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April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Scripture: John 11: 1-44

Sermon Title: Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

Prayer...

## **John 11:1-44**

### **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

#### **The Death of Lazarus**

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent a message to Jesus,[a] “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” 4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” 5 Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6 after having heard that

Lazarus[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

8 The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to

stone you, and are you going there again?” 9 Jesus answered, “Are

there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day

do not stumble because they see the light of this world. 10 But those

who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” 11 After

saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I

am going there to awaken him.” 12 The disciples said to him, “Lord,

if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.”[c] 13 Jesus, however, had

been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was

referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus

is dead. 15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may

believe. But let us go to him.” 16 Thomas, who was called the

Twin,[d] said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

### **Jesus the Resurrection and the Life**

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus[e] had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[f] Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I

believe that you are the Messiah,[g] the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

### **Jesus Weeps**

28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34 He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus began to weep. 36 So the Jews

said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

### **Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life**

38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with

strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them,  
“Unbind him, and let him go.” (This Is the Word of the Lord)

### **Introduction:**

As some of you know, in addition to being a pastor, I have a background as a spiritual director and leader of prayer retreats. One of the ministries that we have in our church is called the Newberg Center for Christian Spirituality. We offer Friday and Saturday retreats and are next one is on May 16<sup>th</sup>, if you are interested in attending. The theme will be on the Spirituality of Love. I want to explore how love needs to be the foundation of our understanding of God and our Christian faith.

Over the years as I have led retreats, I have noticed that people often attend a retreat with an agenda. The agenda is to have an answer to a problem in their life or maybe they come seeking discernment about a choice they are making. Sometimes the retreats help with

those agendas, but I often find that people finish retreats realizing that what they really want most is not clarity from God, but closeness with God. What they need is not only guidance, which is great, but they need intimacy with God. What they need more than anything is an encounter with the risen Lord. What we all long for in our relationship with Jesus is Jesus himself.

In our story today, we are continuing the Easter season by remembering that Jesus identifies himself as the resurrection and the Life. The story of the raising of Lazarus is the gospel writer John's preview of Jesus' own resurrection. The raising of Lazarus mirrors what will happen to Jesus. Jesus also will die and be placed in a tomb. He also will come out of the tomb and be revealed as alive, but the difference is that Jesus will have a resurrected body. The gospel writer John is getting us ready for the resurrection story of Jesus.

We could walk through the entire story of Lazarus this morning if we wanted to, but I assume you are familiar with the story, so I want to focus on one specific part. I want to focus on how Jesus wept. Jesus wept is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it also carries profound wisdom about the ministry of Jesus. Jesus wept speaks to his compassion.

Brennan Manning, well known speaker and spirituality writer who passed away in 2013, wrote and spoke about the compassion of Jesus.

The "Deepest Emotions" of Jesus

Manning emphasized that Jesus was "moved with the deepest emotions" when he saw Mary and the Jews weeping. He focused on several key aspects of this compassion:

[thunderstruck.org](http://thunderstruck.org)

A "Gut-Wrenching" Reality: Manning often pointed out that the Greek word for compassion used in the Gospels (*spagchnizomai*)

refers to a movement in one's bowels or guts. In the Lazarus story, Jesus' grief is not a polite or symbolic sadness but a "shuddering" of his entire being.

The Tears of God: Jesus' weeping ("Jesus wept") was, for Manning, proof that God is not a "remote overlord" or a distant judge. Instead, Jesus' tears show a God who is "exquisitely attuned" to human feelings and uninhibited in expressing them.

Compassion as Solidarity: Manning taught that Jesus' compassion in this story meant "suffering with" the bereaved. By weeping even though he knew he would soon raise Lazarus, Jesus validated the present reality of human sorrow rather than rushing past it with a theological explanation. (AI Generated summary information)

Manning writes,

"Our culture says that ruthless competition is the key to success.

Jesus says that ruthless compassion is the purpose of our journey".

I appreciate how Manning highlights the compassion of Jesus. In our story, Jesus is filled with emotion. He produces the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead because of his compassion.

During my life I have known various people who have the gift of healing. We all can pray for healing, but there are some people who make this ministry a key focus. My wife Karen and I are cultivating this gift and we have seen some miracles of healing in our church. My Pop for example is free of Prostate Cancer. Others of you have faced other ailments and experienced healing. Healing often is a partnership of prayer and medical support, so I want to remind us that it is not either or. Medicine and prayer work together.

