

I AM Part 3: "The Resurrection and the Life" (11-19-2017)

This new series . . . As we begin to move towards Christmas this year, instead of exploring the Nativity, we will be looking at the **Identity & Mission** of the child that came into the world.

The series is titled: I AM . . . we will be exploring Jesus identity & mission through the eyes of the apostle John

There are 7 proclamations Jesus made in John's Gospel, about His Identity . . . The 7 "I AM" statements

There are 7 proclamations Jesus made in John's Vision (Revelation), to His People . . . The 7 letters to the churches

We will be looking at the connection between Jesus' Identity & Mission, and our own.

Today: Part 3 – "I AM The Resurrection and the Life"

John 11:25-26 (ESV)

(25) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, (26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11 Historical Context: Events from John 10-12 occur from winter (Dec) thru spring (April)

John 10 – Jews attempt to stone Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem in the wintertime at the Feast of Dedication (Festival of Lights/Hanukkah)

- Then Jesus leaves Jerusalem and heads to the region where John the Baptist baptized and ministered.

John 11 - Months pass and now Lazarus dies (a friend of Jesus along with his 2 sisters Mary & Martha)

- Jesus goes to Bethany (disciples fear for his life / on arrival Jesus encounters Martha our primary passage today / then Jesus weeps)
- Jesus raises Lazarus, and then the Jews again plot to kill Jesus (but now they see it through to the end)

John 12 - Jesus comes to Bethany again (6 days before Passover) – Mary anoints his feet & Judas gets upset

- Jews plot to kill Lazarus too
- Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

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Note:

- Jesus' essence is Resurrection and Life. He makes dead things come back to life & He keeps them that way!
- Jesus - Believe in me, you will die, yet you'll live. In fact if you believe, you never really die!
- Jesus – "Do you believe this?" we are asked this question while facing the reality of death, in fact in this case literally facing death, because Jesus is at a funeral.

Implications of Jesus being Resurrection & Life . . .

- **Jesus heals now** – he raises Lazarus from the dead. Guess what happened to Lazarus though, and for that matter everyone who ever lived. Therefore . . .
- **Death is a reality we all face** – it may come early, it may come quickly, it may come late (Alzheimer's), or slowly and painfully. But it will come.
- **Jesus is resurrection** – meaning he died.
 - Jesus can relate to suffering, pain, abandonment, death of loved ones, and even facing death himself.
- **Jesus is eternal life** – so he wins ultimately, this sustains us through suffering and reminds us of the bigger picture.
 - When Jesus asks us to put our faith in him about eternal life, he is asking us to do something he did. He trusted that he would be raised again.

Now this Jesus writes a letter to the Church at Smyrna in the Book of Revelation . . .

Notes on Smyrna: what is now the city of Izmir in modern day Turkey

Map of Smyrna (including the 7 other churches in Revelation & Patmos)

A city of Asia Minor, situated on the Aegean Sea, 40 miles north of Ephesus. Alexander the Great intended to re-found the city, but did not carry out his plan. It was left for one of his successors, who accomplished it in B.C. 290. The old city had been on a steep high hill on the N. side of the extreme eastern recess of the gulf; the new was planted on the S.E. shore of the gulf, about 2 miles away. The object of the change was to obtain a good harbor and a suitable point for the starting of a land trade route to the East.

In B.C. 195 Smyrna built a temple to Rome, and ever afterwards remained faithful to that State through good fortune and bad. Rome showed a thorough appreciation of this friendship and loyalty, and in A.D. 26 this city was preferred before all others in Asia as the seat of the new temple to be dedicated by the confederacy of that province to Tiberius.

The city was of remarkable beauty. Its claim to be the chief city of Asia was contested by Ephesus and Pergamum, but in beauty it was easily first. In addition to its picturesque situation it was commended by its handsome and excellently paved streets, which were fringed by the groves in the suburbs.

It did not become a Turkish city till Tamerlane captured it in A.D. 1402. Even now the Christian element is three times as large as the Muslim, and the Turks call the city Infidel Smyrna.

Revelation 2:8-11 (ESV)

(8) "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. (9) "'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. (10) Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (11) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

Notes: Jesus – the one who died & came to life

Jesus knows their current condition: Tribulation, Poverty, Slandered, Suffering, Imprisoned, Tested

Jesus knows their eternal condition: Faithful unto death, then they will receive a crown of life, and will not be hurt by the second death (judgment).

Smyrna & Myrrh – the preservative of the body (Mary pouring it on Jesus after Lazarus is raised)

Polycarp (Foxes Book of Martyrs) - Persecution under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 162

Marcus Aurelius, followed about the year of our Lord 161, a man of nature more stern and severe; and, although in study of philosophy and in civil government no less commendable, yet, toward the Christians sharp and fierce; by whom was moved the fourth persecution.

Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna and direct disciple of the Apostle John, was carried before the proconsul, and condemned to be burnt in the market place. The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee; reproach Christ."

Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?"

At the stake to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him; and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword, when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire.

Understand this . . . since Jesus & Lazarus – the story of Resurrection is scandalous, dangerous, and the most powerful truth if it's real.

The opposition has always understood this – hence the crucifixion of Jesus, and then guards at the tomb of Jesus, and all of the suffering and martyrdoms of the saints since then.

Let's look at the results of this gospel of the resurrection on the first established church . . .

Acts 4:32-35 (ESV)

(32) Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **(33) And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.** (34) There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold (35) and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Note: The result of a resurrection based gospel? The Church experienced Unity, Generosity, Power, and Grace.

Application Today:

- 1) Accept Him as Savior today! Jesus asks still today – “do you believe this?”
- 2) Trust Him for healing & rescue today
- 3) Hold onto Him through un-answered prayer & suffering (it's inevitable, we all die) - Lesson learned from Josiah: prayer of faith / patient in trust – believe for a miracle, trust God if you don't get one.
- 4) Always live in view of Eternity – we have a living hope!!
- 5) Share the Gospel of the death, burial, resurrection, and eternal life of Jesus

Further Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Philippians 3:7-11, 1 Peter 1:3-9