



Sermon
Rev. Lang Yang

"Whoever Lives and Believe in Me Will Never Die"

5th Sunday in Lent
St. Michael's Lutheran Church
3-29-2020

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

John 11:25-26, *"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* This is the Word of God. (Cross-reference – John 1:4; 3:16; 5:21, 26, Colossians 3:4, Revelation 1:18 – Vs. 26 John 6:47, 50-51, 58; 8:51)

Illustration "Cemetery" (Show casket at gravesite)



It is tough when someone you love dies. Either the person dies too young – new birth, youth, or at an old age. Many of you have lost someone very dear to you, and it has left you devastated. When you are at the cemetery, it may be an easy place for you to openly weep while receiving comfort from your friends and accept their condolence. But it is very hard for you to say, *"I believe the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."* A cemetery is the hardest place to confess and believe.

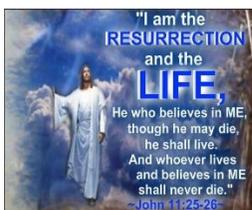
I. Why is it that it's so hard for us to say something so important during our most grievous moment. Is it simply because our emotions get the best of us? Is it merely because we're afraid of saying the wrong thing, so we don't say anything at all. You see, a cemetery is a hard place to confess because it seems like the enemy public trophy showcase. Every tombstone appears to be another medal that death had conquered life. (Show a knockout punch)



No matter how valiantly we fight for life, death always comes out on top. Death always throws a knockout punch. Death always seems to win the gold. Death will say, *"O you mortal, have lost."*



What I just said appear and looks to the naked human eyes. But looks, however, can be quite deceiving, can't they? The naked human eyes see the cemetery, coffin, the corpse – man is easily deceived into thinking that death has won, once again. That is what our eyes see, and our mind thinks that it is the end through the deception of death.



But to see beyond the cemetery, the coffin, the corpse to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, we need to believe from the mouth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and He said *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die..."* (John 11:25-26) By believing and trusting His Word, a cemetery is not as a place of defeat but a place of victory.

In our lesson, we have Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom all were very good friends of Jesus whom Jesus love. But Lazarus fell ill, and his sister sent for Jesus. They waited and waited, and finally, Jesus

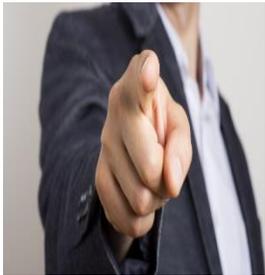
came, but it was too late. Lazarus was already dead. The sickness moved in quickly, but Jesus had moved too slowly. The funeral rituals of Jesus' day were different than ours. (Show burial tomb)



When someone died, there was no embalming, but immediately the body was wrapped in linen clothing and put into the burial vault, a limestone carved into a limestone rock. Then around the heavy stone was placed at the entrance to keep the burial tightly lock. There were intense mourning for seven days and less intense mourning for twenty-three more days. But the first seven days were days of intense grief and crying. But little did the people know that their Lord was

allowing death to suck their hearts dry, that He might fill those empty hearts with the fullness of faith in Him. (Show pointing finger)

II. When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, it seemed that everyone was pointing an accusing finger at Him.



Mary and Martha both said in a different time, *"If only you have been here, my brother would not have died."* (John 11:21, 32) When Jesus tells Martha that her brother shall rise again, she responds, *"I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* (Vs. 24) In saying Martha confessed the truth, but she did not confess the whole truth. Similarly, we sometimes pointing fingers and blaming others if they would have come; none of this would have happened to the one that we love. We didn't confess what we believe is not the whole truth, either. We made it appear to the outside that we are a follower of Christ when we

are with others Christian, but when we are around friends, we forgot that we are his child. But the truth is that we can't just believe halfway. We need to believe 24/7 that salvation is here and now that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. (Show people weeping around Jesus)



When Jesus reached the people and saw Mary weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. (Vs. 33) Our lives many times, when we see death, we also feel the pain of sadness. It is similar to what Jesus feels because the friend that he loves to die and all his friends cried because they also lost a friend.

Their hope was lost; even Jesus was among them. Their death ceases no matter. There was no need to wait for the Last Day of the resurrection of the body. Their friend Lazarus was four days in the grave and already start to decay. (Show Jesus encourage about God's glory)



When Jesus asked them to take away the stone, Martha told her Lord and said, *"by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."* (Vs. 39) Then Jesus said, *"Did I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"* (Vs. 40) Truth be told amid that crowd gather at the cemetery, the only one who completely believed in Christ was the dead Lazarus. He alone truly heeded the voice of Christ. Mary had heard, Martha had heard, the crowd had heard, but their heart was still crowded with doubt and grief.

III. Brother and sister in Christ Jesus, His word to you today as he said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25-26) (Show Jesus raise Lazarus from the tomb)



We have His Word, do you believe it? Lazarus heeded the Word of Christ. Jesus said, "*Lazarus, come out!*" (Vs. 43) Jesus called out, and the dead man came out. The dead man Lazarus was ripped from the arms of death by the one whom death could not hold in the tomb. He, who is the Resurrected, raise Lazarus to life. Lazarus now lives as a living proof of victory over death.

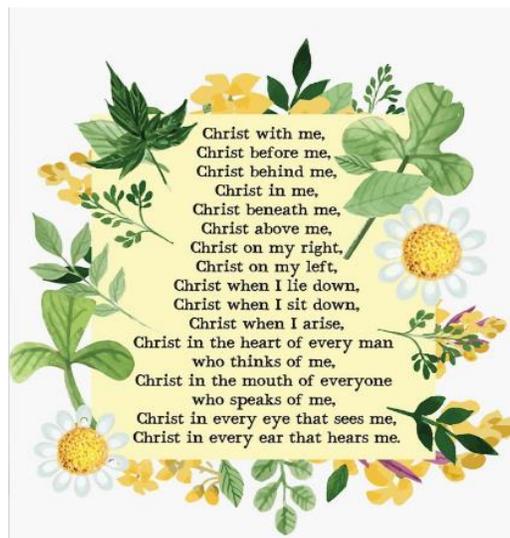
Each time people see a cemetery, it is a hard place to confess and believe Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. (Show Jesus resurrect from the grave)



Jesus overcomes sin, death, and the devil so that you may have life through Him. In the wake of human suffering and death, we stare at the enemy's face with loss, heartache, and defeat. But when we look to Christ, He had faced all the heartache, pain, and suffering on the cross for you. Christ is the one who has been crucified to earn our forgiveness, who sheds His blood, die, and went to the grave then exits through the tomb alive again to provide the hope for you and me that we will resurrect even our body die. Christ is the one for our forgiveness, who is our salvation, and who is our resurrection. In an ancient prayer of St. Patrick, it said:

<https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/st-patricks-breastplate.html> (Show St. Patrick Prayer)

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me,



May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, continue to grant you unto all eternity because you believe in Him and will never die. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.