

John 11

Sunday 11/8/2015

I don't know about you, but I have been noticing Christianity having a hard time lately. Not Christianity itself, but it is like the world is giving it a hard time. It is not like the olden days, but it is getting kind of strange. I am not comparing the trouble that Christianity is going through to anything like the Dark Ages or early Christianity or early Judaism. I am just saying you cannot help but turn on the news or read a paper and you cannot help but find some organization or some government that is working pretty hard to keep Christianity out of everyday society. They are trying to erase it. They are trying to melt it down and make it something that it is not.

You do not have to argue about how it is our fault, because it is. I get it. We should have stuck with God's Word all these years. If we had just stuck with the Book, everything would be okay. I get that, but it is supposed to happen anyway. The Bible said it is going to happen. It is happening whether it is our fault or not. There is an attack on Christianity today, and it makes it a little hard for people to hold onto their faith these days. The attacks are everywhere. Every television show, every news program, every newspaper article that I can find, is all about trying to erase the influence and the appearance of Christianity in everyday society. We are under attack.

I have seen this over the last twenty-some-odd years that I have been a Christian. We see how our response is. Our response seems to go to manuscript evidence or church history or end-time prophecy. We have all the right answers, but we wind up out here on the edges because there is one core principle of all Christianity that really is under attack. It has been under attack since the very beginning, and it trumps all other attacks. It is the attack that without this one fundamental principle, there is no Christianity. It rests on one single truth: that is, did Christ rise from the dead or not?

Nobody disputes that there was a man named Jesus of Nazareth, and that He lived and He talked and He said some things. Few people even deny that He said the things that He said. The issue lies not just in what He said, but what did He do? Because that is the important thing. Did He do what He said He did, or did He not? You can say yes to everything else. You can say, "Sure, He walked on water." "Sure, He turned water into wine." "Sure, He healed the sick and He made the blind see again." But if you cannot say yes to the fact that He rose from the dead, none of that matters. It is just a parlor trick. It is just a parlor trick because without the coming back from the dead, there is no Christianity at all.

This is the fundamental truth upon which all of Christianity lies. No matter what religion, well, most religions, without that one fundamental truth, the rest of it is just parlor tricks. It is just window dressing, and it does not really mean anything. Not counting Christ, there are nine instances of people coming back from the dead in our Bible, making ten total. Eight of those are recently dead people. So eight of the resurrection stories in the Bible are recently dead. You can twist it so that, "Well, they were just sleeping," or "They were just in a coma," or "It was medical, whatever," and they just came back. But there were two that were completely different. Christ was dead for three days, and I do not dispute that. I happen to subscribe to that fact. It is not a theory; it is a fact. I happen to subscribe to that. If a Christian has trouble with that fact,

then there is a bigger issue than you can ever imagine. Then there is the other one, Lazarus. He was so dead, he stunk. There is no way you can twist that story to say that he had been in that cave for four days smelling, and that was just, "Well, he just had a migraine," or "Well, he passed out," or "He was in a coma." He was dead, dead, dead, and he stunk.

If you really think about this, would anything in your Bible mean anything to you personally if Christ had not come back from the dead? It would just be another book, would it not? It would just be another philosophy book about how to get along with others, how to win friends and influence people, seventeen ways to make a million dollars. It would be just any other book in the world, but it is a different book. Would it matter that He came to save the world but He could not save Himself from death? None of what He did, none of what is in my Bible, would matter if it were not for that one fundamental truth. There is no precept or principle or doctrine in the Bible that becomes nothing more than a poem if He did not do it, really. If you think about it, without that one simple thing, it is all nothing. It would not matter. Manuscript evidence does not matter. Church history would not exist. End-time prophecy would just be a bunch of hokum. Without that one truth that Christ died for the sins of the world, rose on the third day, He is coming back. Our hope and promise as a Christian is that one day He is going to do that for us too.

I think when I am reading my Bible that this is a pretty important precept, and that I might see that pattern elsewhere in the Bible. If that is true, then this ought to permeate everything in my Bible: every verse, every book, every chapter, every single concept in that Bible should be tainted with that one simple, fundamental building block of all Christianity. If I am right about that, then there must be more about these resurrection stories than just a picture of someone coming back from the dead. We say, "Yes," because we are too, right? If we are not alive when He comes and we are Christians, we are going to come back from the dead to meet Him in the air. That is the hope of a Christian.

I. The Story of Lazarus: A Picture of Sin

I want to take a look at John chapter 11 at one of those stories, one of those resurrection stories. It is the story of Lazarus. I submit today that this is more than a story of just Jesus raising someone He loved from the dead. It is more than that. I know that is what the story is about, but what is it really about? Is there something else there? I asked myself, "Why did He do this one? Why this one? Why not some other one?" What is the practical message for me? When I read my Bible, I want a practical message so I can apply it to my life. Otherwise, it does not help me. It does not help me unless I can work it. So the story is telling us something about ourselves, and it is telling us something about people around us. At least I hope so, because that is what I am going to spend the next forty-five minutes talking about. If it is not, well, I am in a lot of trouble. The question is, "Can the dead rise or not?" This is a story about coming back from the dead.

This morning, I would like to see if there are some things we can learn about ourselves and whether or not we really believe the central tenet. I know all Christians believe Jesus Christ will come back from the dead. They have to, or they are not Christians, that is just by default. But do we really believe it in a practical way? Is there a practical application greater than just the simple

fact that we all know we are going to rise from the dead someday if we are not here when He comes back?

We are going to read out of John chapter 11, and then we will pray and we will get on with this thing.

