



THE ABUNDANT LIFE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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The Abundant Life

SERMON REFERENCE: John 11:25-26

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2474

In John 11, Jesus raises His friend, Lazarus, from the dead; this miracle is an illustration of the abundant life we can have in Jesus Christ, before and after death.

First, we must exercise faith in Jesus.

John 11:25-26 says, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die...’”

There are many walking about with beating hearts, yet they are dead because they’re alienated from God. They have existence but don’t have life.

Our society will try to raise us from our spiritual death by pushing examples for us to follow. People suggest we change our environment or get a good education. But death is still death; the secret of abundant life is salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

We can experience freedom through Jesus.

After Lazarus was raised, Jesus instructed Lazarus’ friends to loosen him from his graveclothes. (See John 11:43.) When we come out of the tomb, there are some things about our former life that we must shake off: old loves, sinful language, lusts. It may not happen immediately, but as we grow in grace, we will be unwrapped from our former ways.

We can enjoy fellowship with Jesus.

After Lazarus was raised from the dead, he sat down for a meal with Jesus. Once we put our faith in Jesus and experience freedom from sin, we can have fellowship with Him; He calls us friends.

Adrian Rogers says, “Being saved is not some sort of penalty that you pay to get to Heaven. When I invite you to come to Jesus, I’m not inviting you to a funeral; I’m inviting you to a feast.”

Finally, we must express our faithfulness to Jesus.

After Lazarus’s resurrection, he received death threats from those who wanted to deny Jesus’ power. But Lazarus could not be intimidated because he was no longer afraid of death. Realizing our souls are forever alive in Jesus Christ is the way to an abundant life.

Life Application

Do you exhibit abundant life in Jesus Christ? Is there something about you that cannot be explained apart from a miracle? Realize your witness today; be the example and evidence of abundant life in Jesus Christ.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Would you like to live victoriously?
- b) Would you like to live the way the Bible teaches?
- c) Many of us think that these sermons and lessons are something disconnected from us, and we have no intention of being truly changed by them.
 - i) The worship service at church is sort of a semi-entertainment and worship service, and we are not expecting to be changed.
- d) Disraeli: "Youth is a blunder, middle age is a struggle, and old age a regret."
- e) Shakespeare: "Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."
 - i) This is the way some people feel about life.
- f) Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly."
 - i) John 10:10
- g) John 11:25-26
- h) If we want to live before we die and live after we die, then there are four steps or principles that we can apply that will help us to have an abundant life.
 - i) This is not pop psychology.
 - ii) This is absolute truth from the Word of God.

2) EXERCISE FAITH IN JESUS

- a) When we exercise faith in Jesus, that is when life begins.
- b) John 11:25-26
 - i) If we exercise faith, then we will live forever.
- c) Lazarus was a man whom Jesus loved.
 - i) Jesus had some friends in Bethany.
 - (1) They were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
 - (2) They were very special to Jesus, and He would go and abide with them.
 - ii) John 11:1-45
 - (1) Lazarus got sick.
 - (2) Mary and Martha sent for Jesus to come and heal him, but Jesus delayed on purpose until Lazarus was dead.
 - (a) Mary and Martha scolded Jesus and asked why He hadn't come.
 - (i) Jesus knew what He was doing.
 - (3) Jesus told the people to roll away the stone to the tomb.
 - (4) Jesus called Lazarus out.
 - (a) John 11:43
 - (5) Out of the mouth of the tomb came Lazarus.
- d) Why doesn't God raise all of the dead?



