

The Resurrection and the Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 March 2019

Preacher: Edward Lobb

[0 : 00] We turn now to our Bible reading for this evening, and we're in John's Gospel, in chapter 11, which is page 897.

And we're reading John 11 from verse 1 to verse 44. John 11, beginning at verse 1.

Now, a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

So the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill. 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. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

[1 : 09] So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea together.

The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you. And are you going there again? 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. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him. After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.

The disciples said to him, Lord, if he's fallen asleep, he will recover. Now, Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that his meaning he meant taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.

[2 : 20] So Thomas, called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with him. Now, when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him.

But Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.

Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, 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?

[3 : 31] She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, the teacher is here and is calling for you.

And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the village. It was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews were with him, when the Jews were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

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. 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.

And he said, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying? Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.

[4 : 56] It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days.

Jesus said to her, did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen stripes and his face wrapped with a cloth.

And Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go. Amen. Amen. This is the word of the Lord. And may he bless it to us this evening.

[6 : 09] Let's bow our heads for a further moment of prayer before we begin. And make the scriptures our delight.

Dear Lord, our God, we confess to you that often our hearts are somewhat hardened and our capacity to trust and really to believe in the words of the Bible is dim and dull.

And our prayer, therefore, tonight is that you will give us a fresh grasp of the great truth of John's gospel and the truth of the gospel itself about our Lord Jesus.

We pray that our hearts will be warmed, that our desire to love you, to know you and to serve you will be greatly stimulated. And we pray that you will help us in the days to come to display the real Christian life and to do it with conviction and with joy.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, friends, let's turn again to John's gospel, chapter 11, if we may. And our passage begins at verse 1, as you know.

[7 : 25] Page 897 in our big hardback Bibles. John's gospel, chapter 11, beginning at verse 1. On a bright, sunny afternoon in February 1993, I was standing in a cemetery in North London with a fistful of soil in my hand.

At my feet, there was an open grave. And in the grave was a coffin containing the body of my father. I was surrounded by many friends and relatives.

And I gently dropped the soil from my hand onto the top of the coffin to symbolize the burial of the dead. And as I did so, a song thrush began to sing loudly in a group of trees close by.

And I felt an extraordinary sense of the proximity of life and death. At my feet, death. But up there in the trees, there was life and springtime.

One of the great themes of John's gospel is life and death. Or, to be a bit more precise, the victory of life over death.

[8 : 46] And the life that John is interested in us grasping in the gospel is eternal life. Eternal life. The life that goes on with God forever in his presence.

Now, here are some statistics. In Matthew's gospel, the word life is used seven times. In Mark's gospel, four times. In Luke's gospel, five times.

In John's gospel, 38 times. It's a theme that John the evangelist insists on pressing into our understanding. And Jesus is the source of life.

Now, John makes this point very early in the gospel. Chapter 1, verse 4, he says, In him was life. Jesus himself says in chapter 10, verse 10, I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

And one of the greatest points of climax in the whole of this gospel comes at chapter 11, verse 25. Our chapter for tonight. When Jesus says to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

[9 : 51] Now, we'll get into the story in just a moment. But let's first think a little bit about death. The apostle Paul describes death in 1 Corinthians 15, not simply as the last enemy, but as the last enemy to be destroyed.

He treats it as the great enemy, in a sense, the greatest enemy of the human race. But he assures us that it will finally be destroyed by Christ. And later in the same chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, he writes, When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? It's almost a taunt against death. Death, where is your victory? Paul the apostle is teaching there that Christ is the conqueror of death.

And when Paul says that death is swallowed up in victory, he's actually echoing something from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah writes this in his 25th chapter. God will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth.

[11 : 20] For the Lord has spoken. Now that prophecy of Isaiah dates from some 700 years before Christ. Death is to be swallowed up by the Lord himself.

And the swallowing up of death will mean that the tears we shed because of death will be wiped clean away. To go back to Paul, Paul says in 2 Timothy chapter 1 that our Savior Jesus has abolished death, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The gospel is about the abolition of death and the bringing in of immortality. And therefore the gospel addresses our most fundamental concern and anxiety.

Some of you will know the name of Alistair Begg. Alistair is a Scotsman who pastors a church in the state of Ohio in America. And he's a friend of ours here.

