



CtK exists to connect all people to the life-giving message of Jesus, as we experience God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference in our world.

20/20—Mission Clarity

Day 14—January 25, 2020

Hope is a powerful thing

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha... ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days... ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.

²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁸Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"



Christ the King
CHURCH

⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."

⁴³When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."

⁴⁴The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

John 11:1-54

Hope is a Powerful Thing...

Lazarus – a friend, a brother, a neighbor. He became sick and died – but hope comes into this story. His friends came to mourn. His sisters sat down sorrowful. His neighbors helped them grieve. But all were asking – Where is The Friend? Where is Hope?

Hope in the face of Death. Lazarus had died – but Jesus did not come right away. Death is a common point of our lives – we all face it when we lose a loved one, a friend, or our own frail humanity. Death intrudes on life. Only something stronger than death can bring hope in the face of death.

Hope in the face of Desperation. Mary and Martha faced the loss of their brother, Lazarus. For those four days, they thought and conversed about Jesus – "If only he had come when we called... If only Jesus had said a word... If only we had... If only..." Questions crowd into our hearts at times of loss – "Why...?" "If only..." "What if...?" Answers are not needed at this moment, because it is the heart, not the mind, that is desperate. Comfort, calm, contact, communion – these are needed.

Hope comes in the face of Jesus. Jesus arrives in Bethany, and meets Martha – "If only you had been here..." Jesus gives her a reminder of hope – Lazarus will rise again. Martha responds with theology – "Yes, in the last days, he will be resurrected." At that moment, Jesus points to himself – "I am the Resurrection and the Life, whoever believes in me, will live – even if he dies." (John 11:25). Mary, the devout sister, comes out – "If only you had been here..." Jesus felt the pain in her voice and in the mourning cries of the crowd – and he wept... with them. He entered their pain and felt the loss of Lazarus. He not only brought life to Lazarus, but restored hope to Mary and Martha.

Are you facing the results of death around you – a friend, a family member, a spouse? Come to Jesus and let Him restore your hope as he enters your pain and loss. Do you know someone who has lost a friend, a family member, a spouse, a child, a significant other? Help them come to Jesus, so they can find hope in the face of Jesus. Because of your Resurrection, Lord Jesus, we can have a new life, and a new hope, even in the face of death.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the Resurrection and Life – and you bring hope of life to all of us, as we face death around us. You have comforted me, and I ask you to be comfort to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. You have given hope in the place of desperation and I ask you to help us extend your hope to those who are desperate around us. You are Life and I ask you to bring to us an awareness of how we can bring You into the lives of grieving people, so they can find hope in your presence. Amen.

Paul Allen Clark