- i) They are in a far better place than this.
- ii) This miracle is an illustration of our greater spiritual life.
- e) In John 20, John tells us why he gave us this miracle story.
 - i) There are seven miracle stories in the Gospel of John.
 - (1) Each one of them illustrates a special point about salvation.
 - ii) John 20:30-31
 - (1) This is why we must exercise faith in Jesus.
 - (a) That believing, we might have life in His name.
- f) There were many things right about Lazarus, but there was one thing that was wrong about him: he was dead.
 - i) It didn't make any difference how well they had him dressed, how much money he had in the bank, or how many friends he had.
 - ii) There are people today who do not know that they are dead, but they are dead in trespasses and sin.
 - iii) There are others who have loved ones who have gone to Heaven.
 - (1) We say that they are dead, but they are not dead.
 - (a) They are more alive than they have ever been.
 - (b) They are leaping, dancing, and praising Jesus face-to-face.
- g) We need to understand what death is.
 - i) Some people are dead, but their hearts are thumping, their blood is circulating, and their minds are thinking.
 - ii) 1 Timothy 5:6
 - (1) This passage is speaking of a person who has given his or her heart over to licentiousness.
 - (2) They are the walking dead.
 - iii) Ephesians 4:18
 - (1) They are alienated from God.
 - iv) Some are dead in trespasses and sin.
 - v) Some today have existence, but they don't have life.
 - (1) They may be dead and not know it.
- h) Jesus raised three from the dead:
 - i) He raised a little girl who had died.
 - (1) Luke 8:41-56
 - (2) She had just died.
 - (3) He told the people there to stay out of the room; they did not believe.
 - (4) Her body was still warm.
 - ii) He raised a young man on the way to his funeral.
 - (1) Luke 7:11-15
 - (2) The young man was on the funeral bier; he was being transported.
 - (3) His body was cold.
 - (4) Rigor mortis had set in.
 - iii) He raised Lazarus.
 - (1) John 11:1-45



- (2) Lazarus had been four days in the grave.
 - (a) Corruption had already begun.
 - (b) The stench of death was there.
- iv) Which one of the three (the little girl, the young man, or Lazarus) was the most dead?
 - (1) Dead is dead.
 - (a) It doesn't matter whether we are like that little girl or that young man or like Lazarus.
- i) Some of us have little children who are old enough to know Jesus.
 - i) These children are as lost as the worst criminal on the face of the Earth without Jesus.
- j) There may be degrees of corruption but not degrees of death.
- k) We need to stop comparing ourselves to other people and saying that we are better than they.
 - i) That is like a lot of dead people saying that he is more dead than I am.
 - ii) Dead is dead.
- l) Lazarus was raised from the dead and that takes a miracle of God to do that.
- m) Falsehoods about raising the spiritually dead:
 - i) By example.
 - (1) Many people think that what people need is a better example.
 - (2) Jesus did not come to be our example; He came to be our Savior.
 - (3) Salvation does not come by learning lessons from the life of Christ but by receiving life by the death of Christ.
 - (4) Examples are good, but they won't raise the dead.
 - ii) By encouragement.
 - (1) There are philosophers today who say that a person can do anything if he really applies himself.
 - (a) A dead man can't apply himself.
 - (i) We can encourage him all we want.
 - iii) By environment.
 - (1) If we take a dead man out of a cemetery and put him in a party, then he is still dead.
 - (2) Environment is not going to change anything.
 - (3) Environment will not raise the dead.
 - (4) Man got into difficulty in the best environment ever known, the Garden of Eden.
 - (5) Man needs more than environment.
 - iv) By education.
 - (1) Education is not going to change him; he needs a miracle.
- n) Jesus performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead with His Word.
 - i) John 11:43
 - (1) With His Word; He spoke.
 - (2) There is power in the Word of God.
 - ii) Philippians 2:16
 - iii) John 6:63
 - (1) The word "quickeneth" means "makes alive."
 - iv) The Word of God, the Bible, is the Word of Life.
 - v) The Word of Jesus brought Lazarus forth.
- o) Lazarus was already saved at this time.



- i) This wasn't when he was saved.
- ii) This was only an illustration that he had been saved.
- iii) He was saved by believing in Jesus before he went into the tomb.
- p) The secret of abundant life is to experience life and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

