



HG197 *The I AM Sayings Of Jesus*
I AM The Resurrection

John 11:17-27

Home Group Study Notes

19 April 2020 - Revd Christine Williams



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



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Home Group Sermon

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We're living in turbulent times but we are people who know that Jesus Christ is alive. How does this make a difference?

In my time as a curate and then a vicar I did quite a lot of funerals. A lot of people ask for strange things at the funeral of their loved one. Perhaps the strangest funeral service I ever did was of a Dr Who fan who had 3 Daleks on his coffin as he was carried in to the theme tune from the programme. I discovered that many people have odd and rather sad ideas about death. People seem to select bits of poetry and readings from far eastern religions and ideas from the New Age.

The deceased are all around us, they get re-incarnated or they are just in the next room. The poems speak of 'not really dead', present in the stones and flowers, living on in the grandchildren etc. None of this gives hope for the future in any way. How tragic it is that people go after these things and do not know the truth that we have in Jesus. Jesus has been raised to life. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. There is hope for the future. I hope and pray that in my readings and talk they may have realised there is more future than they thought.

In our reading today it seemed that Mary and Martha could only imagine hope for the future if Jesus arrived to help Lazarus before he died. Jesus arrived too late to bring healing. 'If you had been here ...' they both said. They knew that Jesus was the great healer. He would never have let Lazarus die if he had been there. But Jesus delayed. It says in verse 6 that when he heard about Lazarus he delayed 2 more days. Was he being callous? Was he being cruel to his friends Mary and Martha? The delay was definitely intentional. He delayed, it says, so that God's son would be glorified by what happened. (v4). There was something his friends needed to see for themselves and they needed to see it sooner rather than later.

They had to begin to understand that Jesus was indeed the great 'I AM', the creator, sustainer, beginning and the end. He was the one who had power over life and death.

Martha was saddened when Jesus arrived too late. She felt that while there was life there was hope. Jesus reminded her that Lazarus would rise again. It was a Jewish belief that at the end of time the dead would be raised. They believed that the Old Testament saints would be raised and life in God's new creation would begin. But Martha was not comforted by this vague future hope which may or may not happen. She wanted Lazarus alive now. He had died too soon! It was at this point that Jesus said those amazing words that are our text today: I am the resurrection and the life.

Resurrection is not something dim and distant but it is vested in the man, Jesus. It was not an idle boast from Jesus about something in the future but something that he could demonstrate here and now for Lazarus before the waiting and watching crowd. Jesus was not being cruel in allowing Lazarus to die, but he was aware of the importance of the lesson they would all learn. He loved Lazarus and he loved Mary and Martha. He wept as he saw their grief and felt outrage at the awfulness of death. (Maybe he was also weeping because he knew that in a few days he too would die and these people would grieve for him too.)

Jesus called Lazarus out and out he came! Jesus showed that he was not just the miracle-worker who could heal the sick, calm the storm and feed the hungry but that he could raise the dead. Lazarus who had been thoroughly dead, was alive and returned to his sisters in good health. BUT and it is a big 'but', later on Lazarus died in the normal way. This was not his time for the general resurrection. He was not in his future heavenly body but his earthly body restored for a few more years.

In order for Jesus to properly show himself to **be** the resurrection and the life for the world, he had to first die. It was a terrible thing for the Lord of glory to die. It was a terrible way to die. Yet Jesus did it for us. Jesus died for each of us. But if he had merely died to take away our sin and bring us back to God without rising again then it would have been incomplete. We would not know if we were saved or not. There had to be resurrection. Jesus was master of the situation because on several occasions he told his disciples that he would die and on the third day rise again. Jesus was master of life and death.

The Apostles preached about the death and resurrection of Jesus as their main and often only message. In Acts 2:32 Peter said on the day of Pentecost, 'God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are witnesses of the fact.' Their message of the resurrection of Jesus was a huge problem for the authorities but no-one could refute it because the evidence was overwhelming.

The apostles were changed men; changed by their encounter with the risen Lord and by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They had met the Lord, touched him, eaten with him and been appointed as heralds of the good news. And yes, Jesus was different after the resurrection because he was in his body that was now suitable for heaven. It was in his resurrected body that he returned to be with his father.

The future resurrection was not a vague distant thing that may or may not happen. Jesus was, as Paul calls him in that wonderful chapter 15 of Corinthians, 'the first fruits of those who sleep'. 1 Cor 15:20. He was writing to people who were not sure about their own personal resurrection. Faith is futile if Jesus is not alive but as he is alive then we have confidence for our own future, Paul wrote.

Because Jesus was raised to life then we too will be raised to life eternal in God's new kingdom. 'We know we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is'. John wrote in 1 John 3:2. Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life it makes all the difference in the world to us because we are 'in him' and we will be raised with him.

The church has 2 sacraments that Jesus gave his followers to remember him by. We remember his death and resurrection every time we meet for Communion but we also remember that in baptism we died with Christ. We are 'buried' in the water of baptism and raised with him to new life. This is especially vivid in adult baptism by immersion. Everything we do as Christians is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Our salvation is bound up in the death and resurrection of Christ and we are united in him. In Ephesians 2 it says, 'We have been raised with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus' (Eph 2:4-10) that is our status as children of our heavenly father. Our ongoing walk of faith needs to be centred on him. And because we have been raised with him we should set our minds on heavenly things (Col 3:1-4).

Paul then spells out for us how we should turn our backs on impurity and earthly ways of living and desire only godliness; *because we have been raised with him.*

Jesus said to Martha, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’

Yes Lord we believe that you are the great I AM and you are in charge of life and death. As we trust you for whatever happens in this life we can also be confident of our future with you. ***Amen***

These references may be useful: John 11; Acts 2:32; 1Corinthians 15; 1 John 3:2; Ephesians 2:4-10; Col 3:1-4

Emmanuel Church Text for 2020

*“The Lord Your God is with you. He is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with
His love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Zephaniah 3:17



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Which modern Christian songs best describe the future hope of resurrection we have in Jesus?

2. How can we better help the world to know the truth of the risen Lord Jesus?

3. To what extent has Covid 19 made you think about your own end of life and the life to come?

4. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. In what way does this mean more for us than going to heaven when we die?

5. Read Colossians 3:1-4 1 and Cor 15:58. Why does our future hope of resurrection mean that we should change our way of living now?

6. What, out of all that we have studied through this 'I AM' series, really sticks in your mind?

What has strengthened your faith the most?

What has challenged your faith the most?

What has inspired your faith the most?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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