What I have noticed with people who have the gift of healing is that they also have the gift of compassion. Compassion is the ability to suffer with someone. To have sympathy and often empathy for someone experiencing pain and then to join with love and compassion as that person is seeking healing of some kind.

In our story, Jesus reminds Martha that he is the resurrection and the Life. Then Jesus proceeds to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Sometimes when I read this story, I am drawn to think about it literally. This story makes me want to pray for people to be healed instantly, even if they experience death itself. There are stories of miracles of people coming back from death itself. There is a whole movement of people telling their near-death stories in our world today, which is pretty exciting. I have heard stories particularly in Africa of people literally being raised from the dead and I have met a couple people in my life who experienced something like being raised from the dead, but for most of us looking at this story literally is a bit perplexing.

When we look at this story from a more metaphorical lense, we see that Jesus being the resurrection and the life is a statement about how Jesus can provide each of us compassion in our deepest need.

This does not necessarily mean that life will always include a

physical miracle, but that in every circumstance of life, we can expect that Jesus will show up with compassion.

I had the experience of meeting Brennan Manning and his wife Roslyn when I was in college at Whitworth. He had a great personality. When I heard him speak, I was mesmerized by the closeness of his relationship with Jesus. In Brennan's autobiography, *All Is Grace*, he talks about the compassion of Jesus as the truth that God loves you as you are, not as you should be. He even suggests that we will likely never quite become as we should be.

At first, we might say that this teaching is a bit pessimistic. After all, shouldn't we want to become the best version of ourselves. Brennan would support our efforts at improvement at some level, but he would want to remind us that even when we fail or struggle to achieve our full potential, God loves us anyways. Brennan Manning and I have the same theology of grace. We teach that Grace does not end and grace is for us all for always. The love of God even

extends to the most hardened sinner. You see, Brennan Manning in his autobiography, explains that some things did not finish well for him. He suffered with health problems related to a lifetime of struggle with alcoholism. He highlights in his book that his marriage ended in divorce largely because of his struggles. And yet, Brennan remained clear into his final days that God loved him just as he was, not as he should be.

(Read from book- quote about vulgar grace, P. 102)

Finish with...

“My life is a witness to vulgar grace—a grace that amazes as it offends. A grace that pays the eager beaver who works all day long the same wages as the grinning drunk who shows up at ten till five. A grace that hikes up the robe and runs breakneck toward the prodigal reeking of sin and wraps himself up and decides to throw a party no ifs, ands, or buts. A grace that raises bloodshot eyes to a dying thief’s request—“Please remember me”—and assures him, “You

bet!” A grace that is the pleasure of the Father, fleshed out in the carpenter Messiah, Jesus the Christ, who left His Father’s side not for heaven’s sake but for our sakes, yours and mine. This vulgar grace is indiscriminate compassion. It works without asking anything of us. It’s not cheap. It’s free, and as such will always be a banana peel for the orthodox foot and a fairy tale for the grown up sensibility. Grace is sufficient even though we huff and puff with all out might to try to find something or someone it cannot cover. Grace is enough. He is enough. Jesus is enough.

John, the disciple Jesus loved, ended his first letter with this line:

“Children, be on your guard against false gods.” In other words, steer clear of any god you can comprehend. Abba’s love cannot be comprehended. I’ll say it again: Abba’s love cannot be comprehended.”

I am so thankful for Brennan Manning’s impact on my own life and so I am happy to remind you of him. Some of his best books are

Abba's Child and the Ragamuffin Gospel, if you want to learn from him more.

Friends, what if it is true, that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? What if it is true that his compassion is unfair or even vulgar grace, meaning that even in our most vulnerable and messy parts, God still loves us. Nothing we can do can stop God from loving us and love and grace are forever and for always because God's nature is love and grace.

This truth can change our lives. This truth about Jesus can stop us from running away from God and can turn us back to home where God our Father and Mother will run to meet us, even as we arrive bruised and battered by the suffering of life. This grace can help us walk out of the tomb of fear and doubt.

Jesus is the resurrection and the Life. Let us walk in the beauty of this grace and compassion. What we really need is not our agendas met. What we really need is Jesus himself. Let us pray...