3) EXPERIENCE FREEDOM THROUGH JESUS

- a) John 11:44
 - i) Lazarus was wrapped round and round with linen very tightly.
 - (1) Wrapped like this, he couldn't work, he couldn't witness, and he couldn't praise.
 - ii) Jesus told those around him to loose Lazarus and let him go.
- b) Not only do we need life through faith in Jesus, but we also need liberty and freedom through Jesus.
- c) What our Lord wants to do once we are saved is to loose us.
 - i) Many of us, when we were saved, came out of the tomb with graveclothes on.
 - (1) We have things in our lives that don't leave immediately.
 - (a) We have some old loves, old language, or old lusts.
 - (2) We might even think that we are not saved because we still have the graveclothes on.
 - (a) We still had some things in our life that did not go away immediately: old loves, old language, old lusts.
 - (b) This doesn't mean that we are not saved.
 - ii) We have to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- d) James 1:21
 - i) In this verse, "to save your soul" means "to deliver your soul."
 - ii) "Superfluity of naughtiness" here means "that which is over, superfluid," or "that which is in excess," or "that which is left over."
- e) When someone is saved, that person receives life through the Lord Jesus Christ, but he has the graveclothes of the old life.
 - i) For example, someone is saved and hits his thumb with a hammer, and out come those old words he used to say.
 - (1) He wonders if he had been saved at all.
 - (a) If we have trusted Jesus and if we have exercised faith in Jesus, then we are saved.
 - ii) We need to initiate freedom in Jesus.
 - (1) "Loose him, and let him go."
 - (a) John 11:44
- f) One of the jobs of the church is to unwrap the saints.
 - i) There are a lot of people who do not have freedom.
- g) Jesus gives us life, and He gives us liberty.
 - i) He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free.
- h) John 8:32
- i) John 8:36

4) ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

- a) John 12:1-2



- i) Lazarus had gone from the tomb to the table.
- ii) They were having a banquet, and Jesus was there.
- iii) The Bible points out that Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus.
- b) Being saved is not some sort of a penalty that we pay in order to get to Heaven.
- c) When we are invited to come to Jesus, we are not invited to a funeral; we are invited to a feast.
- d) The Bible is full of feasts and stories of suppers.
 - i) John 21:12
 - (1) Jesus says, "Come and dine."
 - ii) Revelation 3:20
 - (1) Jesus will come in as the guest and then He will become the host.
 - iii) When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus bids us to come and have fellowship with Him.
- e) Jesus is a friend with whom we can feast and have fellowship.
 - i) The devil wants us to think negatively about God.
 - ii) God is good all the time, and He says to us, "Come and dine."

5) EXPRESS FAITHFULNESS TO JESUS

- a) There were some other people who did not like Lazarus.
 - i) John 12:9-11
 - (1) They had come to see Jesus, but they also had come to see Lazarus because he had been raised from the dead.
 - (2) The chief priests had threatened Lazarus with death.
 - (a) Death held no terror for Lazarus.
 - (i) When a man is no longer afraid to die, then for the first time he is ready to live.
 - (ii) Lazarus knew that he knew that Jesus was the resurrection and the life.
- b) Lazarus' testimony, loyalty, and faithfulness to Jesus caused many other people to believe in Jesus.
 - i) Lazarus exercised faithfulness in Jesus.
 - ii) The chief priests came to intimidate Lazarus.
 - (1) They told him not to speak in Jesus' name.
 - (a) That didn't slow Lazarus down at all.
 - iii) Are you exercising faithfulness to Jesus?
 - iv) Are you afraid of what people think?
- c) The best argument for Jesus and the best argument against Jesus is the life of a Christian.
 - i) People were saved because they could see in Lazarus supernatural life.
 - ii) What is there about you that is different than the rest of the people who live on your street?
 - iii) What is there about you that cannot be explained apart from a miracle?
- d) The only right we have to ask anyone else to believe in our Savior is something they cannot explain in our life.
 - i) We are to be witnesses.
 - ii) Not only are we to be witnesses, but we are also to be examples.
 - (1) We are the evidence as well as a witness of the changed life.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 5:17



- e) There was no way that they could intimidate Lazarus.
 - i) Death held no terror for him.
 - ii) He was disturbing to those who hated the Lord Jesus Christ by His faithfulness to Jesus.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) If you have not exercised faith in Jesus, then you need to do so.
- b) If you are still in graveclothes, then you need to get unwrapped.
- c) If you are not enjoying Jesus, then you need to be enjoying the Lord Jesus Christ and feasting with Him.
- d) You need to be loyal to Jesus.
 - i) Never be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) It is your changed life that is the best testimony of all.
- e) John 11:25-26
 - i) If you live and believe in Jesus, then you cannot die.
 - (1) You may move out of the body, but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 5:8
- f) There is nobody so bad he cannot be saved, and there is nobody so good he doesn't need to be saved.
 - i) Dead is dead, whether you are freshly dead or corrupting.
- g) Lazarus was not only a witness, but he was also part of the evidence of a transformed life.
- h) Jesus will save you, and He will keep you saved.
 - i) Jesus is not a probation officer; Jesus is a Savior.
 - ii) He will see you through all the way.
 - iii) You might have to be unwrapped.
 - (1) You might have some hangover sins for a while, but He will save you.
- i) The one who gives you life will also give you liberty.
- j) You can feast with Him and be a witness for Him.
- k) Psalm 107:2
- l) Luke 9:26
- m) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- n) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Take God's precious Word, if you would, and turn to John chapter 11. John chapter 11, and I want us to look at a couple of verses as we begin, and then we're going to go back and look at more verses in detail.

