

LIFE

John 11:25 - text

INTRO: I am sitting here reflecting on life. Big subject. I would love a clever title for an Easter Sunday message. I sought some inspiration for a title that would really catch the revelation of God on LIFE. However, it has all been turned upside down the last few days. Never have I heard so much in my life from everywhere on the meaning of life. You see this Terri Schiavo matter has really brought quality of life, at least physical, secular life to the forefront. As I write this, all of her options to go on living have been exhausted. The parents have quit. The crowds will go home. The networks will have to find something else to dwell on. The priest who has been a spokesman for the family will not be a familiar face. I thank God for that man. His courage, his fight with the family, and his clear, very clear belief in the sanctity and sacredness of life. I also just watched a news anchorman for FOX news do something you almost never find on the other networks. He said that even though hope for Terri in this life is dwindling, **his** faith, and Terri's will give them a certainty that when this life ends, because of Christ a new life will begin. What a truth to hear from a news anchorman, with no apology for violating church and state as he made his news statement. **THIS IS REAL NEWS. THERE IS HOPE BEYOND THIS VERY DISTURBED, DISTRESSED AND DETERIORATING WORLDLY EXISTENCE. JESUS IS ALIVE, AND BECAUSE HE LIVES, I CAN FACE TOMORROW!!!!** As the family priest said, after he was told that people just couldn't go over the judges heads, "They will face another judge someday."

BODY LIFE, YOUR LIFE: I have been contemplating for a long time the life of this body, the life of the individuals within it, the life of the body of Christ. I've been trying to understand my intensity, my concern, my joys, sorrows, and absolute inability to relax, let go or let up of both the desperation and excitement I have felt for all of us. For some time now, I have been saying "*It is time!*". There has been an alarm bell of God's timing and call. I spent a lot of time recently seeking God on why I can't get this theme and the weight of it off of me. I really did not get any answer until the plane ride home a couple days ago. I'm going to go into that more later on as I go through the facets of intimacy with the Father. In response to tremendous demand, I am going to do an abc=d message on intimacy. Wow! Finally you will have steps to successful intimacy with Him. I'm being a little sarcastic, but not entirely. You see "resurrection" is not about what Jesus *does* it is about *who He is*. About who Jesus is in your life. About His timing, His destiny, His place for you in His dream.

THE SETTING: John 11:1-3. Jesus has three close friends in Bethany. It's where he went to relax, to visit to rest perhaps. They fed Him, fellowshiped with Him, and ministered to Him. Martha and Mary had sent word to Jesus that the "one" He loved was sick. Jesus declared that this whole situation, however devastating it would seem, was for the glory of God, and the glory of the Son of God. Wouldn't that be an exciting dynamic to have in our situations? What if the gloom that comes to my life was viewed through the lens of the glory of God and His Son? That whenever a situation appeared overwhelming, my focus would shift to the glory of Him!

THE STORY: 11:5-16. Scripture tells us that Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus, SO He stayed two more days. Not the typical reaction from a guy who loves you....but Jesus isn't typical. He should be. Are we supposed to live in the same manner as Him? Depends on what is sourcing us doesn't it? The

disciples tried to reason with Jesus not to go into a place where the enemy had tried to stone Him. Jesus in vs. 9-10 says “Well, if your walking in revelation you’re going to have a lot more confidence than if you are ignorant of God’s plan” (Sam’s paraphrase). *Then Jesus says: “I’m really glad for your sakes that I wasn’t there when Lazarus was ill, because you all would have wanted me to heal him. You’ve seen that before, but now I have an opportunity to show you that My Father not only can improve life, He can turn death into life, even when it is absolutely hopeless”* (Sam’s paraphrase again). When Jesus arrives Martha informs Jesus that if He had been there things would be different, and now Jesus could still change things. Jesus tells Martha that Lazarus is going to “stand up” (Greek meaning of resurrection). He is not talking about someday, He is talking about soon, NOW. This is a destiny and timing thing. You are going to hear a lot from me about God’s timing for your destiny in the days ahead.

THE SUBSTANCE: Our text John 11:25. “You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live.” (Message)

26- And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” You see, Jesus doesn’t do resurrections, He IS the resurrection. He doesn’t just give life, He IS life. This is about who He is, and the flow of His life results in these things happening. I won’t belabor it but vs. 26 seems to have different language than v. 25. If you believe in Him you will live again. But if you LIVE and believe in Him you will never die! Maybe there are believers who ARE NOT living. Enough said, anything else is speculation and probably not very theologically sound.

THE SORROW: 11:28-38. There is something that just cannot be missed here. Sorrow is every where and hope is gone. Now Jesus knows that God is going to move, but He still displays immense sorrow. I could write forever on what that sorrow was about. Why wasn’t He just saying “cheer up, there’s going to be no problem here”. No, He *groaned* in His spirit and was troubled. Jesus troubled? Yes, troubled. Why? Is it because they are weeping? Is it because of His loss? Maybe, but something else strikes me. He had earlier announced Lazarus was going to stand up again. AND He knew that God had a destiny, a plan, a timing in this thing that Jesus had known since He hung around two days after He was told things were critical. Those around Jesus were not getting the picture that God was about to do something in their lives, not someday, but NOW, for God’s glory and their faith. Jesus didn’t do this all the time. He didn’t re-attach John the Baptist’s head. I would have liked that one. But this is Mary and Martha and Lazarus time. God’s timing, God’s destiny, God’s resurrection of a whole lot more than Lazarus’ body. Jesus said to Martha: Vs. 40- Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Jesus had apparently told her earlier that God was going to move at this time in her life like never before. This was going to be a resurrection of Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

THE SUMMARY: This story is filled with destiny, timing, and ultimately God’s glory out of gloom. I am not confused anymore about why I have excitement and hope and sorrow running side by side all together. When you see what God wants to do in peoples lives, when you feel God’s heart for resurrecting people, you can weep even when you know that God is about to perform lives. You weep for those who love God so much, and yet do not see that God has such a desire to call them forth. And you weep at their sorrow. Jesus wept before He went to the tomb. This wasn’t about Him seeing a dead body. This is about what they did not see. That death is nothing more to God, than the diving board into Life. It’s who He IS, not just what He DOES.

1. What situations in my life seem hopeless? Why?
2. Has God revealed Himself in these, really shown Himself above my belief about the circumstance?
3. Do I view God's delays through the lens of His glory?
4. Am I excited about facing tomorrow, "just because He lives"?