He's been to us in Glasgow several times in recent years to speak at some of our Cornhill conferences. I remember him saying in a lecture at Bath Street a few years ago, there is a poignant sadness that runs through the whole of human culture.

[12 : 32] A poignant sadness. Isn't that so true? Just think of our popular songs, our plays, our visual art. Not only our contemporary culture, but the culture that goes back through the ages.

A sense of struggle. A sense of weariness. A sense of fighting a losing battle. Now surely at bottom, that sadness is caused by the knowledge of our mortality.

To use Paul's powerful phrase in Romans chapter 8, the creation, the whole of the creation, is in bondage to decay. We try to conceal our mortality from ourselves and from other people.

We do it by getting fit. We keep fit. We dye our hair. We have cosmetic surgery. We buy youthful clothes. We keep the clothes, but we lose the youth.

We get to a certain age, I speak from experience, and we begin to run up the stairs two at a time just to prove to ourselves and to anybody else who might be watching that we still can.

[13 : 35] We kid ourselves that it's not happening. But it is happening. It is always later than we think it is. Now Jesus came not only to bring forgiveness of sins, but to conquer death and to assure his people that even though we die physically, we shall be raised to eternal life.

Well, let's turn then to this story of Lazarus and his sisters in John chapter 11. John's gospel. My plan, God willing, is to be in this chapter and the next chapter over the next few Sunday evenings.

John's gospel is a portrait of Jesus and it's a portrait with a purpose. John presents us with Jesus as two things, the Christ and the Son of God.

And the purpose of his gospel is to persuade us to believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, to trust him, to submit to him so that we should ourselves enjoy eternal life.

So with that in mind, that it's a portrait of Jesus, let's notice four things about Jesus which John highlights in this 11th chapter. His purpose, which is to reveal his glory.

[14 : 51] His teaching, which adjusts our view of time and eternity. His anger, his anger that death grips the human race. And his voice, which wakes the dead.

So first of all then, Jesus' purpose, which is to reveal his glory. Now John starts this remarkable story rather slowly.

He tells us in verse 1 that Lazarus is ill. And Lazarus lives at Bethany, a small village which lay about two miles east of the city of Jerusalem. And there lived Lazarus with his two sisters, Martha and Mary.

And yes, that's the same Martha and Mary that we meet in Luke chapter 10. Do you remember the story? Martha, the anxious hostess at the dinner party, and Mary, her sister, who's less active in the kitchen, but wisely sits at the feet of Jesus, listening to his teaching.

In verse 2 here, John tells us that Mary was the one who anointed Jesus with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. And John is going to go on and tell that story early in chapter 12.

[15 : 57] So Lazarus is ill, and obviously seriously ill in some way, because his sisters send a message to Jesus, who is not in the immediate neighborhood.

He's some distance away. The message is short and simple. Lord, the one whom you love is ill. Now Jesus clearly knew the family very well.

In fact, verse 5 tells us that Jesus loved these two sisters and their brother. So that's the setting. That's the beginning. A serious illness and a message sent to Jesus implying, please come quickly and help us.

But now we're confronted with something strange. Do you notice the peculiar first word of verse 6? Jesus, he loved the two sisters and the brother, so, so, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, what would you expect to read next?

You'd expect to read so, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he got hold of the fastest donkey in Palestine and rode to Bethany ASAP. But that's exactly what he didn't do.

[17 : 04] He didn't move at all. He dropped anchor and stayed where he was for two days. Was he callous? Was he uncaring? Certainly not.

He had another purpose. And verse 4 puts us onto the trail of it. This illness, he says in verse 4, does not lead to death.

It is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. In other words, the purpose of this illness is to bring glory to God and glory to the Son of God.

Now that immediately connects us with one of the great themes of John's gospel, which is glory. No need to turn back to this. But we read in chapter 1, verse 14, where John says, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

In chapter 1, verse 18, John says, no one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

[18 : 08] Jesus reveals the character and the glory of God the Father. So what is going on in John's gospel? John is making the point that glory is the realm, the home, and the habitat of God the Father.

And it has always been the realm and home of his Son Jesus from eternity. Glory is Jesus' native habitat. He not only comes from the glory, he is himself glorious.

And one of his main reasons for coming into our world was to reveal both his Father's glory and his own. Now, during the years of his public ministry, his glory was largely veiled.