How many of you would like to live victoriously? I mean, how many of you would like to live the way the Bible teaches? Now so many of us think that these sermons and these lessons are something disconnected with us, and we have no more intention of being truly changed by them than we have being changed by some program that we watched on television. And so, the worship service is sort of a semi-entertainment and worship service, but you're not expecting to be changed. And Disraeli said that, "Youth is a blunder, middle age or manhood a struggle, and old age a regret." And Shakespeare said, and I know all of us are wonderful students of Shakespeare, but I did find this quote. Shakespeare said that life is, "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Well, that's what some people feel about life. But Jesus said in John 10:10, "I've come that you might have life, and have it abundantly."

Look at this passage here now in John 11 verse 25 and 26, "Jesus said unto her, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?'" Now, folks, if you want to live before you die and live after you die, then I want to tell you four steps now that you might take, four principles that you might apply that will help you to have truly an abundant life. Now this is not pop-psychology; this is absolute truth from the Word of God.

Number one: you must **exercise faith in Jesus**. That's when life begins. John 11 verses 25 through 26, "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.'" Now Jesus said, "You exercise faith and you will live forever."

Now Lazarus was a man that Jesus loved. Jesus loved to go to a home there, just over the Mount of Olives. I've visited that place many times in Bethany. And He had some friends there: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. And they were very special to Jesus. And Jesus would go and abide with them. And then Lazarus got sick. You know the story. They sent for Jesus to come and heal him, but Jesus delayed, on purpose, until Lazarus was dead. And they scolded Jesus. Mary, Martha said, "Why didn't You come?" And Jesus said, "I know what I'm doing." And then He said to those people, "Roll away the stone." And look in John 11 verse 43, "And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.'" And out of the mouth of that tomb came Lazarus.

Now why this miracle? Why doesn't God raise all of the dead? I mean, can we just in the name of Jesus, raise up the dead? No. We wouldn't bring them back if we could, and couldn't if we would. They're in a far better place than this. So why did this miracle take place? It is an illustration. It is an illustration of our greater spiritual life.

Now in John chapter 20, you might put this in your margin, verses 30 and 31, John tells why he gave this miracle story. As a matter of fact, there are seven miracle stories in the Gospel of John. Now Jesus did many other things, but John takes seven of them, from changing water into wine right on to the raising of Lazarus, and each one of them illustrates a special point about salvation.



Now look if you will in John 20 verses 30 and 31, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” That’s the reason I’m saying that first of all you must exercise faith in Jesus. That believing, you would have life in His name.

Now, Lazarus was dead. Now there were many things right about Lazarus, but there was one thing wrong about him: he was dead. It didn’t make any difference how well they had him dressed. It didn’t make any difference how much money he had in the bank. It didn’t make any difference how many friends he had. He was dead! That’s the one thing that was wrong with him. He was dead! Now, the sad thing is that there’re people in this congregation that are dead. You don’t know you’re dead, but you are dead. You’re dead in trespasses and sin. There’re others of you which have loved ones who’ve gone to Heaven. You say, “They’re dead.” They’re not dead; they’re more alive than they have ever been. Leaping and dancing and praising Jesus face to face. We need to understand what death is.