John 11:1-11

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Then after that he saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Let us pray. Father, we just thank You so much for giving us this Book and giving us this church and sending us that Savior that had the power over death to bring this man from death to life, and someday to bring us from death to life. That is the hope of all Christianity. Father, I pray for the words to say and the strength to say them. I pray, Lord, that You take care of our people who are in New York and You bring them back safely to us. Lord, I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

What I want to do today is I want to take the story of Lazarus and I want to stretch it a little bit. I want to picture Lazarus as a picture of a man or a woman who has a sin in their life, and the sin in their life is making them sick. Sin is a sickness. That is what I want to posit today: that sin is a sickness. In the first two verses, it says, "whose brother Lazarus was sick." So for the sake of argument, let us compare Lazarus to a Christian in some sort of sin. I am not saying that this is Lazarus and he is in sin. That is not what I am saying. I want to have a practical application out

of here and consider, just consider for a while, that possibility. Who here has not faced a sin in their life that literally made them sick? I have. It has literally made me sick. That sinking feeling when you realize something you are doing is sin, that is what I am talking about. When it goes on long enough, it becomes an anomaly that affects every part of your body, physically and spiritually.

I think it is not too much of a stretch to even think of it as someone who is suffering in some way as a result of their own sin or even someone else's. Have you ever met anyone who suffered for the sins of someone else? I have. His name is Jesus Christ, and you probably have too. It is not just Him. People suffer because they have done wrong, and people suffer because other people have done wrong. This is the thing I am talking about: sin is a sickness. Sin has a way, just like illness, of making it into every aspect of our lives. The bad thing about it, at least with sin, is that it feels good. So we do not even notice it creeping in. If sin did not feel good, I personally would not do it. Bottom line, it just feels good. So by the time we first realize that we, so the first time we feel this sin, is when we feel the symptoms. At least that is the first time we admit having it. But sin comes in a little bit, and it is like leaven; it spreads everywhere. It is like a disease.

Lazarus is sick. I do not think it is too much of a stretch to take this as a picture—a picture, not Lazarus himself—a picture of sin, just like we would if you had leprosy in the Old Testament. We equate leprosy with sin in the Old Testament. So I do not think it is too much of a stretch. Sin is like an infection. It is in you long before you see the symptoms of it. It builds up power, it builds up strength, and then it manifests itself in whatever way that particular infection will manifest itself. Sin is just like that. You take it in. In this case, you know you take it in. The moment you do, you look around and say something like, "Well, that did not hurt. See? Nothing happened." And we go on with our lives.

Remember that old statement, "Thou shalt surely die"? Well, Adam said, "I am still breathing, God." Do we not say the same thing? "Thou shalt surely die." Look at me, here I am. I would not try it, but I have done it. Or you look around after you ingest that little bit of sin, in whatever form that is, and you say, "Whoa, glad nobody saw that." And there it is. It is in you now. Now it has a chance to grow because it is not sitting there in this little tiny format. It is over in a corner doing pushups, waiting for it. It is just waiting for that moment to manifest itself in you. That is basically how we allow sin in our lives: one small step at a time, while nobody is looking. Then we do a self-diagnosis. We look around. "I am standing. I am breathing. I am still a deacon in the church. I am preaching today. How about it? I am still here, God. Thou shalt surely die." Nothing happens. Nothing happens.

II. The Lingering Sickness of Unaddressed Sin

Lazarus' problem had gone on for a while too. Once sin gets going and you do not take care of it, it goes on for a while. Look in John 11:3-6.

John 11:3-6

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He ran directly to Lazarus' bedside and fixed him. That is not what my Bible says. "He abode two days still in the same place where he was." This is a pattern with Jesus. You remember the story of His disciples out on the boat that He sent them on. He said, "Go get in the boat, go to the other side of the sea." And they did. Suddenly there is this great storm, and it is throwing the boat around. They think they are going to die. So they cry out to Jesus, "Jesus, help us!" You know what He did? He kicked back and prayed for a while. Then He started walking. He did not start running; He walked.

Lazarus' sin went on for a while. "He abode two days still in the same place where he was." I am not saying—I say it over and over again—Lazarus is not the bad guy. I think he is a picture of a perfect Christian. So do not get me wrong here. I am just using sickness as an illustration. Think of it as unaddressed sin. It goes on for a while. Every day it gets a little bit worse and a little bit more insidious because nothing, I mean, "I am cool. I still have a job. I still have a family. I still have a church. I still have a ministry. What is the big deal? I am still breathing." We grow a little bit more accustomed to it. So after a while, we look at that sin that we knew was sin before. Now it is not so much sin anymore; it is just kind of what we do. Then what you do, you look around and say, "Well, they do it. That guy does not. If you knew what that guy was doing, you would not think I am so bad." We start to do that self-justification, self-medication. It does not bother us until it starts killing us.

If you take a frog and you throw it in hot water, it will jump out. But if you put a frog in cold water and heat it up, it will sit there until it dies. It does not even know. We grow so accustomed to unrepentant sin, we do not even notice the water getting hot. Before we know it, we are in deep hot water, and it is boiling, and we cannot get out. We do not even notice it happening. The thing with Lazarus has been going on for a while. Then the sisters send for Jesus. What does He do? He sits. He stays put for a couple of days. I think that is a parenting technique. If my picture is correct, there is someone in sin. Jesus knows about it. He waits a couple of days.

I know I get discouraged when I find myself in hot water and I cry out for help. "Oh, Jesus, help me!" And it does not happen right away. But I was not really interested in Jesus helping me out when I was getting into that problem, was I? I really did not want Him to know I was doing it. I looked around, "Glad nobody saw that. Still breathing." Now here I am in hot water. "Oh, Jesus, help me!" "He did not come. That is it. I am quitting church. I am out." That is how I, "I already tried. I tried that church thing once. I tried that prayer thing once. It did not work. Let me know how it works." So I get discouraged, but there is something good and proper about that two-day wait. If you have ever had kids, have you ever had them just sit there and stew in it for a while? Let us let them learn a lesson. Maybe that is what is going on here. "Why do you not just sit there

and think about what you have done for a while?" I have had that happen. I have done that. If it is good enough for our kids, it is probably good enough for our Father in Heaven to do the same.

