

Wednesday in Lent IV

3/18/26

"I Am the resurrection and the life"

John 11:17-27

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?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

"We now commit his/her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body, by the power that enable Him to subdue all things to Himself."

These words, from the graveside committal service, express the hope that we have in Christ. In death, our bodies return to the dust from which we came. But, our confidence is that Christ will raise our bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. What gives us that confidence? Jesus Christ, very God of very God, has authority over all things, even death and the grave.

As we continue looking at the "I Am" sayings of Jesus, tonight we hear Him say,

*"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".*

On a death certificate, there is a blank that needs to be completed, "Cause of death." Written into that blank, is accident or the name of an

illness, perhaps even crime. But, God's Word tells the truth of mortal flesh, *The wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23)*.

Paul says it this way in the book of Romans, *death spread to all men because all sinned (Ro 5:12)*. The cause of death for humans is sin.

"In the very midst of life, snares of death surround us," Luther writes. Then he adds, "Who shall help us in the strife let the foe confound us" {LSB 755:1}?

With merely a step between you and death, who will help us? Who is our helper in the midst of death?

Jesus, Jesus who says, *"I am the resurrection and the life"*.

Do you remember creation? God breathed His eternal life into us. God wanted us to live with Him forever and ever. There was no death in God's creation. But, we sinned. And, with that sin, came death.

Remember those ashes on your forehead Ash Wednesday. Those ashes are a reminder to you that, because of your sin, you will return to the dust from which you came.

We could not do anything about it. The advancement of medicine and technology may delay it. But, we can do nothing to keep ourselves from the grave. So, God, who is love, took it upon Himself to save us.

Jesus took our sin, our guilt, and our punishment upon Himself, upon His own body. Paul writes, *[God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin (2 Co 5:21)*.

Jesus died the death our sin demanded and was buried in the grave. But, on the 3rd day, Jesus rose in victory from the grave, bringing life and immortality to light for us poor sinners.

Christ's resurrection so important and comforting to us poor sinners because it means that all believers rise to eternal life in Christ. Paul says it

this way, *Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Co 15:20).*

When we are baptized, we rise to eternal life in Christ. The book of Romans reads,

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ... if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His (Ro 6:3, 5).*

Baptized and living in Christ, we are one with Him in His death and life.

Because Jesus gives us eternal life, we need not fear death. We can rejoice in the words of Paul,

*“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Co 15:55-56).*

There is the story of the family who went for a drive on a beautiful, sunny, warm Sunday afternoon. In order to enjoy the country air, they rolled down the windows of the car. Their enjoyment came to a sudden halt when a bee flew into the car and buzzed around the children in the back seat. At the very sight of that bee, their son began to cry, near hysterical. You see, he was not just afraid, he was allegoric to bee stings. To be stung, meant sickness, perhaps even death. The Father calmly and assuredly extended his open hand over the front seat until that bee landed on his palm. He shut his fingers around that bee and then opened them, allowing the bee to fly free. Then, and only then, did the father look at his sobbing son and say, “Its OK, Son.” Holding the palm of his open hand before his son, the stinger of the bee was embedded in the father’s hand.

That bee could not harm the son any more, because the father had removed the sting. This is what Christ did for us with His Easter resurrection, it removed the sting of death.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.