I had a dear friend in Fort Pierce, Florida. He was a great man of God. His name was Charles Fisher. Everybody called him Uncle Charlie. Uncle Charlie was one of the most eccentric, lovable, courageous men that I’ve ever known. He’s just a little, wiry guy about that high, but oh, he was so excited about Jesus. There came a time for Uncle Charlie to die, and Uncle Charlie said to his son, Lee, he said, “Now when you have my friends there, invite all of my friends, the saved and the lost. Invite them to my funeral.” And he said, “When they’re all there, you don’t have to do anything else, just push the button on this tape player. That’s it. That’s my funeral. Just push the button on this tape player.” And Lee was going to obey his daddy. And this was a man I knew and loved very much. And so Uncle Charlie was gone to Heaven, and Lee pushed the button on the tape player. And it said, “Hello, friends. This is Uncle Charlie. I’m up here in Heaven. It’s wonderful in Heaven. I want you to come to Heaven with me, and here’s the way that you can know the way to Heaven.” He preached his own funeral. Preached his own funeral, because he was not dead really. He, being dead, lives.

Now there’re some people who are dead, and some dead people in this building. Your heart is thumping. Your blood is circulating. Your mind is thinking. But you’re dead. Do you know what the Bible says in First Timothy chapter 5 verse 6? “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she lives.” She that liveth in pleasure. That is, a person who has given his or her heart over to licentiousness, they are the walking dead. Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 18, put it in the margin. He speaks of these, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God.” Just dead, alienated from the life of God.

I had another friend, Byron Richardson. Byron was the Associate Director of Evangelism for the Texas Baptist Convention. He told a story that I think I shared with you a long time ago, but it’s so poignant to what we’re talking about right now. Byron and his wife were having a vacation, and they were driving through the Great Smoky Mountains. You know how beautiful that is. Well, his wife looked over at the gas gauge and said, “Byron! We need to stop and get gas.” “Oh,” he said, “we got plenty gas. Don’t worry about that.” How many of you men have done that? “We’ve got plenty gas. Don’t worry ‘bout that.” And so they’re driving through the Great Smoky Mountains, and they got out of where the town was, and they got into this national forest or park or whatever is there. I think they call The Blue Ridge Parkway. And he’s going on this thing, and his wife has gone off to sleep, and the sun has gone down, and he’s looking at this gas gauge, and it’s about to move all the way over to the left-hand peg. So he says, “I’ll stop and get some gas.” But there’s a major problem. There were no gas stations. He’s out there alone with his wife, but no gas stations. And he begins to panic. He said, “O God, if we run out of gas on this dark road out here, my wife will kill me. She told me, she told me to get gas. Please, God.” But there was not a gas station nowhere.



And finally he saw a little country store. And there was a light on inside, and there was one single, solitary gas pump out in the front. And it was one of these old kind that, you know, they put in collector's items with the tube on the outside and so forth. "Oh, oh," he said, "I hope that's not just decoration." He pulled in and he asked the mountaineer there, "Do you sell gasoline?" He said, "Yep." He said, "That's wonderful. I want some gas." And the old man came out, the mountaineer, and began to put the gas in the gas tank. And Byron just thought, "Oh, this is wonderful. Look at this mountain air. Lord, it's so wonderful." And he said to the man, "It's great to be alive, isn't it?" The mountaineer never even lifted his head. He said, "I don't know. I've never been any other way." Well, friend, I want to tell you, I have been another way. I was dead in trespasses and sin, and I can tell you it is great to be alive. Some of you today have existence but you don't have life. Now, you may be dead and not know it. You may think, "Well, the dead people are those people into drugs and prostitution and all of that."

Do you know that Jesus raised three from the dead? He raised a little girl who had just died, He raised a young man on the way to his funeral, and He raised Lazarus, those three. Now you think about that in Luke chapter 8 and verses 41 through 56. How did He raise that little girl? She had just died. And Jesus went back there in the bedroom and said, "All the rest of you just stay out. You don't believe." But Jesus took that little girl and said, "Darling, get up!" That's what He said, "Young maiden, arise. Darling, just get up." She woke up. Her body was still warm. And then in Luke chapter 7 in verses 11 through 15, Jesus raised a man, a young man. He was on the way to the funeral. He was on the funeral bier. He was being transported. Now he was dead also, but his body was cold. Rigor mortis had set in. And Jesus raised him. And then in John 11:39, Jesus raised Lazarus. Lazarus had been four days in the grave. Corruption had already begun. The stench of death was there. And God raised Lazarus.

