are two Greek words for life, one is bios from which you get biology and physical

life. He is talking about the quality of life that comes from heaven. It is a heavenly quality of life.

*(ESV) Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me **has eternal life**.*

The word is 'zoe' which is eternal quality of life and this quality of life is

*John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it **abundantly**.*

So you have got quality of life that is extraordinary, that's beyond what is necessary. The quality of eternal life is depending on relationships. When Jesus Christ was resurrected, the first thing he did, he went behind closed doors and the first thing he said to them was peace be with you.

*John 20:19-21 (ESV) On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "**Peace be with you.**" 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "**Peace be with you.**"*

*Romans 5:1 (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The idea of peace is taken from the Hebrew idea of Shalom, which is actual wholeness. It doesn't just mean to cessation of hostility, it means perfection, prosperity, total satisfaction in life, natural gifts fully engaged, it is a shalom which is why Jewish people wish each other. It is a picture of good relationship. Shalom depends on relationship, it is a restoration of relationship. It is an eternal life that we all have today. It is like Chloe Kim, she already won and the last jump she shouldn't have done but she went up there and did it anyway because it was shalom. When you are absolutely performing at your absolute magnificent best and she enjoyed it. Shalom is like a symphony of life, made meaningful through a righteous relationship with God. It is like that conductor, that moment of ecstasy that is shalom. That is something that every human being on the face of this world aiming towards and you are finding it all sorts of things that doesn't quite work, it is false hope. Jesus came that you may have live and this life is shalom. This life is lived no longer in bondage to sin, we don't have to continue to sin, Galatians says

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control

That is the quality of eternal life and you actually have eternal life right now absolutely. Those features of eternal life have to be exercised in the presence of other people. When you are

with other people, they will see your gentleness. They will see your self-control. They will see your peace. They will see your joy. Some of you want to be Christians at home, will log on to the worship site, who worship God alone, it doesn't quite work there. Eternal life is how you change and how you relate, it is a relational term.

Grant Glueck Study in Harvard looked at 268 Harvard sophomores from 1938 including John F Kennedy. It is the longest study in the entire world, 80 years, most of the investigators died and they found a very important part of the human DNA. They said, there are two foundational elements of people who live to a long age, one is love and the other is finding a way to cope with life that doesn't push love away.

"When the study began, nobody cared about empathy or attachment. But the key to healthy aging is relationships, relationships, relationships."

Why because a human body is designed for relationship. We are made in the image of God and eternal life is basically going back to what we originally created for. When you are lying in ICU, who do you want to see your banker or your wife? Your banker will never come as he doesn't love you, he loves your money, so he will be in the bank counting your money while your wife will come that is relationship

Matthew 25:38-40 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? 40 And the King will answer them, Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

It is relationship, you will be judged on your relationships in life and she said,

John 11:27 (ESV) She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

We need to take hold of eternal life now.

*1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. **Take hold** of the **eternal life** to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

The problem is we are always celebrating Resurrection Day because we have a hope and the hope is for tomorrow, but that's wrong. Paul tells Timothy, take hold of eternal life for which you were called. You can't live for tomorrow because it is not about tomorrow, it is about today. When Jesus saves us, I am the resurrection which is future and I am the life, life begins today and a lot of us do not appropriate it. I remember having a patient of mine, who was so sad. He had some kidney stones and needed work at Subang Medical Center and it wasn't cheap. He was really desperate for his treatment but was lacking finances. He was so sad, he went home kicked everything around and he found his insurance policy in a drawer. He took out his insurance policy and he kissed it and hugged it, he came running into my room telling me about his insurance policy. You could have insurance policy, you could have eternal life and

you are keeping it tucked away and you never exercised it. It is like for the young people; I remember Peter Pan how he flies. He flies with the help of pixie dust sprinkle. He got pixie dust sprinkle but he couldn't fly because he has to think happy thoughts. When he thinks happy thoughts then you appropriate the power of the pixie dust and you fly. It is same way for us. We are given eternal life, eternal life starts now but we have got to dig into and believe in it. We have got to let go of your present life, we got to appropriate it, we got to treasure it and you got to persevere it.

This is a scene just before they go back to Judea and the people were gunning for Jesus Christ, they were going to kill him and disciples said, why you want to go back there, they will kill you, Jesus said to them

John 11:7-10 (ESV) Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.

This is actually an acted parable. It tells you that when you are walking, the only time you can walk is in the day, in those days got no lights at night, you can't walk at night. So while it is day, you might walk as much as possible. Jesus is saying to them, when it is time whatever I do in the daytime I can accomplish it. Basically Jesus is bulletproof, you can't touch him but night will come when you cannot do anymore work and that is same for us, each of us have been given eternal life and no matter what you do, God knows when you are going to die. If you are destined to be drowned you will never be shot, it is a fact. There is a space of time where you can act and during this time if you really believe you have eternal life, Jesus has given you a bulletproof vest, why aren't you acting in it, you are acting as if you are a coward and not appropriating the eternal life. Eternal life is to live for a particular purpose. It is not to be hidden away as if you don't have a bulletproof vest, Jesus said, you have eternal life, he who believes in me will never die. Even if your body dies, your eternal life goes on and on. He has given you that life. So are you act like rabbits or you are bold like lions.

Maria Garriott was a brilliant scholar, she decided to live in a very bad neighborhood with her family. She wrote a book of her own spiritual journey called 'A Thousand Resurrection.' She wrote

- *I did not know that we would scrape by just above the poverty line for years*
- *That I would live with people who heard voices, who had spent most of their lives in juvenile hall or in prison*
- *Or that I would share a house with women who sold their bodies, snorted cocaine, whose boyfriends would choke and punch them*
- *I did not know that my children would be lead poisoned, their friend who ate at our table, our god son would not go to college with them but would go to prison*

- *That a little boy with no daddy at home that would bake cookie in my kitchen and hunted snakes with my son would one day lie in the street in a pool of blood*
- *I did not know that several times a week for years my husband would wake up in the night agonising over whether we would be able to reach the neighbourhood at all*
- *I did not know that when I was scrapped raw that Jesus would heal me, that when I was broken that God would use brokenness and that life could spring up in hope again where it seemed that dying and evil had gained the upper hand.*
- *I did not know I would witness 1000 resurrections*
- *That the church members who struggled to pay the rent would adopt nieces and nephews to save them from drug addicted parents*
- *That a woman in our church who saw a teenaged mother roll a baby in a stroller into an empty house and abandon it there would herself then raise that baby as her own and give that child hope and life*
- *I did not know that men who snorted cocaine could get clean and love Jesus and women sexually abused by their fathers could be healed and then could actually rescue other children and give them hope of life*
- *I did not know that Muslims from Iraq, Atheists from China and Hindus from India would actually find Jesus and would actually fill me with faith*
- *I did not know that they would become my heroes and friends*
- *I did not know that they would be braided into my heart and that I would know the resurrection through the resurrection of Christ in them.*
- *I have seen 1000 resurrections why because through them in whom Christ works are united to the resurrection and the Life*
- *I did not know*

Paul writes,

*2-Cor 4:8-11 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the **life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.***

The biggest power of eternal life in our lives is manifested when we are broken, when we are tested, when we put ourselves, our lives on the line for the sake of the gospel. We as a church cannot live like cowards and rabbits. We have been given a Resurrection Day gift of eternal life. We need to appropriate it, believe in it, act on it and let go of the things that drag us behind. This is the victory of the resurrection that this eternal life that we have today, we need to believe in it, appropriate it and all this happens because of the death and resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ.