

Gospel of John (2nd Yr Study 6 of 19, Chap 11 Cont)

by G.W. North

The sermon explores John 11, emphasizing Jesus as the resurrection and the life, and the transformative power of faith in the face of death.

Duration: 51:50

Scripture: John 1:4, John 6:35, John 8:1-11, John 10:7-9, John 10:40, John 11:25, John 11:43-44

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the climactic statement made by Jesus in John 11:25, where he declares, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' The preacher highlights the significance of this statement by connecting it to the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus not only brings physical life to Lazarus but also imparts new human life to him. The sermon also mentions how Jesus went back to the place where John first baptized, emphasizing the importance of John's role in preparing the way for Jesus.

Transcript

We are in the eleventh chapter. Now I must confess this really is a favourite chapter of mine. But if you said which is your most favourite chapter in the Bible I wouldn't know which one to say really.

But this one is a great one. Now remember in the end of chapter ten we had Jesus retiring from this scene of confrontation in the temple. You know he did it earlier when he met the woman taken in adultery, left them and then came back into the temple again and all kinds of things like this.

There are times when Jesus terminated an action or an interview or what you will and went away and teaching. Now God is going to teach us from this. He's gone away, right away and he goes back to the place you will notice.

He went back to John verse forty of the tenth chapter where John at first baptised, where he was baptised in water first time. Alright. And many went to him there and he didn't do anything else much but just believed, never performed any miracles particularly but everything that John has been convinced about the person, not in what he says, not in what he did in the person.

For John was the man that was like the door that let Jesus into the race and what did he come for? Now he came for this climactic statement that we find in this eleventh chapter. For you will know that the Lord Jesus made certain. I am the good shepherd, I am the door of the sheep, I am this, I am the bread of life.

One thing or another went all the way, started off with I am the light. Okay. The light shines in darkness and so on.

Okay. Now he has come to the point of extreme darkness of Lazarus in the tomb. And he is going to make his climactic statement in this chapter.

I am the resurrection and the life. That was his climactic statement. Wonderful.

He has pointed them on beyond the grave in that statement. Lazarus was dead. I am the resurrection and the life.

Lazarus comes out of the tomb and Jesus has imparted to Lazarus new human life. Alright. To do with his own death and resurrection but I am not going to dwell too much on that.

I am going to gallop through this. I am going to try and reach the end. If I can and it is one of the long chapters.

Here we are. Now. A certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany.

I would like you to know that this word Lazarus by connection in the Greek is connected with leprosy. I don't want to give you a lecture on words. That's not the point.

But it is. Whether he was one of these clean lepers I do not know. In that you will know that when leprosy has gone through and sometimes it does.

It's deadly work in human beings. They become in the terms of the Old Testament a leper as white as snow. Have you ever read that? You are Bible readers aren't you? He was a leper as white as snow.

The disease had run its course. Left him white from head to foot. Hair, skin and everything.

Then he could stay among the people. Move in and out. Had been a leper.

But somehow he didn't pass on his disease anymore. What a marvelous thing this is. So just keep that in mind.

But this will count when we get to chapter 12. But store that up in your memory. Because I hope to be taking chapter 12 with you someday.

While I'm here. It says it was Bethany where the man was sick. And Bethany, again, as you will know, was a marvelous thing.

Jesus moved. Every inch he walked. Everywhere he went.

Everything he did is important in situation. For instance, Bethany in the Hebrew and Greek means the house of ripe figs. Now you just keep that.

And you think of Lazarus, Martha and Mary as ripe figs. All right? You think of them. But look, how wonderful this is.

Oh, I'm not going to get through this. I want to tell you what's in my heart. Not what I'm strictly according to curriculum supposed to be doing.

They all know that anyway. I'm not kicking over the traces. It's just this.

I think my mission in life, if I have one, by God's grace, is to teach you God. Not so much the Bible. All right.

Look at what it says. And you think of the town in which you live. In your native land.

Unless you live out in the country in which you're, of course, you're very blessed if you do. That town was the town of Mary and her sister Martha. Fancy having the town where you live named after you.

It wasn't what men had built or the importance of the town in men's eyes. It was just that these two choice women lived there. Made the town for Jesus.

He chose that town. And finally, Martha and Mary and, of course, Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead, as to be, if you like, his headquarters from which he went from day to day in Jerusalem and back at night. Until he went to Jerusalem for the last time as a captive and was crucified.