I want to ask you a question: which one was the most dead? Dead is dead, friend. Dead is dead. It doesn't matter whether you were like that little girl or like that young man or like Lazarus. Dead is dead. Now some of you have little children in your home who are old enough to know Jesus. Maybe you have a granddaughter. I want to tell you, that granddaughter is as lost as the worst criminal on the face of this Earth without Jesus. There may be degrees of corruption, but not degrees of death. Dead is dead. So you need to stop comparing yourself to other people and saying, "I'm better than him. I'm better than her." That's like a lot of dead people saying, "You're more dead than I am." Dead is dead. Lazarus was raised from the dead. And that takes a miracle for God to do that.

Now friend, how do you raise a dead man, anyway? How would we do it? Well, if we got the social engineers today, they would try the four big E's. Here's what they are: "E" number one: by **example**. And everybody thinks, "What everybody needs is a better example. Let Jesus be our example." Jesus did not come to be your example, He came to be your Savior, and salvation does not come by learning lessons from the life of Christ, but receiving life by the death of Christ. And so many people think, "Well, everybody needs a better example." I like examples. Examples are good, but they won't raise the dead.

Then other people say, "Well, to raise the dead is by **encouragement**." Now we have a dead man out here, and we want to raise him, we say, "Come on, boy. Get up! You can do it! Atta boy, come on. You can do it!" You know we have these philosophers today who say you can do anything you want to do if you just really apply yourself to it. Well, a dead man can't. You can encourage him all you want.

And then another person says by **environment**. We need to change the environment. Well, if you take a dead man out of a cemetery and put him in a party, he's still dead. Environment's not going to change anything. Now I believe in a good environment. And I'm, in many degrees, an environmentalist. But I'm about 95%; these other 5% whackos, they bother me. And I like a good environment. But environment will



not raise the dead. I want to tell you, friend, man got into difficulty in the best environment ever known, the Garden of Eden. Man needs more than environment.

Others say, "Well, the answer is **education**. Give him a good education. Give him twenty lessons on life." That's not going to change him. He needs a miracle.

So Jesus comes to Lazarus. Lazarus is dead. And Jesus is ready to perform that miracle. And how does He do it? Well, He does it with His Word. In John 11:43, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." I want to tell you one thing. I wasn't there, but I know this much about it. Every eye was riveted on the mouth of that tomb when Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." And how did He raise Lazarus? Listen very carefully. With His Word. With His Word. He spoke. Oh, the power of the Word of God. Philippians chapter 2 verse 16 calls it, "The Word of Life." John chapter 6 verse 63, Jesus said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," that is, makes alive, "the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." They are spirit and they are life. Friend, look up here. Here's the Word of God and it is the Word of life. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." What brought Lazarus forth? The Word of Jesus, when He says, "Lazarus, come forth."

Now Lazarus was already saved at this time. That wasn't when he got saved. That was only an illustration that he has been saved, because he was saved by believing in Jesus before he went into that tomb. And he heard the voice of Jesus, saying, "Come forth." Now what is the secret of abundant life? It is to experience life and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, secondly, not only should we have life through faith, but we need **freedom through Jesus**. Look if you will in John chapter 11 now and verse 44. I love this. And the Bible says, "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. And Jesus saith unto them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'" I love that. Now look, folks, you talk about a horror movie. I don't know what Hollywood could do with this. Here is Jesus saying, "Lazarus, come forth!" Now remember he is wrapped round and round and round and round with linen very tightly. And he comes out of that grave. Can you imagine what that must have been like? Now here's this man, the one they thought was dead, the one they thought whose body was already decaying. He walks out of the grave. Now like that he couldn't work, he couldn't witness, he couldn't sing, he couldn't praise. He's all wrapped up. He's all tied up. You would not have wanted to have him home for dinner like that with the stench of death on him. But Jesus, looking at him, said to those round about, "Loose him, and let him go." Now not only do we need life through faith in Jesus; we need, friend, liberty and freedom through Jesus. We need to experience freedom through Jesus.