Again, that story of those disciples in the boat, they thought they were going to die. Now, "Cool, I got this." Jesus comes walking on the water. They called out. They had to wait a while. They had to wait a while. He took His time. We want Jesus on the scene the moment we need help, but we do not want Him anywhere near us when we start out, do we? "I do not know, God. I do not want it. Boy, I do not know. Dear Lord Jesus, I pray, I pray, I pray for this cigarette, Lord, that it would just bless me somehow." No, "Lord Jesus, when I go into this bar, I pray that I meet someone I can witness to." No, "Lord, when I do this or that thing, Lord, I ask You to bless it." If you cannot ask Jesus Christ to bless the thing you are about to do, think about that as an inoculation. It will stop you from doing it. It should.

Sometimes we get into sin, and we have to stew in it for a while. We think Christ is Batman, do we not? We will just, like the Bat-signal, Jesus will come in and save the day and kill all the bad guys and make everything right. That is what we think. We think He is Santa Claus. We think He is a superhero that is going to come and get us. The problem that we are in is a problem that we have already put ourselves in. Why is He bound to run to our side? I do not think He is. Sometimes sin has consequences beyond our immediate circumstance. Sin comes with a price, and it is not just being out of fellowship while you are in sin. Sometimes sin leaves a mark in your life. So we are playing with fire, so to speak, when we play with sin. Lazarus is just a picture of this man or this woman who is in sin, and sin had gone on for a while. Unrepentant sin just gets worse. It is like an untreated infection; it gets worse.

I had an infection. The doctor was trying to treat it. He saw me one day. He said, "I need to see you. Call me tomorrow night." I called him tomorrow night. "How is it going?" "It is kind of painful." He said, "You should really come in and go to the hospital." I said, "No, I have to go traveling on Monday." I was going to Korea or some stupid place like that. He said, "Well, just come and see me in the morning before you leave." Went and saw him. He looked at me and said, "Bob, you are going to die. You need to go in the hospital." I am like, "I am going to die?" That got my attention. I just let this thing go on, and I did not want the treatment that the doctor had prescribed because I had plans. Think of that as sin. I did not want to apply the treatment because I had plans. You know why? My sin is fun. I do not take sin that is not fun. I will not do it if it is not fun. So I wanted to go do something I wanted to do. The doctor had other ideas, and I got to live another day. Sin is the same way. Lazarus is a picture of that man who was sinning, it had been going on for a while, and his loved ones made it known to Christ, and He gets on it, but He gets on it in His own time. So by the time you cry out for sin, it may be too late. In the case of Lazarus, if you take the metaphor literally, it was a little bit too late for Lazarus.

III. The Disciples' Reluctance and Our Own

You are going to find something else about the people around you in this story. Look at John 11:7.

John 11:7

Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

His disciples say unto Him, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither?" These men with Christ are a good picture of American Christianity today, in my opinion. He has got this entourage, and they knew Lazarus needed help, but they are essentially concerned with their own welfare. If you think for a minute they were worried for Jesus Christ, Son of God, no one is going to kill Him unless He lets them, right? We know that. Can you imagine walking around with this Man and seeing Him do the things that He had done and still coming to a conclusion that some people with rocks could kill Him if He did not want it? In John chapter 2, He turned water into wine. He healed a sick boy in John chapter 4. He saw the woman at the side of the well and told her her life. He healed the man in the pool of Bethesda in John chapter 5. They had just had the miracle of the fish and the loaves in John chapter 6, and He gave a blind man sight in John chapter 8, and He could not duck a stone? That is not what they are talking about. They are afraid. They do not want to deal with it. These men are not concerned with Christ's safety at all. They are either worried for their own selves, or they are just too important to help one sinner with a sin problem. Their friend, Lazarus, not us.

The disciples by John chapter 10 had heard other things, and these are the things they took heed to. They heard Him called the devil. They had seen people try to kill Him. So they were focused more on that than they were on the object of their affection. They were focused on the circumstances of their lives rather than the object of their faith, and that will always fail you. They were worried about their own flesh. I will tell you that right now. They were worried about their own flesh. But look at the picture. Even then, two thousand years ago, they wanted Jesus Christ removed from every aspect of daily life, and nothing has really changed. You have more media attention. You have more clever arguments against it. You have the weird factors on either end of Christianity. You have the fringes, and that is what we always point to, is the fringes. "Look at Westboro Baptist Church." Yeah, okay, yeah. "I am not them."

They were reluctant to help. They believed in Christ, but did they really believe that He could rise from the dead? He had been telling them that. Did they really believe it? Is there no practical application? They said, "Yeah, I know your friend needs help, but what about You, God? Do You not think that is a bad idea, Jesus? Do You not? I think we should just stay here," whereas they were really worried about themselves. So let us bring this home. You see someone at church. They are in sin. Now think, picture, picture, right? You know you ought to do something about it, but you do not. You give some excuse, "Well, I do not want to cause any trouble. I do not want to get involved. That is not my problem. That is not my place. I am not leadership." Where is that? I do not get it, but we do it.

Think about it. If you saw someone, like someone in this church, maybe it is a deacon in this church—by the way, I am not referring to anything, I am just putting this out there—and they are doing something that was sin. Would you tell them? Or would you tell the pastor? Or would you do what we normally do and tell everybody else in the room? Would you do that? Think about it. Is that not what we do? If you have a problem with a brother, you take it to everyone else in the church first, and then you get everyone else in the church to take it back to the brother and beat them up with it, right? Is that not what Matthew teaches us? No. But is that not what we do? I

will tell you what. The man in sin may not even know he is in sin—well, he probably does, but maybe he does not. The whole church knows he is in sin, but no one has gone to that man or that woman and said, "Hey, look, this is probably something you need to fix." That is the model. If you have a problem with a brother, you take him to him alone. If that does not work, you take someone else, a leader in the church. If that does not work, you take it to the pastor and let him deal with it. That is the biblical way to deal with it. But we do not want to deal with people in sin.

