

**My Journey to Easter  
Through A Question  
John 11:25-27**

**April 20, 2014  
Easter Sunday**

**Dr. Steve Horn**

**Text Introduction:** In these weeks leading up to Easter, we have tried to prepare ourselves for Easter around this theme of “My Journey to Easter.” A few weeks ago and then again on last Thursday, we remembered our Lord’s sacrifice through the Lord’s Supper. On another Sunday recently, we dedicated the day to baptism. We have also taken this virtual journey through a word—repentance. Perhaps in that one word, we come as close to any other experience in realizing the full weight of what Jesus did for us on the cross and in the resurrection. Then, last time we took that virtual journey with Jesus remembering how he entered Jerusalem in what is called the Triumphal Entry. All of this has had as the goal to bring us face to face with the realities of Easter. Today, I want to take that personal journey to another level. We ask ourselves a question. It’s the question of our own belief in Jesus’ resurrection.

**Text:** <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she told Him, “I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.”

**Introduction:** I want to talk to you today about the resurrection, but not in a way that gives an argument for the proof of the resurrection, but in a way that asks you to make the belief personal. In fact, in my preparation for today, I came across this statement which said, “Preacher, your job on Easter Sunday is not to convince people of the resurrection. You don’t have time for that!” I have taken that to heart. I am not setting out today to convince anyone of the resurrection. Rather, in believing that many of you are already convinced to some degree in the resurrection, I want to make that truth more personal.

I think this text before us today is a good text to help us to see the personal nature of our belief. Our text today comes from the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. The miracle helps us to discover several things about the resurrection even though Jesus’ own resurrection obviously has not occurred at this point in His life. Lazarus’ resurrection actually serves as a foreshadowing of sorts that God has power even to raise the dead to life.

In case you are not familiar with the story, Jesus has been called to come to the house of his friend Lazarus, who is sick. The text very specifically indicates that Jesus did not immediately leave to go heal his friend. In fact, before leaving Jesus announced to the disciples that Lazarus had already died. I’ve always thought about this text that Jesus uses this experience to bring a greater understanding of His power. People already knew that He could heal the sick. What they did not know is that He could raise the dead.

This particular text comes in an exchange of conversation between Jesus and Lazarus’ sister, Martha. The sister is protesting that her brother would not have died had Jesus been there to heal him.

## **A Question Centered on the Person of Jesus**

- The basis of our belief is in Jesus' own resurrection.
- The belief that we are being asked to hold is in Jesus.

The specific nature of the question is realized in what Jesus said to her, the question that he raised (especially with the word *this*), and her response.

## **A Question that has credible Proof**

Now, just because I do not have as my intention to prove the resurrection does not mean that the resurrection cannot be proven. But, still, I do not offer in this sermon proof of the resurrection, except to point out that proof about Jesus' life, person, death, and resurrection is precisely the point of this whole Gospel. And so story after story is stacked up by John to offer that proof.

That's what this book is about!

John 20:30-31 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book.<sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name.

John 21:24-25 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written.

Martha is being asked to believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. What does he offer as proof? The resurrection of her brother. Did it work? Not only did she believe, but according to verse 45, many others did as well.

After Jesus' own resurrection, one of the disciples, named Thomas, was having difficulty believing. In fact he said, "If I don't see the mark of the nails in His hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe." (John 20:25) So, what did Jesus do? He appeared and said, "Put your finger here. Reach out your hand and put it into My side." (John 20:27) Did it work? Thomas said, "My Lord and my God."

I am certain that there are some that have some incredible questions for God. I am certain that I don't have all your answers. I don't have all the answers to my questions—how could I have the answer to your questions. But, I do know this—He does. And He has proof. And today, He wants to come to you as He did to Martha, as He did to Nicodemus, as He did to a woman of Samaria at the well, as He did to Thomas.

## **A Question that carries a Promise**

The promise of eternal life is the promise that Jesus is making with the resurrection. It is a promise that all of us need, because none of us will live forever. Paul said, as recorded in 2 Corinthians, that “we have the sentence of death in ourselves.”

And Jesus comes to promise eternal life. The great preacher D.L. Moody recounted a time as a young preacher when he was called on to do his first funeral. He went to the Gospels to find something that Jesus said at a funeral. In His search, He found something incredible. When Jesus went to funerals in the Gospels, He brought people back to life. Death and Jesus do not exist together.

### **A Question that is certainly Personal**

We are back to where we started. This is intensely personal. “Do you believe this?” It’s personal. This is not a question of the church. This is not a question of your family. This is not a question of American culture. This is a personal question. Do you believe this? Martha thought the statement, at first, was a religious question. It was not; it was a personal question.

And it is a question that changes us. If I believe something, it changes me. I see a sign that says, “Stop.” If I believe it; it changes me. I stop. If I believe the resurrection, it changes me. If I believe that in Him is life; it changes me.