Now, what our Lord wants to do once we get saved is to loose us. You know, many of us, when we got saved, we came out of the tomb with the graveclothes on. And you know that is true. You have some things in your life, and they didn't leave immediately. You had some old loves. You had some old language. You have some old lusts. And you might even think that you're not saved because you still have the graveclothes on. That doesn't mean you're not saved. You've got to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Put in your margin James chapter 1 verse 21, "Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul," that is, deliver your soul. Now there's a word in there that I know that you're going to use every day, "superfluity of naughtiness." You use that all the time, don't you? Well, what does that mean? It means that which is over, superfluid. It means that which is in excess. And it literally means "that which is left over." Now, see, when we get saved, we receive life through the Lord Jesus Christ, but all of us have the graveclothes of



the old life. Maybe you got saved and you hit your thumb with a hammer and out came those old words. Or you're in a grocery store and there's some salacious literature and your eye wants to go to it. And you wonder, "Lord, have I been saved at all?" Yes, if you've trusted Jesus. If you have experienced, exercised faith in Jesus, then you're saved. But what you need to do now is, friend, initiate freedom in Jesus. "Loose him, and let him go."

Do you know what the job of this church is? For one thing, it's to unwrap the saints. There're a lot of people here who need to be unwrapped. There're a lot of people here who do not have freedom. I want tell you about Jesus. The One who gives us life, gives us liberty. "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me." Jesus said in John 8 verse 32 "You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Wouldn't you like to be free? I mean, have liberty in the Lord Jesus Christ? John 8 verse 36 "If the Son, therefore, makes you free, ye shall be free indeed." Well, I want to be free, and free indeed.

Now here's a third thing. Here's a third thing. I'm going to give you four of them. Number three: I want you to **enjoy fellowship with Jesus**. Life from Jesus, liberty through Jesus, and now fellowship with Jesus Christ. Enjoy fellowship with Jesus. John chapter 12 verses 1 and 2, "Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead," past tense, "whom He raised from the dead. And there they made Him a supper, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." Now he's gone from the tomb to the table. They're having a banquet. And Jesus is there. And Lazarus is there. And the Bible points out that Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus. It's hard to know who was the guest of honor that day, whether it was Jesus or Lazarus. Can you imagine the fellowship there must have been at that table?

Now let me tell you something. Being saved is not some sort of a penalty that you pay in order to get to Heaven. When I invite you to come to Jesus, I'm not inviting you to a funeral; I'm inviting you to a feast. You know, the Bible is full of feasts, stories of suppers. In John 21 verse 12, Jesus is saying, "Come and dine. Come and dine." Revelation 3:20 says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will have supper with him, and he with Me." "I'll come in as the guest, and then I'll become the host." You see, when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, friend, Jesus bids you to come and have fellowship with Him.

So, the first step is, you put faith in Jesus. Then you have freedom through Jesus. And then you have fellowship with Jesus. Are you having that fellowship? And, I can tell you Jesus is as real to me as that man sitting over there and those two guys over there, just that real. I don't see Him, but Jesus is a friend. And I feast with Him and fellowship with Him. Oh, if you only knew, if you only knew. You know what the devil wants to do? The devil wants to get you thinking negatively about God. Precious friend, God is good all the time, and He's saying to you, "Come and dine. Come and dine."

Now here's the fourth thing I want you to see. You need to **express faithfulness to Jesus**. Now Jesus is there having a meal with Lazarus, but there were some other people there who didn't like Lazarus at all. Look if you will in John chapter 12 verses 9 through 11, "Much people, of the Jews, therefore, knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He raised from the dead." Now they came to see Jesus. They also came to see Lazarus because he had been raised from the dead. Now notice in verse 11, "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death." This is a joke, friend. "That they might also put Lazarus to death, because, that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus." Now the reason I say it's funny to me, they had threatened Lazarus with death. Lazarus said, "Been there, done that. Now what's next?"



I mean, look, death held no terror for Lazarus. When a man is no longer afraid to die, for the first time he's ready to live. Lazarus knew that he knew that Jesus was the resurrection and the life. And Lazarus and his testimony and his loyalty and faithfulness to Jesus caused many other people to believe. He was exercising faithfulness in Jesus. When they came to intimidate him, these chief priests and so forth, said, "You can't speak in His name." That didn't slow Lazarus down at all. And I want to ask you today, are you exercising faithfulness to Jesus? You afraid of what people think? You don't want to carry your Bible to work? You don't bow your head in a restaurant and pray and thank God because you're afraid that somebody might be looking, somebody might be watching? Friend, let me tell you something: the best argument for Jesus and the best argument against Jesus is the life of a Christian. They came to see Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. And there were people being saved because they could see in Lazarus' supernatural life.