He was seeking out his home of love. His home, shall we say, of headquarters from which he directed his own deaths. Don't you think the Romans hatched it up? Don't you think the Jews did? We look at the part they played, it's what God was doing.

Because he came from the home of love originally when he was born into a manger. All right. That was the town.

I love it. If God called this city, called Birmingham, the place where Derek and Barbara live. I love it.

Or your town, only significant to God where you live. Because you live there. It was their town.

The authorities wouldn't have thought so. The tax gatherers wouldn't have thought so. But the author of this book thinks so.

Marvellous, isn't it? It was that Mary which anointed their lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother, Lazarus, was sick. You must excuse me, ladies, but I often think if it had been you instead of them, you wouldn't have had much hair to wipe his feet with, would you? Mary had long flying locks. He wouldn't have got on so very well, would he? If he'd been born in 1900 and whatever year.

Marvellousness. Listen. And that thing, verse 2 here, had not yet happened.

Now think of the foresight of God. Think of this. It's not what it is now with you, but what you're going to be he takes into account.

For it's in the next chapter we're told the story of Mary anointing his feet and wiping it with her hair. So he's anticipating the future. If you're wondering what's happened to you in the present, what are you going to do in the future? Two months from now, what will you be doing? Ten years from now.

It hasn't happened. But John, in his loveliness, included that in a parenthesis, because you know that's what this is, a parenthesis. In grammar.

He includes that. It's the same Mary. Alright.

She was going to grow through this to be able to do that in the future. Now are you listening? She was going to grow through this. And it was going to prepare her for that.

And she didn't understand. And neither do you. But this Bible shows it to you, you see.

Be avid Bible readers. Go over the scriptures of truth over and over and over again. Do you know, when people get born again, if I happen to be the preacher and they respond, you know, to the truth, they say, then I say, go home, read John's Gospel.

They say, go home and buy a book. We've got the book. Go home and read John's Gospel.

And after a while, they'll come back and say, that is if I'm still in their area, say, I've read John's Gospel, what shall I do now? I say, read it again. They'll come back and they'll say, I've read it again. I say, read it again.

This is the Gospel you need to get into your heart. You don't want so much to know about the miracles he's performed. He is the miracle.

He is the miracle. And you will be a miracle if you're born of God. For Jesus was born into the flesh from God.

Understand. Oh, do understand, beloved. Here, then, is the marvellous truth, beloved.

But we're going on. Therefore, his sisters sent unto Jesus, saying, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick. Now they had no other thought than that he would come immediately and heal him.

Or they also knew that he could come and say in a word, and my servant will be healed. He didn't need to come. And they knew these things.

But he didn't do it. Do what they knew or what they thought. Or regard their love and his love for them as a greater thing than his love for his father.

And in absolute honesty, he must be able to say that, which he said later in the 14th chapter, I am the truth and the life. Of course, he said the way as well. In other words, he's the way for you.

So take this thing that lies behind this blessed account in chapter 11 to your heart. This is what to be. Don't try and speak truth unless you are the truth you speak.

Examine yourself. Oh, this is what I've learned as I've gone on with the Lord Jesus. God's concerned not so much with what we say, but what we are.

Here, take it in. Who am I? This is answered in God's sight by what am I? You have no consciousness of human being for about the first two years of your life. You might become a little bit more self-conscious.

It varies. I can remember things happening when I was three. But this is the thing.

Get it into your heart. Not in vain does John write in the third chapter. God so loved the world that he sent the only Bible or a radio station.

He sent, gave his only begotten Son. Let truth of it that should be shouting at you from the scripture, that is who and what you are. All the thing he did, the cross, the grave, all the miracles, that came out of what he loved.

And so it will be with you. And it can't be reversed. Not in the sight of God, though millions have reversed it in their own lives.

And think they're right. And that takes away from us pontification. When we speak, I told them this, but who were you to those persons to whom you speak? Who did they hear? What did they touch when they touched you? Not just your body, though they might have come to your bodily presence.

These are the things that count. They may explain a lot to you, if you think it. Think about them.

Success or failure rests upon it. That is in the sight of God. Though in the sight of a congregation or teachers or what, it may appear different.

Here it is. Say, he whom thou lovest is sick. It's all right Lazarus, he'll come now.

He'll come. He loves you. He doesn't always do things because he loves you.

But, contradictorily, he does do things because he loves you. You say, you're talking in polemics. Yes, I'm talking in polemics.

Opposites. This is the mystery of being alive with the life of God. Well, now, it shows you this.

Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. That's why he undertook to do this thing. He undertook to do it as he himself thought.