Now take it like this. Now think about that example I just gave. Maybe it would not be everybody, but what if it was a certain person? Would you do it for them? What would you do? Do you base your Bible Christianity based on who the other person is? Or do you base that on who Christ is and what He says to do with it? These people did not want to help Lazarus. They wanted to help themselves. So Lazarus was sick. Let us say it was because of a sin in his life. The people in his life, Mary and Martha, wanted to help him. They knew what the answer was, but they could not give him that answer themselves. They had to reach out for Jesus Christ. His friends with Jesus Christ were with the answer and did not want to bring the answer to him. So Lazarus is kind of in a bad place.

If we are who we say we are, we believe Christ is who He said He was. And we believe He did what He did and meant what He said. How is it that we cannot approach a brother or a sister in Christ who is in some sort of sin and offer them a solution that we all know that we have? How is that possible? These men would rather leave Lazarus in his current state and save their own hides than to risk something of their own to help him because it is more comfortable. "I do not want to cause, I do not want to split the church. I just want to be unity in a church." They profess their concern for Christ just like we profess our concern for the unity of the church. "We do not want to cause any division. We will just wait for Pastor Bob to find out about it and let him deal with that." That is not Bible. You know what it is called? It is called being chicken. That is what it is really called. It is called being chicken. That is what it is.

Then you see what they do. They really go far with this. Look at John 11:9-10. These men, they are experts at this. They are nothing like us here at Old Paths Baptist Church, by the way. So watch this.

John 11:9-10

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

I think Jesus is getting a little sarcastic with them. "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" Christians are the best liars in the world. Have you ever noticed that? They are the best liars. The lost world, they do not even have to try. They do not have a Book that calls them out every time. So they can make up lies like this. I have to really think about my lies. Do I line up with the Bible? Are they going to get me with this verse or that verse? Christians are the best liars on the planet. But a Christian who really has to work at it to make a lie, right? Jesus is using sarcasm to

some people who appear too busy to help. We do. We tell ourselves lies like this. "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" You know what that means? "There is plenty of time to go do that." Then we say things like, "Well, I do not have enough time to do that." We go both sides, right? There is either too much time or not enough time. Or we will say something like, "That is just not my problem. Am I my brother's keeper?" Well, we tried that one before.

The disciples here are trying to attack it to look like this: "Dude, Jesus, it is a long trip to Bethany. You do not have time for that. They do not like You there. They do not like us either. We have bigger and more important problems to take care of." Jesus is calling them out. He already told them in John chapter 8 and 9 that He is the Light. He told them again in John chapter 11, He is the Light, He is the Way, He is the Truth. He says He is the Son of God, for crying out loud. They are walking with Him. All we have is, I do not know, all I have is a King James Bible, right? So they are with Him. He is calling them out. He said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." So what darkness could befall them if they are walking with Jesus Christ? This is about them, not about Christ. John 11:9 said, "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." Then He hits them hard. He hits them. He nails them. This is where He nails them in John 11:11.

John 11:11

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Their friend is in trouble, and they are more concerned with their own flesh, their own agendas. They do not want to go help their own friend. So this is an acquaintance of Lazarus. This is not these men's acquaintance. It is not just the man that Jesus loved. It is their friend, "Our friend, Lazarus sleepeth." They are a bunch of fair-weather acquaintances, guys. There is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance. There is a big difference. A friend sticks by you no matter what you have done. They never let you get out of fellowship if they can help it. They attack that sin like a doctor, like that doctor attacked my infection and told me that if I did not take care of it, I would die. I think it is true. I do not know if it is doctrinally sound, but spiritual death, out of fellowship with God, not reading your Bible, not going to church, not hanging around with church people, that is a pretty dead world. If you have ever tried it, do not.

He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," their friend, not just Jesus' sick friend. This is personal now. So let us say he is in sin. Let us just say for the sake of argument, Lazarus is in sin. Lazarus is in sin. What do these men do? They do what some of us do. They do not want any part of it. "I just do not want to deal with that. That is not the part of Christianity I like." They turn their backs on him, and they want to do anything or go anywhere else, except moving towards their friend who needs help. I do not know how some of us can call ourselves Christians, let alone human, after we turn our back on someone who is in sin. How do you do that? They need you more than any time in history, at that very moment in time that they are deep in sin. They need us more than at any time in the history of their life. What do we do? We turn our backs on them.

I get it. Titus 3:10 says, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject." Okay. He gets three strikes first. That heretic gets three strikes first. That is a heretic, not to mention your friend Lazarus. How many strikes are you going to give your friend until you call yourself an acquaintance? Because there is a difference. Do not forget, the man gets three strikes. Not to mention Christ saying seventy times seven if your brother offends you. So you go figure out how many chances you need to give your friends before you walk away. You never, ever turn your back on a friend, biblically speaking, never. But we are righteous, King James Bible-believing, blood-washed Baptists. "We cannot be seen hanging around with someone like that." Well, I can. I have, and I will. If you knew the infection of sin that was in my life before I got saved, you will not hear it from me. But I will tell you what, a lot of water went under my bridge. A lot of water. "You cannot be seen hanging around with someone like that. He got himself into that. Let him get himself out." Right? That is the holy thing to do. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." It is personal now. He just nailed them so hard, it is not even funny.

Lazarus' sickness had only one cure. Look in John 11:11 again.

John 11:11

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

"I go." All he needed was just a daily recommended allowance of Jesus. He needed a daily recommended allowance of the Word of God. You know the story in John 11:43, He says, "Lazarus, come forth," and boom, he comes forth. All he needed was the Word of God, but he either could not get it or would not get it. The people around him either could not get him that or would not give him that. His friends would not bring it to him. But thank God I have a Savior that does not rely on all of you to get to me. I am in the same boat. I am not picking on anybody. I do not have a specific instance. I can think of several, but I am not. There is nothing current going on. This is just how I read this passage. Nobody around him was either willing or able to bring it. Mary and Martha, they knew the solution. It is always funny, the women always have the solution, do they not? His man friends, they wanted out, but the women knew exactly what he needed. Think about that. Chew on that for a while. These men were just Klingons, and they would not because they are too busy doing other, more important things, or more likely, just afraid to address the sin in Lazarus' life. Maybe because they had the same problem. Sin usually loves company, but when it comes to the Bible, it rejects it like magnets. You just do not want to be around it.