There was that moment when he revealed it to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration when his clothing became dazzlingly white. But he did offer glimpses of it on other occasions as well.

So, for example, in John chapter 2, he changed the water into wine at a wedding. And John comments at the end of that little episode, John says this, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory.

[19 : 18] And then John adds, his disciples believed in him. There's a connection there. The revelation of the glory of Jesus is designed to lead to belief.

And John's message throughout his whole gospel is look at him. Look at this man. See his glory. Come to understand who he really is, the glorious Son of God.

And believe in him. Because when you believe in him, you will be on the road to eternal life. The pattern of John's gospel, what you might call the basic structure or DNA of John's gospel, is that the revelation of the identity of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God leads to belief in him and belief in him leads to eternal life.

Well, let's come back to the story. Verse 6. Jesus stays put for two days. But then, verse 7, he says to his disciples, let us go to Judea again.

Now, Judea is the area further south where Jerusalem and Bethany were situated. A day or two's journey from where Jesus was when he heard the news of Lazarus' illness. But the disciples say to Jesus in some alarm at verse 8, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you down in Judea.

[20 : 40] And are you going to go there again? In other words, they're saying, discretion is the better part of valor, Lord. Let's keep our heads below the parapet. You can't help suspecting that there is much concern for their own safety as for Jesus' safety.

But then in verses 9 and 10, Jesus calmly says to them, it's all right to go. There are 12 hours of daylight in each day. So while the sun is shining, while we have the opportunity, let's do what needs to be done.

We do it because we see the light of this world. Now, Jesus had described himself as the light of the world back in chapter 8. So he's really saying here to his anxious disciples, don't be afraid.

I'm with you. I'm the light. All is well if you're walking in my light. Now, at verse 11, Jesus sharply picks up the pace of the story.

He says to the disciples, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him. Now, their minds boggle at this.

[21 : 45] They think he's lost the plot completely. So they say to Jesus, if he's asleep, he'll recover. He'll wake up by himself. You haven't got to journey 50 or 60 miles to Judea to wake up a sleeping man, have you?

But, says John in verse 13, Jesus was speaking of his death. Now, that phrase, fallen asleep, it's a beautiful way to speak of death where death is not final.

Jesus used the same expression when he went to the house of Jairus to raise up his 12-year-old daughter. The story is told, I'm sure you know it, in Mark chapter 5.

This little girl had died and Jesus comes to visit the house and he goes into the bedroom where the girl is laid out and he says to the people who are crowding around the deathbed, she's not dead, she's asleep.

But they laughed at him. They weren't laughing a few moments later. The apostle Paul speaks of those who have fallen asleep in Christ. In graveyards, you sometimes see the inscription asleep in Jesus.

[22 : 51] In fact, this word cemetery, or the word cemetery, means a dormitory. Cemetery comes from the Greek word meaning to sleep. So when a believer falls asleep, the implication is sure and certain.

That believer is going to be awakened by a voice that cannot be resisted. Look again at our verse 11. I am going to awaken him.

What a statement of power that is. But Jesus has a further purpose in delaying his journey to Judea. And he tells his disciples what that purpose is in verses 14 and 15.

Then Jesus told them plainly, he drops the figure of speech at this point. He says to them plainly, Lazarus has died. And for your sake, I'm glad that I was not there so that you may believe.

And that is his overarching purpose so that you people may believe. Now we're bound to ask, these are the disciples.

[23 : 57] Weren't they already believers? Well, the answer is they were beginning to believe in him. Their eyes were gradually being opened, but you can understand them not putting all the pieces of the jigsaw together immediately.

After all, the world had had no experience of somebody who was fully man and fully God. Jesus was and is absolutely unique. He's the only begotten son of God.

None before him and none since. At the end of his gospel, John tells us exactly why he has written in the way that he has. He says, I've recorded these signs, which means these miracles, 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.

So this means that the content of Christian belief is sharply defined in the Bible. I'm not a Christian if all I can say is I believe in God.

A Muslim can say that. I'm not a Christian by saying I believe that Jesus existed. A Muslim certainly believes that.

[25 : 08] But I become a Christian when I can truly say I believe that Jesus is the Christ and the son of God. That's where Christian faith begins. And the purpose of John's gospel is to show the reader the grounds on which that belief rests.

And one of those grounds is the raising of a dead man to life because only God can do that and therefore Jesus is God in human flesh. So here's the first thing.