Not what three people whom he loved thought. If you've got your own schemes of God and his ways, you and I know nothing. Much.

Here's the thing. He says, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified. Now, here comes the argument, if you have one.

It was unto death. Lazarus died. Oh.

Now, he's putting the perspective right. Death is not what the whole of the human race, for whichever country you come, death is quite different from what we thought. Which simply means the permanent cessation of breathing.

We're dead. But Jesus renamed it. Our friend, Lazarus, sleeping.

Oh. This is so very glorious. You know, we need the whole of our thinking turned upside down and inside out.

We think. And we're brought up to think it. That shows you how far this world is away from God.

Even Christians. I never call about, say, my wife, whom I buried a couple of years ago, that she's dead. Nobody ever heard me say that.

I prefer that wonderful statement that I once heard somebody... I'm not going to get to the end of this chapter. I'm not. Perhaps I won't get beyond a few verses.

The thing is this. I heard it, and it was a dear coloured man made it. He made it in a statement when he was preaching.

That somebody went to visit a man called Willie. Because this is the name. Whether he made it up, I don't know.

But he said they came to inquire of him. Knocked at the door. And somebody opened the door, said they'd come to see Willie.

He said, Willie doesn't live here anymore. What a wonderful way to talk. Perhaps we'd do well to learn from each other, wouldn't we? Say, oh, she's dead.

He said, oh, he was in terminology. He died, Willie. He says, Willie doesn't live here anymore.

He was the Lord's child, you see. And God only allows you to live a certain length of time. You might be more fortunate than I and get above 84.

Let your thinking change. Don't be ambivalent. But let your thinking change.

You've been stereotyped into common human language. Well, after that, as you know, low down the chapter, he said, our friend Lazarus is asleep. And then he said, oh, well, Lazarus is dead.

Sorry to have to condescend to that level of thing. I expected you to know better. You're my chosen apostles.

What does God expect of you? Oh, he's very merciful, very gracious. I know he's been that to me a thousand times. But we've got to grow.

And I do think sometimes we do learn more from our mistakes than we do from our professors who teach us. It's the substance of your life that counts. It isn't what you're carrying up here, except that we record facts in our mind.

It's this living thing inside, as God's Spirit. And it can exist in a state of death, or it can live in a state of life. And it uses your body.

Think that one out. Your spirit uses your body and in the end controls it. Well, that includes the function of your mind, of course.

What a mighty and wonderful thing it is to be, to introduce probably to Bible psychology, how am I calling this? You've got to see what it's about. Never think along the lines of the world. Never.

Oh, well, you can think that you're hungry and need some bread, but that doesn't come from the world anyway. It comes from you. You are hungry.

This is the main thing. Here it goes. Let's finish.

Let's go. You know, I could spend the rest of my time here in this chapter. It's so marvellous.

It's so full of truth that most people don't even see. They don't know it's there. Never read the Bible the way we always read our Bible.

I read it. You've got to read the Bible this way. You've got to know its source, where it's springing from, what it's all about.

I hope I haven't confused you. Beloved. Beloved.

When he heard that Lazarus was sick, chapter, verse 6, he abode two days. Didn't even stir himself. Didn't make any, not a move to respond to human love and human connections.

He was a Godman. The Godman. He always moved in that area.

He let that control his body and his mere human affections. So they're very wonderful, as far as we're concerned. Or anything like that.

Or the sort of loyalties that people expect of him. Nothing like that. Jesus was God first.

God second. God last. Now maybe only you don't come to a last in God.

Everlastingly God in whichever form he abode. He was abiding in a man's form here. Here it is.

After two days, he said to his disciples, Let's go unto Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stir thee. Goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walk in a day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

If a man walk in a night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. Listen, beloved. Jesus was living in another day.

When he was young. The thing, that world in which he was living, in the spiritual world, of course, with his father, he focused all of the light of that day into himself. He focused it onto the earth in himself.

You know he said it in chapter 8, I am the light of the world. Now it was focused. All those twelve disciples, every man of them was walking in darkness.

The only hope they had of light, was the light that Jesus focused onto them. From heaven. Which day and light are you walking in? They followed Jesus for three years or more.

And they were as dark, and as unilluminated, except in the brain they had enough common sense to learn that this was the most wonderful man. And so on. But anybody could... But they weren't walking in its intrinsic value, in its... Him.

But he was walking in that day, you see. He never bothered about people stoning him. He walked out of all that because it wasn't God's time for him to die.