Because of this, Lazarus has a sickness, and it lingered long enough that it killed him. I believe sin will kill you spiritually. I know you are still saved. I get it, but it will, have you ever let that fire go out in you? No, not fire. You are on fire for God. You want to do something for God. You want to study God's Word, and you love your Bible, and you cannot wait to get home to read it. I used to put it on the seat in my car when I drove across country. It was stupid. It was like texting before it was bibling before texting. It is stupid, but I loved that Book. I loved it. I wanted more. I wanted more. I listened to nothing but tapes in my cassette player. Yeah, the cassettes, cassettes, a little thing we used to put in our car, kids. They are about this big. Yeah, I loved it. Then the

fire went out. You try to relight that fire. That is a hard thing to do. That is a hard thing to do. It will kill you spiritually. It killed Adam in the garden, but he looked around and said, "Well, I am still breathing, so what is the big deal?" Well, I do not know how that worked out for him sometimes.

I say this almost facetiously. I am grateful that I did not grow up in church because very few times, but I am not proud of my past life, do not get me wrong. The moments are brief at best, but because I always regret not growing up in God's Word, at the same time, I have an appreciation. I can tell you, and not from books, Mark, it is what sin will do. If left unchecked, it burrows into every dark corner of your life. It takes every decision you make. It takes every word you hear. You do not even know it. You know why? Because you are having fun. Because it feels good. And I am finally doing what I always wanted to do. It almost did me in, and I am not talking, I am not talking sleeping like Lazarus. I am talking dead. I am talking, I would not have made it. I would not have made it. I would be dead, dead, dead, rotting in hell right now.

But there were two people in my life, two people in my life that were not afraid of my sin, two people. There was this little girl when I was fourteen, fourteen years old, maybe fifteen, I do not know. We liked each other, whatever that was, for about a year. She moved away, and she came back. I think I was eighteen or nineteen, and we met up again, and all she wanted to do was tell me about this thing that happened to her, how she was born again, and she was going to Heaven, and she wanted me to get saved, and she wanted everybody to get saved. So all she would talk about, "I do not want to talk about that." I did not want to talk about that. I did not want any part of that.

There was a man at the company I worked for when I got out of the Navy. His name was Roy. He was weird. He will not ever hear this, I am sure. He was weird. He prayed for his food in front of people. I am not just talking to tie your shoe, duck your head, achoo, wipe your nose thing. He prayed for his food. He was weird. He carried a Bible with him at work. He is going to a lunchroom with a Bible and a lunch pail. He is a freak. If that is not enough, he did not cuss. He never cussed. If he cussed, he never cussed in front of me. I worked with that man for ten years. He never said a cuss word, ever, that I heard. This has got to be it. You cannot like this man after you hear this. He listened to Christian music. He witnessed to everyone at work. Everyone? Everyone. He kept telling me time after time after time that I had to be born again or I would go to hell. I just told him to go there. That is what I did. I was not nice to him. I wanted nothing to do with him. I wanted nothing to do with that girl when she came back and told me that I needed to be born again because I was deep in my sin, and I was having fun. That felt good. I did not want to hear this born again stuff. I was in that deep, unrepentant sin, and there was but one cure. There was just one cure. I did not want that cure because I was finally having the fun I always wanted to have. Because sin is fun. If it was not, I would not do it.

I mocked them. I did. I mocked Roy. I did get to see Roy once after I got saved. I went back to that company. I told him, "Man, I am really sorry about what I did." He was happy. He had an argument against me once, and he nailed me with it. I said, "Roy, you know, you get up every Sunday morning, you go to church, you read your Bible, you give your money to that thing. What happens if you die and it is all wrong? It was all fairy tale." He goes, "Well, Bob, I guess

then I would have led a pretty good life, and all that was for nothing." Then he turned around on me and says, "But Bob, if I am right, you are in a lot of trouble." I am like, that stuck with me. That stuck with me for ten more years that he nailed me because I am like, you know, I like to argue. He nailed me. He shut me down. "If I am right, you are in a lot of trouble." Okay. Well, I did not have one of my fancy comebacks for him, right? I probably told him to go to hell or something like that. I mean, I was not nice to him, and he never let it get to him. He knew that there was a man with a sin problem, a sickness that had grown into every area of my life. He could see it. He could see it.

One day I had this light shine, that same light shine again. I recognized it. I put those two people together. Remember that young girl and that man were trying to give me a cure for an illness that I had that I did not want a cure for, just like the doctor was trying to cure me from my infection. I did not want it. I had other plans. I had other plans. I will tell you this. I did not turn into any overnight G-Zoid. I am telling you right now, there was not me going out there, "You will praise the Lord! You need to be saved!" I got there, but there was a lot of water passing under my bridge by the time I got saved. Think about a diabetic that has a diabetic problem, and they finally figure out how to handle it, but not until they lose a leg. Think about it. There is always a consequence for sin. It is not always a consequence for diabetes, but I am telling you there are things that remained. Jesus said, "But I go." He also goes when we bring the Word of God to someone. We bring that same thing. He says, "I go, but I go." Just like that young girl and that man at work, but His disciples do not want to do it. His disciples do not want to do it.

IV. The Blindness to Sin and Its Consequences

Here is the problem. Let us give these men. Let us say they are not afraid. Let us say they are deeply concerned over their friend Lazarus. We know they are not, but let us just say they are. Let us lie to ourselves and say they are. Look in John 11:12-14.