The purpose of Jesus in this wonderful episode is to reveal the glory of Jesus and to help disciples then and today to believe in him, to put their trust in him.

Now secondly, the teaching of Jesus adjusts our understanding of history, our understanding of how time and eternity meet. We won't look at every verse.

We can't do that. But let's pick up the story again at verse 20. Jesus, at this stage, has reached the village of Bethany. Martha hears that he's approaching the village so she goes out to meet him and she says in verse 21, it's not so much a reproach, it's more of an expression of sadness and trust in him.

[26 : 21] But she says to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.

To which Jesus replies, verse 23, your brother will rise again. Now, what did he mean by that? Did he mean your brother will rise again today?

Or did he mean your brother will rise at the end of history? Orthodox Jews believed that there would be a general resurrection at the end of the world. And that's exactly the view that Martha expresses in verse 24.

She says, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. But it's here that Jesus rocks her view of history. He then says to her, 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? Now, that word or that phrase, I am, that is the name of God revealed first to Moses at the burning bush.

[27 : 33] So Jesus is telling Martha unmistakably here that he is God incarnate. But he's also telling her that the future has come into the present.

Resurrection and life are not just for then, they're for now. Not just for a far distant future, but for the present tense. The life of the world to come is to be experienced even within this old world.

Now, this is not the first time that this understanding has appeared in John's gospel. Back in chapter 5, verse 24, Jesus says, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, believes the Father, has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. In other words, the Christian believer is already part of the new world, part of the new creation.

This is what it means to be born again. The new birth is not something the Christian experiences after death. It's something that the Christian already experiences now.

[28 : 39] And we know this. Our lives are radically changed when we come to Christ. Already, we see God and ourselves and the world through very different eyes.

We're still in the old creation. We're still inhabiting decaying bodies which are being propped up by the National Health Service. But though we have one foot in the grave, the other foot is in the new creation already, if we're Christians.

Jesus changes our view of history. What Jesus says in verses 25 and 26 is not only comforting, it is thrilling. Whoever believes in me, though he die, even though he may have to spend time in the cemetery, yet shall he live.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. So the Christian can say, I will die, but I will never die.

I will die in this old body of mine unless Christ returns in the meantime, but I will then be raised and then I will never die. And therefore, the Christian repeats the pattern that is set by Jesus.

[29 : 51] Death first and then resurrection. To follow Jesus means not only to follow his teaching and to obey it, but to follow the very pattern and order of his experience.

Death first, resurrection second. Paul writes, Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no more dominion over him. And that's the same for you and me if we belong to him.

And if that doesn't make you want to dance down the aisle and turn a cartwheel, you are the dullest of dull birds. It is the most thrilling thing. Now thirdly, let's notice Jesus' anger and grief.

We move on in the story now to verse 32. At this stage, Mary, the other sister, comes to Jesus. She's weeping, as verse 33 tells us.

And the others with her are also weeping, the ones who've come to the home to comfort them. And Jesus, we're told in verse 33, is deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

[30 : 59] Now that is really too tame a translation. The verbs really mean that he is groaning here with fierce, indignant anger. So much so that he bursts into tears in verse 35.

It's the most powerful mixture of grief and anger. Now we're bound to ask, why? Why does he weep? Why is he so upset when he knows perfectly well what he's just about to do to Lazarus to wake him up, restore his life?

The answer must be that he's angry at the fact and power of death. He knows why people die. He knows why death came into the world as God's righteous punishment for our sin.

More than anybody, Jesus knows that death came into the world through Adam's sin and that death spread to all human beings because we're all sinners. Jesus, of all people, knows that the wages of sin is death.

He hates death, hates it. He hates the pain it causes, the tears, the sense of loss. He knows that it all stems from the rebellion against God which is endemic to the human race, endemic to all of us until we turn to Christ and submit to him.

[32 : 19] Jesus loves the human race. That's why he wept at the grave of Lazarus, wept at the power of death and the fact that we all had so richly deserved it.

In a graveyard somewhere in Fife in the east of Scotland, there's a tombstone which bears this inscription, O Adam, what hast thou done? But the weeping of Jesus is not the end of the story.

Fourth then, we hear his voice, the voice that wakes the dead. Now verse 38, Jesus comes to the tomb and John tells us that he is again deeply moved, again fiercely indignant at the power of death.

