

John 11:1-45 *I am the resurrection and the life*
(Concentrating on John 11:25-26)

We've all been affected by the death of someone close to us. Nothing is more certain than the fact that we'll all die one day, unless of course the Lord Jesus returns first!

DIY (do-it-yourself) is the rage with home renovations.

Many Aussies also apply DIY to home-made-religion! It is very common for people around us to believe that everyone goes to Heaven when they die.

God wants us to believe His revealed truth about that rather than home-made ideas.

The Gospel reading for to-day deals with the death of Jesus' friend Lazarus and one of seven memorable claims of Jesus which John includes in His Gospel: the seven "I am" statements which help point to Jesus true identity.

Background:

Chapter 11 opens with news that Lazarus was sick. His sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus, hoping that he would come and heal their brother.

Jesus deliberately waited before travelling to the home of his friends. In the meantime, Lazarus had died! Jesus told His Disciples:

"I am going there to wake him up."

By the time Jesus arrived Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.

Martha was not happy and told him so!

Jesus then makes the memorable claim: (Read verses 25-26)

Mary was confused and the mourners were confused. Why couldn't Jesus have simply healed Lazarus?

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Jesus then raises Lazarus from the dead and as a result, many put their faith in Him.

There are at least three things which we might consider here:

1. JESUS' AMAZING CLAIM. Verse 25a

"I am the resurrection and the life."

When Jesus spoke these words, he was about to be killed and rise again and He knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.

When Jesus used the expression *I AM* he was using the same expression used in Exodus 3:14 where God reassured Moses at the burning bush: *God said to Moses, I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.*

In using this *I AM* self-designation, Jesus was claiming to be God come in human form.

As such, He had the power to raise people from the dead and give them (Eternal) life.

2. JESUS' AMAZING OFFER. Verse 25-26 *He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

Most non-Christians believe that *when you're dead, you're dead.*

Christians believe that death is the gateway to Eternal Life and continued friendship and fellowship with God, forever!

Why do Christians believe this? Because of Jesus' amazing offer.

Even though Christians die, they know that because they believe or trust in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, they will never really die. It is as though death is like going to sleep and waking up with the Lord.

Jesus will raise them up and gift them Eternal Life.

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In fact, the moment a person puts their trust in Jesus, they begin to experience Eternal Life. This gives the Christian great confidence and assurance.

In John's first Letter, he reminds his readers that for the Christian, *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know (for certain) that you have (now) eternal life.* (1 John 5:11-13)

3. JESUS' PUSHY QUESTION. Verse 26 *Do you believe this?*

Some sales people are very pushy. Jesus was pushing Martha to accept what He had said.

Martha responded: *Yes Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.*

Martha's response was an expression of faith or trust. However, at the tomb, her faith was tested.

When Jesus gave the order for the stone to be removed from the front of the tomb, Martha blurted out what many others would have thought: *But Lord, by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been dead four days.* In other words, NO! Don't remove the stone! The body will have begun to decompose!

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We've heard the rest of the story and we know that Lazarus did come out because Jesus had raised him. (Verse 44) We don't know how much longer Lazarus lived but we know from the verses that follow that his resurrection made things difficult for those religious leaders who were seeking to have Jesus killed, so they planned to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of this miracle, many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in Him. A living and breathing Lazarus was evidence and he needed to be removed from the scene. (John 12:10)

Jesus' pushy question remains: *do you believe this?*

As we approach Easter, we need to consider the claims of Jesus upon our lives.

Some people say *I believe in God, isn't that enough?*

Jesus said that if people really believed in God then they'd trust in Him too. Either we trust in Jesus' death on the cross as the payment for our sin, love Him, follow Him, grow up in Him or we don't.

Jesus' pushy question is a bit like a marriage proposal: *will you have me? Will you accept me?*

Or an invitation to a party: *will you come?*

An answer is required. A commitment is essential.

Jesus made an amazing claim and offer with a pushy question.

If we've responded to Jesus by faith and obedience we can have every confidence that He will keep His Word and have us with Him in Heaven forever.

If we have never responded to Jesus' invitation, what are we waiting for?