John 11:12-14

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

"All right, all right, but I have got to say it. Lazarus is dead." Many Christians do not even know what sin looks like. They do not. "If he sleep, he shall do well." "Well, what do I have to spell it out for you? Lazarus is dead." "Oh, why do you not just say that?" Well, you should have known that. We should know what it looks like. They do not get it either, to some of us. "Well, that is their choice of lifestyle. Who are we to judge? So what if they only come to church twice a month? What is the big deal? Who are we to judge? They are probably just busy." Well, they are not too busy to schedule things on Sunday mornings.

I find it amazing that even though we are far better at spotting sin in other people's lives than we are in our own, we still cannot see it for what it is when we see it sometimes. We excuse it because we want that same excuse when it comes to us. If I want to show it, I will not want to

attack someone for not coming to church four times out of every month. Maybe because I want to do that. I am just using that as an example. These men have been with Jesus for a while, and they should have known what it looked like when they saw it. They should have known what Jesus was talking about. Why would Jesus say, "Hey, Bob, we have got to go over to Bethany. Lazarus is sleeping." I am like, "Well, why would He do that? Why do you not just tell them to wake them up?" There is something bigger going on. There is something bigger going on, and they should know it. But hey, cut them some slack. They did not have a Bible. I do. What is our excuse?

We get all caught up in the periphery when we want to defend our faith. What do we do? Church history, manuscript evidence, end-time prophecy, right? Those are the big three. What about simple Bible? Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, rose on the third day, and He is coming back, and that will cure any malady you have from a spiritual perspective. Manuscript evidence will not save anybody. It is good. It is proper. It is true. It is real. I love it. End-time prophecy will not save anybody. It is good. It is true. It is perfect. I love it. It is necessary, but it is like, that is like potato chips. We need penicillin here. Jesus Christ died for your sins, rose on the third day. He is coming back, and you are going to rise from the dead someday too. That is the medicine. It is not the Lord's Supper that is the medicine of immortality, even if Origen said that or whoever said it. That is not the medicine of immortality. The medicine of immortality is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is what this Lazarus needed. Our friend Lazarus, not the literal Lazarus that we are talking about in the story, he is already saved. But we get all caught up in that and church history and all the spiritual gifts. Of course, you know that you need to know all the latest government conspiracies, right? Because that is important. Without government conspiracy theory, we cannot have Christianity, right? "Oh, they are going to take 'In God We Trust' off the coins. They are trying to get rid of us." Why did they even put it on there? This country does not trust God. We are not a Christian country. Maybe we used to be, but we are not now.

We are all caught up in those things, and we cannot even spot simple sin in our lives. If we do, okay, let us say we see it. It is worse. If we can see the sin in other people's lives and we do nothing about it, I think that is worse. So you can claim ignorance, and "I did not know." That is cool. We can work with that, but you cannot claim anything biblical when you can see the sin in someone's life and choose to do nothing about it. So the sin in our lives just goes on and on in the lives of our so-called friends, coworkers, family. Roy had nothing on me. Roy was just a man at work, but he was relentless. He was really weird. Lazarus, our friend, he was, I am telling you, he is not weird, but you know, from a, what was I, twenty-eight-year-old man, loose as a jaybird, hated a lot of stuff, doing a lot of stuff that you are not going to hear about. This man sat next to me at lunch. Why would he do that? His reputation was not going up in anybody's eyes. It was not. I was not bringing him up to my level, but he refused to come down to my level, and he witnessed to me, and it stayed. You will never be sorry that you try to help someone out with their sin. You will never be sorry.

Romans 13:11 tells us it is high time to awake out of sleep. You know what is going on in Christianity today? We are asleep. We are dreaming that we are doing the right things. Folks, you think this is all of Christianity? "I go to Old Paths Baptist Church. You know what is good about

me? I have a King James 1611 Authorized Version." Really? Cool. So do I, but outside the doors of this building, that does not mean a thing to the lost world. It does not mean anything. It does not mean anything to your sick friend Lazarus who is dying from the sin in his life. That King James Bible never saved anybody. It is the words. It is the Gospel. It is the cure that Jesus Christ wanted us to have that saved anybody. Thank God I have a King James Bible to do it with, but this Bible never saved anybody. It is a Bible. It is instructions. It is God's Word. When I speak those words to another human being, I can solve any spiritual problem they have if I am willing to face it. But we are living in a different world today. We are dreaming that we are doing the right things because it is easier to dream doing the right things than it is to do it. Good is evil today. Evil is good. Welcome to the end times, folks. Welcome to it. I guess it has to happen, right? My Bible, my King James Bible, says that it has to happen.

John 11:14-17 then tells us something else about this unaddressed sin.

John 11:14-17

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

That unaddressed sin deepens over time. It went past the point of no return there. "He found that he had lain in the grave four days already." He had been dead. Okay, so now the illness, say I went and saw the doctor that morning, and he did not convince me to go into the hospital. I would have been in a foreign country for about ten days without access to real medical care. According to my doctor, who has been my doctor now for twelve years, I would be dead. Physically dead because I had other plans. You play with sin long enough, it gets you sick. But if you let it play long enough, it gets you dead.

I had a verse here, and a brother I was talking to yesterday got it out of here. But I was trying to use that verse that says that you were dead in trespasses and sins. That is a lost person. But there is just something about sin that will put your fire out. It will make you dead in a way. Make you dead to the work anyhow. If you are not doing the work, you are dead to it as far as I am concerned. Do not think this cannot happen to us. I mean, just read up on the judgment seat of Christ and show up with wood, hay, and stubble. Just leave the other crap home. Try that. You think there is going to be a good day? It is going to be a terrible day. All that wood, hay, and stubble you can gather while relaxing with a cold one on a Sunday morning, nursing a hangover. You bring that to the judgment seat of Christ, and Christians are going to do that. Christians are going to do it.