These Jewish tombs were apparently cut out of a rocky hillside very often. In fact, the tomb that Jesus himself was buried in soon afterwards was also cut out of rock and there would be one or two ledges inside the little cave and the bodies would be laid inside.

And verse 38 tells us that just like Jesus' tomb, this tomb had a stone, big stone, laid across the entrance. It would need to be big and heavy to cover such a large opening.

[33 : 37] So Jesus comes to the tomb with Martha and Mary and all the other mourners around him. But what he says next would have rocked them back on their heels with a sense of horror.

Take away the stone, he says. You cannot be serious, Lord. Martha still doesn't understand the agenda. She has no idea. So she says, but Lord, he's been dead four days.

There'll be a horrible smell by now. But he replies by challenging her to trust him and to believe in him. He says in verse 40, did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?

Now he had challenged her back in verses 25 and 26. Do you believe this? He'd said. And she's already made a beautiful confession of faith in verse 27 where she says, yes, Lord, I believe that you're the Christ, the son of God who is coming into the world.

That is a full-blooded confession of faith. You are the Christ, the son of God. That's saving faith. That's real Christianity. But Martha still doesn't understand the full picture.

[34 : 50] So Jesus wants to strengthen her belief even further. He wants to make assurance doubly sure. So he says in verse 40, if you believe, you will see the glory of God.

In other words, what you're about to witness will reveal God's glory and my glory. So verse 41, they take away the stone.

Several strong young men would have been needed to do that. And at this point, Jesus prays out loud in the sight and hearing of everybody. Father, he says, verse 41, I thank you that you've heard me.

I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me. That's the agenda, that they may believe.

That is Jesus's purpose in doing what he's about to do, to give this crowd solid ground for putting their trust in him. Now, of course, he also wants to replace Martha and Mary's sorrow with joy.

[35 : 56] Of course, that's part of his agenda. But his great aim here is to help people to believe. To believe what? Look at the end of verse 42. To believe that the Father has sent the Son.

That they may believe that you sent me. To believe that Jesus really is the Son of God, authenticated and authorized by the Father. Not just some loose cannon, not some maverick wonder worker, but truly the Son of God who has come to bring eternal life and eternal salvation.

Now, friends, harness your visual imagination for a moment. Picture this in your mind's eye. The stone is rolled back. Jesus now is standing at the very mouth of the grave.

The crowd, tense but bewildered, are watching him in silence. Lazarus, come out! That's the voice that cannot be resisted.

Out he comes, wrapped up in yards of linen cloth. Unbind him, those grave clothes are no fitting thing for a living man. Let him go. Now, John has recorded this for us so that we too should put our trust in Christ.

[37 : 18] He came into the world to conquer death and to bring eternal life to everybody who belongs to him and therefore the Christian need fear death no more.

Christianity is not just about living a new and better life in this world in the old creation. Now, it certainly involves that a new life, a better life, a happier life but the gospel is about eternity.

It's about eternal life. The apostle Paul said, if for this life only we have put our hope in Christ we are of all people the most to be pitied. It's a pitiable thing to think that it's only for this life that Christ has come.

The raising of Lazarus is a foretaste of the new creation. Lazarus himself of course had to die again but Jesus raised from the dead never has to die again.

Death has no more dominion over him and if we belong to him we belong to one whose resurrection is the prototype of our own.

[38 : 26] This is good news. This is the truth. This is to be believed and trusted. Look again at verse 25. I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me. That includes everybody here doesn't it? 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? And that is his question to all of us. Do we believe this? Martha said yes Lord I believe that you're the Christ the son of God who is coming into the world.

And John is inviting us to echo her words. Well let's bow our heads and thank him.

Lord Jesus our wonderful savior we lift up our hearts and our thoughts to you now. You are seated at the right hand of God the father in heaven but your power is abroad in the earth and in our very hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit whom you have sent to bring us new life to make us even in this old world part of the new creation.

[39 : 46] So we pray dear Lord Jesus that you will help us to love you and to trust you ever more deeply. We think of Martha and Mary and those others who really did put their trust in you because of what they saw because of what they experienced and we thank you for your servant John who has written all this down for us so that we too should believe that you are the Christ and the son of God and that by believing should have life in your name.

Confirm in our hearts this faith we pray and we ask it to the glory of your name. Amen.