And it wasn't God's way. God did not want him to die by stoning. That was a Jewish method.

He wanted to incorporate Gentiles into it. And give them a responsible position too, to know these blessed things. I only slowed it slightly.

Slowly, I'm sorry, I did the light really dark. Following Jesus never, never must be mistaken for salvation by Jesus. Generally speaking, the evangelical world does not recognize these things.

That's why so many people say, well he did follow for a start and they fell off. You see, he's being born into a family. I marvel more and more as I get older that God ever wanted to include me in his family.

But not until you come to a place where you're prepared to be born in a manger. I don't say you've got to fill your mind. I must be born in a manger externally.

I'm not meaning that. But the demeaning yourself to see that you have no hope whatsoever. They followed him.

Most left him, of course. And even those disciples did in the end. Do you know why I love John's gospel? And John, do you know why I love him? Because he was the only man that would stand with his mother Mary at the foot of the cross.

All the rest, where were they? Peter with his great bandaging of swords. I don't know all these things. Where were they? Surely they were somewhere in the crowd.

Out here in the crowd, probably. If they hadn't run home to mummy. Do you understand? If you're born again, you're not born in God's sight in this life.

You're not born to act according to your human fallibilities but to this infallible truth that's written in this book. We're all weak. But he proposes to pour himself and all his strength into a man.

That's the thing. This is what John is bringing about. He was a brave man.

He stood there when all the world looked upon him as partner with the woman that foisted upon the world that she was virgin when Jesus was born. Keep it clear. Learn to live as from heaven.

Not as from Russia or England or wherever you come from. I can't tell where you came from, sister. Or anything.

I don't know. Don't you live like... I'm not living by an Englishman. I said it again.

I gave up being an Englishman the moment I understood what new birth was. I gave it up. Completely.

Hallelujah. Oh, I pay my taxes. Don't have to pay many of those now.

They sink upon me with sympathy. I hope. Here is the truth, beloved.

He said, Are there not twelve hours in the day? My day is not finished yet. Men walk in the night and stumble. Are you a stumbling person? Call yourself Christian.

I'm always stumbling. I always fall over. It's because you have no light in you.

Oh, but I've accepted Jesus. What for? To obscure him by your humanity? He wants to make you a radiant and burning and shining light above John Baptist. That's what it's about.

But anyway, let's carry on. My enemy is ticking away. Here is the thing to see.

Listen, beloved. I love this chapter. I'm bathing myself in it again.

Good to keep taking baths, isn't it? And here is the truth. Then he says, First he said, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. But I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. They're really saying Whatever is he talking about? Whatever is he talking about? Do you know, Jesus never complained much. But he did complain sometimes.

He was on the sea with them in a boat and they'd forgotten to take any breath. And he said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. They said, Oh well, it's because we haven't taken any breath.

He said, How is it that you do not understand? Now tell me. How is it that you don't? That you don't? That you don't? Of course, nobody expects you to have all the knowledge of your lecturers. I'm only a preacher.

I'm not a lecturer. Here is the thing. Nobody expects that.

Because we all have to make a beginning. But he said, How is it you don't understand? Did he get impatient? I don't know. But he evidently expected them to know more than they knew.

And understand more than the present circumstances revealed they did not understand. It's that that tells me, I've only got to live with you. I've only got to be beside you.

And I'll know whether you understand or not without being critical. That's the point. It's all about that.

Peter speaks on how he must have thought when he wrote it. Growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He must have thought, Oh.

Oh. Be hard on yourself. Not too hard.

Not too hard. Read this Bible. It will teach you more than all your teachers Remember David said that.

By thy Spirit I have more understanding than my teachers. It's the Spirit that teaches you. You are, are you listening, being taught now by your Spirit.

And if I'm not speaking by the Spirit that won't teach you anything either. It's verbiage. You have to see this, beloved.

What it's all about. Lazarus, plainly, Lazarus is dead. But I want you to see things that aren't plain to be seen.

I am the light. I will walk in the weight and say all this. And if you follow me, you'll learn what I'm talking about.

Which they did follow him. And bless him, this is one good thing you can say about old Thomas. You might say, ooh, darling Thomas, ooh.

He said, let's go and die with him. Brave Thomas. Wasn't Peter said, let's go and die with him.

But you might have expected, but his voice was plainly silent. At this time, he was a big, strong fisherman, appointed himself as the spokesman of the disciples. But it was Thomas, who said, oh, darling Thomas, let's go and die with him.

He said, come on. Hallelujah. Now, you see, now, if I was on my own, I wouldn't read anymore.