Lazarus is a picture of a man who knows the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not speaking of Lazarus himself; he is a picture of someone that knows the Lord Jesus Christ. He loves Christ. Christ

loves Lazarus. That is a settled matter. The Bible said so. Period. You are a Christian. You love Christ. Christ loves you. But do not think for a millisecond that Christ loves your sin. Do not even try to fool yourselves. He does not love your sin. Do not think He is going to sit there on that proverbial bar stool next to you drinking a cold one. He is not going to do it. "Oh, Lord Jesus, I pray that You give me someone on this bar stool that I could witness to." That is a weird prayer, is it not? He is not going to be there while you drink away your inheritance or smoke away your marriage or your children or your ministries or your jobs. He is not going to be there while you do that. You are not going to do it. He will not bless us if we are not in a place where He wants to bless us. He will not do it.

When our family cannot provide the answer, and our friends either cannot or will not or do not know we need an answer, we are left to ourselves. What we need is a daily dose, daily recommended allowance of God's Word. That is the first thing you throw away. I will tell you what, I am not sitting or staring at my Bible when I am thinking about the next sin I want to do. That is not how it works. It sits around long enough. We put a little sin in there. We become comfortable with it. So we have room for some more, and we add that. We become comfortable with that. So we add that, and we let it go on a little bit too far, and we get sick. Then we, like the Bat-signal, "Come on, Jesus, fix this!" Lazarus is a picture of a man just like that, but he let it go on just a little bit too far. He got a lot dead.

It is always the same thing from the very beginning. The story repeats itself over and over again. Cain is a great example. One of the last things Cain says is, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Really? You killed your brother. You killed your brother. "Oh, it is just harder than I can bear." His sin started out with just a little bit of disobedience, right? Then it worked its way up to pride, right? Then it worked its way up to murder. If he had stopped that disobedience, I wonder if Cain had had in his heart that he was not going to do what God said, there is disobedience. What if he repented of that, confessed that? Think about what could have been Cain's story. It could have been different. Now maybe Cain's could not have been different, but mine could. His sin started with just simple disobedience, went through pride, grew and festered until it became murder. Now he is facing the consequences. "Oh, it is just too much. I cannot bear it. This is not fair. I am quitting church. I have had enough of this, Jesus."

If you remember the story of Mary from Luke chapter 7, where she washes His feet and anoints His head with oil. Jesus says, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." This is a sinful woman who has repented of that sin. Instead of allowing it to fester, she expressed her love in the only way that she could at that moment in time. That is exactly what a Christian man or a woman does when they witness to people in sin, when they try to address the sin problem in their friend Lazarus. That is what a Christian ought to do. Instead, Cain just kicks it up a notch, and he has consequences. Oh, lo and behold, they are too much for him to bear. Adam had consequences. Abraham had consequences. Moses had consequences. Joshua had consequences. Who am I? I mean, I am nobody in their sight. I am going to have consequences too. It all matters when we get off that sin train and how far we want to go and how deep we want to go with it. For some, there is a point of no return. Lazarus seems to be a

picture of that person. Lazarus is a picture of a person in sin that lets it go beyond, so long he is beyond human intervention. No human could save him. No human could get to him.

You and I were once dead in trespasses and sins, but we were quickened. We were saved. We were brought back from the dead. We have already been brought back from the dead once. Do we believe it? Is it real to us?

V. The Cure and Lingering Consequences

I need to tell you this. Sin in our lives leaves evidence. You cannot hide it. Look at John 11:34-44.

John 11:34-44

And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept.

Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

I like this one. You may not see the effects of long-term unrepentant sin in your life, but it should still be obvious because it stinks. You stink. You reek of sin. You cannot help it. You smell everything. If you ever have a hard time identifying sin in your life, just use your nose. Sin reeks of sin. When something smells bad, it gets into everything. You cannot hide it. You put perfume on it, but it just smells like perfume and you stink. You have the little Poo-Pourri things in the bathroom. Nope. Nope. It does not work. It gets everywhere. Take someone who smokes. Okay, I will confess. I used to smoke about twenty-five years ago. I stopped. But their clothes smell.

Their houses smell. Their cars smell. Their kids smell. You cannot get rid of that until you quit smoking. But the strangest thing is, I never noticed the smell until I quit. I did not even know I stunk, but I stunk. Sin stinks. Even if you do not know you stink, you stink. The Bible said so. "He stinketh." The effects of sin permeate everything you do. It permeates your house, your attitudes, your relationships, your job, your children, your friends, your family, your co-workers. Everybody can smell that, and it affects them. It affects them. Again, you can put perfume on it. Try to mask it with something else. But right underneath that thing, it stinks. You cannot maybe see the effects. I mean, you show up dressed for church. Everything is cool. But my life stinks sometimes.

Even when we get out of sin, there is still a consequence to be paid. Look at John 11:40.

John 11:40

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." When He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Okay, cool. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

You are going to get out of the sin. Lazarus got a second chance. This is not exactly a picture of us. Well, maybe it is. He came out of that grave, but he came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes. Those are consequences. Hey, I got saved, but I had a lot of graveclothes wrapped around me that day. They did not go away right away. They stuck around for a while. He is free from the bondage of death. But the effects of his sin are still evident, like the diabetic that lost a leg. That is not sin, but I mean, I am trying to make a physical comparison. I would have lost my head. So my infection was in my head. That is why I am the way I am. That is my excuse. Anyway, he came out bound hand and foot. There are still consequences after he beat death, but he had not beat the sin yet. Did I give up smoking? Well, I was not smoking when I got saved, but I did not give up a lot of things until later, until they made me sick, until I noticed the symptoms. Someone pointed it out. I did not get this all by myself. Someone helped Lazarus.

There is a sequence of events here. Lazarus is a picture of someone in sin. He either would not or could not help himself. The people around him, the people around him that loved him, knew what he needed, but maybe they were not equipped to help. They knew the answer, but they could not apply it themselves. That sin lingered long enough to give him physical and spiritual consequences. He died. His only answer was Christ. Christ calls him from death to life, but he comes out bound with graveclothes, consequences. Then after that, Jesus said, "Loose him." It might not be six seconds after he gets saved. I know I have seen people, they get saved and they drop everything right then and there. I have seen it. It is not my experience. Maybe Roy. When Roy got saved, he dropped everything. Roy was weird, but he is a man who is important in my life.