What is there about you that is different than the rest of the people who live on your street? What is there about you that cannot be explained apart from a miracle? The only right that we have to ask anybody else to believe in our Savior is something they cannot explain in our life. You see, we're to be witnesses. But not only are we to be witnesses. Friend, we're to be examples. I mean, we are the evidence, as well as the witness. The changed life. Is your life changed? Second Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I want to say again, there was no way that they could intimidate Lazarus. Death held no terror for him. He is disturbing those who hated the Lord Jesus Christ. His faithfulness to Jesus.

Now let me just kind of wrap this up today and talk about the abundant life that we have. We exercise faith in Jesus. We experience liberation through Jesus. We enjoy fellowship with Jesus. And then we exhibit faithfulness to Jesus. That's all right here. That's what we do.

Now what does that mean to you? What does it mean to me today? Is this just a sermon? You say, "Pastor, I got the outline down." No. Listen. God is speaking to you today. If you've not exercised faith in Jesus, you need to do so. If you're still in the graveclothes, you need to get unwrapped. If you're not enjoying Jesus, you need to be enjoying the Lord Jesus Christ and feasting with Him. And you need to be loyal to Jesus. Never, never, never, ever be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's your changed life that is the best testimony of all.

Now what is the message here? Well, it's what I read to you to begin with. John chapter 11 verses 25 through 26, "Jesus saith unto her, 'I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?'" Now, listen, you're looking at a man who cannot die. Go look in the mirror and say, "That person cannot die." If you live and believe in Jesus, you cannot die. You may move out of the body, but Second Corinthians 5:8 says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

I told what I'm about to tell now on a cruise ship one time, and a man wrote a song about it. Went to the top of the charts. It was called, "My Name is Lazarus." And I just imagine the paralyzed man in the Bible who was brought to Jesus on a stretcher. And this man was totally paralyzed. Now this is all just my imagination, but I think you'll get the point. And this man is so pessimistic; he thinks there's no hope for him. And one man on one corner of the stretcher said, "Look. I was blind and Jesus opened my eyes." He said, "But I'm paralyzed all over." Another one said, "Look! I had a withered hand and Jesus straightened my arm and my hand." And the man said, "But I'm paralyzed all over." Another said, "I was deaf and Jesus opened my ears." He said, "But I'm paralyzed all over. There's no hope for me." Then the fourth man steps up and says, "My name is Lazarus." Come on, you didn't get it. "My name is Lazarus!" And if Jesus can



raise the dead, He can save anybody here today. Anybody. There's nobody here so bad he can't be saved, nobody so good he doesn't need to be saved. Dead is dead, whether you're freshly dead or corrupting. Friend, Lazarus was not only giving a witness, he was part of the evidence, a transformed life.

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. Now, have you exercised faith in Jesus? Have you? Well, this is the time for you to do it. I want to tell you on the authority of the Word of God that Jesus will save you today and He will keep you saved. Jesus is not a probation officer; Jesus is a Savior. He will see you through all the way. Now you might have to be unwrapped. You might have some hangover sins for a while. But He will save you, and the One who gives you life will give you liberty. And you can feast with Him and you can witness for Him.

Now you might be a boy or a girl, and you're not saved. Let me help you to be saved. You might be an older person. You might think I'm too late for this. It's never too late with God. Let me invite you to pray a simple prayer. Pray like this; "Dear God, I am dead in trespasses and sin. I want a new life. I want to be saved so I can have fellowship with You and live with You. Jesus, You said You're the resurrection and the life. If I would believe in You, I would never die. I do believe in You, Jesus. Right now, right now in this chair, I receive You as my personal Savior and Lord. Forgive my sin and save me, Lord Jesus." Pray it from your heart. Exercise faith in Jesus. "Save me, Lord Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then by faith I want you to thank Him. Don't look for a sign or ask for a feeling. Just stand on His Word and thank Him this way, "Thank You, Jesus, for saving me. You're now my Lord and Savior. Teach me to love You, teach me to serve You. And help me, Lord, never to be ashamed of You. In Your holy name, Amen."



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