I would just let that saturate my being. For I want to be a brave man. Even though at that time Thomas was only brave according to his ideals.

But he was brave enough to go through with what he thought. Always prepared to. Come on.

I know lots of women are better men than men go through with Jesus. But let me come on, you know. He says, I'm glad in verse 15 that I wasn't there.

I purposely didn't go, you know, for your sakes. To the intent that you may believe. He could have added, believe that I am the person who I am.

He states it later in the same chapter. I am the resurrection and the life. I am not just the belly filler.

What do you mean by that? Well, he's done that wonderful miracle. In chapter 6, he fed the thousands of people and people came to him afterwards seeking him. And he said to them, you've only come because you ate up the bread and were full.

That's all. He sorts us all out, you know. He's looking at you and me.

Every one of us. Do I sound severe? I'm talking the truth. Sometimes the plain truth is the serious, the most serious and severe thing you can face up to.

Here it is. I want you to believe. You think you're believers, don't you? You're following me.

When we get to chapter 17, I hope to get there before this whole course is finished. He reveals their unbelief and they'd been unbelieving all the way through on the essential things. Anybody can believe in miracles when they see it take place.

Anybody can say, I know he took five loaves because I ate it, you see. I know that I was blind and now I can see. And preachers preach on that.

They should. But you've got to set it in the context of the whole truth that's being revealed in the Scripture. This is our trouble.

Partial reading and listening to people who have only partially read. No, they've read the Bible from cover to cover. But readings and going through it say, well I've read it through and through and through and through.

This is a door that I may enter in to the person and personality that spoke it and did it. There's no other reason. Yet books, I believe in miracles.

And they've missed the greatest miracle this world has ever seen. That God became man. That's the greatest miracle.

Wasn't even raising Lazarus from the dead. From death. Wonderful it was though.

It was the consummate miracle in our Lord's life on earth. Except his own raising, rising from the dead. Ah, listen.

I'm glad I wasn't there. Let's go die with him. Jesus came.

Verse 17. He found just what he expected of course. That Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off. And many of the Jews, if you want to know what a furlong is, there are eight of them to a mile if you go back to English messengers. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him. But Mary sat in her. I don't know whether that was protocol or whether dear Mary couldn't rise to overcome with grief.

I just don't know. I cannot make a personal judgement on that. Then said Martha unto Jesus Lord, If thou hast been near my brother and not died, now if he had been a mere man, his conscience would have swept him.

I should have come immediately, I heard. But he didn't go by the minds of men. He was here to establish the very life of God.

It's very tempting to do what your friends expect of you, isn't it? Very tempting. And so you will live for yourself and your cronies if you do that. Excuse me.

And Martha said unto Jesus Lord, If I had been here and my brother had not died, I have perfect confidence in your powers. But she didn't have confidence in that blessed Lord. The sort of mental confidence that she ought to have had.

Well, shall I say ought to, because I think if my name was Martha I might have said the same things at that time. But we are beyond Martha now. We are beyond John.

We are beyond any of the Gospel writers. We are beyond Paul. We have lived.

We are in a different age. I mean in the progress of Revelation. Not the book of Revelation.

We are in Provence. We know so much. All we think we do.

I know that even now, whatsoever thou would ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. I know, says Martha, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection.

At the last day I wanted him not to die. I wanted him now. I love my brother.

I wish he was still here. A life cut short. And you know all the stuff that humanity has thought up about it.

All right. Jesus says, and here's the great climactic statement, except that last great thing that he said and why he was crucified. You'll know why he was crucified.

You say the Romans killed him. No, it was the Jews. You say, but it was all.

Mine were the hands that fixed the nails. Mine were the hands that placed the thorns on his breast. Because I'm just a human being.

I told you I'd lost my Englishness years ago. I'm ever so sorry I can't speak every one of you in your own language. Here's the thing.

It was that great statement when he stood before the high priest. Tell us, art thou the Christ, the son of the blessed? And he said, I am. You'll find this in Mark 14.

I am. That was it. Yes.

That's why he was crucified. Pilate didn't want to crucify him. The Gentiles didn't want to crucify him.

They had to. Because the Jews insisted that he did. Those who believed in God.

That's why he was crucified. That was the climactic thing. He never said, I am he.

That's italicized. The word he should not be there. We've been robbed sometimes by these wonderful translators.

I am, he said. That was the voice that spoke out. To Moses.

I am. All right. Now I must stop because I believe my brother has come here to talk to you.

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