VI. Call to Action: Living Out Our Belief in Resurrection

So now what do you do with all that? That is just a story. Lazarus is a picture of your friend, your friend in sin. He has been in it too long. He cannot get out. He will not or cannot. People around him will not help him or cannot help him. His alleged friends, who are really acquaintances and not friends, will not help him. They are giving excuses like, "I do not have enough time," or "There is plenty of time," or "Oh, Jesus, we have got to protect You. This is for Your own benefit." They do not want to disrupt the status quo for whatever reason, either they do not notice it, they cannot tell what it is, or they have the same problem. They do not want to address it. We hate light when we are in sin, but there is hope in that. It is the fundamental center of all Christianity.

If you are saved today, you have already been born again once. You have already gone from death to life. That problem is solved. The sin problem has not been solved yet because we still have this. We still have this flesh. So what do we do when someone's flesh gets the best of them? We do what we all do. We just tell everybody else that so-and-so is in sin, and that is what we do, right? Come on, tell the truth. But He calls us out of the depths of that sin, and He raises us from being dead in trespasses and sins. He seats us in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. How is it that we have trouble trusting Him to get us out of this sin that I am in today? How is that possible? I am a blood-washed, Bible-believing, King James-only Christian, standing before you right now. I know that I am going to Heaven someday. I know that I am seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and I cannot give up this. I cannot ask Him to help me give this up. Worse yet, I see that in one of you, and I cannot tell you. I cannot help you. "That is your problem." That is what Lazarus' friends were saying. "That is his problem. He got himself into that; let him get out. We have better things to do. I cannot be seen." Roy could have said, "I cannot be seen next to Bob. It is going to hurt my career. It will hurt my reputation." He sat next to me at lunch almost every day. He was so annoying. But you know what? Is that not good? I still remember him. This is thirty years ago now. This is almost thirty years ago, thirty years ago, some man I have not seen for at least twenty-five years. I still remember that man. I still remember that fourteen-year-old girl. I still remember that. Even though I did not want to hear it, those words stick.

You have done your job. You may never see that man or that woman get out of sin, but you did your job, and you go to the judgment seat clean on that one, or dirty, however you want to be. Do we really have the right to think that He cannot raise us out of that sin? If He can raise us from the dead once already, then if we are not here when He comes back again, how do we have the right to not apply that in every aspect of our everyday lives? If He is going to raise us from the dead someday, will He not pull us out of sin? A little verse we used to learn when I got discipled. I do not think it is there anymore. Maybe it is. 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Yeah, but not that man. Not Bob, not him." "Maybe he forgot, and I am not going to tell him, but I will tell these men over here. I will tell them over there. I will tell these ladies over here. Or maybe I will just tell Bob the pastor to deal with it." Okay, cool. Maybe that is better than doing nothing, but the Bible says that there is a three-step process for someone who is in sin. Do you know it? If you do not know it, you need to find out what it is.

Do we really believe that Christ rose from the dead or not? It is required. If you are a Christian today, you believe that. If you do not believe that today, you are not a Christian. You are dead in trespasses and sins, and you are going to hell, where I told Roy to go. Roy will not be there, by the way, but you might. If you do not believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, you are not a Christian. Bottom line. So let us go out of here today and lay claim to that promise and then live like it is a real promise. Let us live like it is real. These are not just stories. They are not just made-up characters in a story. These are people. Abraham was a person. Lazarus was a real person. He looked a lot like some of us. He lived and breathed, walked and talked, had fun, laughed, cried. Then one day he got sick, and the only cure for him was the Word of God. He either could not get it or would not get it, or no one would bring it to him, or the people that could have brought it to him did not see the problem for what it was because they had other agendas. So he died, and he came back. Jesus called him out of death, but he came back bound with the troubles that the sin left, the marks of that sin in his life that set him back for a while. For him, it was a matter of moments. For me, it was a matter of years. Those graveclothes stuck around for a while. Some of them are still there. I am not telling you where they are, but you already see them, but you have not told me about it yet. So, hey, my friends, "Our friend, Bob, sleepeth."

So let us go out of here with some sort of attitude of victory because if He is faithful in the big things, like raising from the dead, maybe He can help us with our little problems in our life. Maybe He can help other people with their little problems in life. When they have got their eyes off of Him, maybe you can get their eyes back on Him, but our current methods will not work. The current method of going around and telling everybody else, it does not work. By the way, if you were wondering if that works, it does not. Going directly to that person. If He is faithful in the big things, He will be faithful in the little things, not that any sin is little, but you know what I am talking about. Now, when someone attacks Christianity and you feel like you are losing ground, think on this. I do not even bother anymore. Christ came and died for my sins. He rose on the third day. He is coming back. If I do not believe that, nothing I can say is going to make me feel any better about telling some little bozo that tells me there is no Jesus Christ and that it is all a big story. I will tell him what Roy said. "Look, you know what? In the end, if it is all a big fairy tale, I will stack my life up against yours any day. But if I am right, you are in a lot of trouble."

Let us pray. Father, we just thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks for dying for us on that cross. Thanks for sending us this message of Lazarus. Lord, I pray, You know that I am not casting aspersions on Lazarus. I am making a picture of a man or a woman who has been in sin so long that it just takes over their life, and they get sick, and ultimately they die spiritually, physically. It does not matter, Lord, but thank You for calling us back from that death once and for helping us loose those graveclothes and those consequences of sin. Lord, I pray that we think on these things as we go out of here today. If we know another brother or sister who is having struggles in their life with sin, that we would be bold to go to them and bring this solution, the only cure that will work, Lord. We have it in our hands every day. We should put it in our hearts so that we can be ready with an answer for that person when they need it, just like Roy was for me, and just like that girl was for me so many years ago. I did not take that cure, but

I knew what it looked like when I finally had an opportunity. I thank You for them, and I thank You for this opportunity to preach Your Word. Again, I ask that You bring our pastor and our other folks home from New York safely. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.