

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

30

TITLE

Our Comforting Conqueror

SCRIPTURE

John 11:17-44



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Well, it is great to see you, Providence. And if you're a guest with us, welcome. We are really glad you're here. If you're in this room, or in the amphitheater, or at home, welcome. We're glad that you joined us. And if you're not a guest, we're also glad that you joined us as well. It's a great morning. If you brought a Bible, if you want to turn with me to John, chapter 11. If you did not, there should be one on the chair in front of you, there at the bottom. And if you don't have one home, please take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have God's word in your home for you to be able to read throughout the week. It is great to see you and always ... it's always such a privilege to see and to worship with you.

I want to ask you, as we just prayed, to just bow once again, okay? Father in Heaven, as we open up your word, we confess that there are parts of it that say that unless your spirit moves within our heart, that we will not even be able to believe what we read. We won't be able to understand it, we won't be able to apply it, we won't be able to obey it, we won't be able to see it as valuable or important or precious or true or noble or praiseworthy if you do not open our eyes. We pray, God, would you do that? Thank you for, Lord, recording this true even in the life of Jesus for us in this gospel and we pray, God, that for many in this room who've heard this story of Lazarus, God, and just our natural ... just bent is ... is to take things for granted, to assume that we already know. God, would you reengage our minds as we read this? God, would you help us to read it in a way that would ... that would spark curiosity in us for, perhaps, what we are missing in our own life? And, God, I pray that you would show us the glory of Jesus Christ and, in doing so, that we would receive great good.

We ask that you would help, would you speak through weakness? Once again, I pray in Christ's name. Amen. It is ... it's a phrase that's used a lot ... we use it a lot in just ... as we just walk in friendships with each other in our homes. It's a phrase that's used by firefighters or it's used to firefighters when they, perhaps, get to the scene just barely too late and the house is already burned down. It's the phrase that is used sometimes, perhaps, by absentee parents or spouses if and when their family kind of falls part. That phrase is 'if you had been here'. If you would've been here, things would be different. When you think about that little phrase 'if you had been here', there's one part of real affirmation. You have power to make a difference. There's ... there's something that I recognize in you, your skill, ability, wisdom, something. If you had been here implies that we respect this person enough to think that they could have helped. But, also in that equation, is maybe two parts. Disappointment, frustration, confusion, you weren't here. You could've helped but you weren't here.

It's interesting that we use that from time to time. What we mean is that you have the ability to help but you didn't show up when you needed to. It's interesting that in this little story in these verses that we'll read, Jesus is going to be the recipient of that three different times, where people look at him says, "Had you been here. You had the authority and have the power and you didn't come." It's interesting that many of us in the room, perhaps, have uttered that or thought that or prayed that to the Lord.

When we're going through hard times and we look things that just don't compute to us, that equation just doesn't make sense of life and how we got where we got in life and we didn't think life was going to turn out this way and sometimes I think it's natural for us to look up and say, "God, had ... you could've changed things had you been here. Why weren't you there when this?" It's interesting that this story is one that Jesus recognizes and even allows that to take place. In fact, his actions even permit the knowledge that that was going to take place in his life and he still did what he did.

If you remember from last week, we looked at the first 16 verses where two sisters, their names Martha and Mary, they have a brother Lazarus who's sick. They send word to Jesus saying, "You need to come and help. This is the guy that you love, this is your friend. This is our brother. You need to come." And we're told in verses 5 and 6 of this chapter that Jesus intentionally ... it says because he loved them so much, when we heard he stayed two additional days until Lazarus died and then chose to go. This wasn't random, this wasn't an accident. This was intentional. What we looked at last week was this truth and that's that Jesus permits pain in the lives of people he loves because he's patiently working a better plan. That's what we looked at last week.

What we find here is we pick the story right back up to where now Jesus is going to come back into town and he's going to face all that disappoint that's been built up when he was not there. What we're going to see here is this, is that God's plan, although good and infinitely good in the end, it does not mitigate our pain today. We're going to find Jesus to be this conquer and this counselor unlike any other in this text. Let's read it together.

Starting at verse 17 it says now, when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. When Martha hear that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." And Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" And she said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God, who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The teacher's hear and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him when the Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Now, 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.” When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled, then he said, “Where have you laid him?” And they said, “Lord, come and see.” And Jesus wept.

The Jews said, “See how he loved him?” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind men also have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone lay against it. Jesus 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 for four days.” And Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe that you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I say this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” And the man who 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.”

What I want to show you today is three things and they’re really condensed into once sentence, okay? The sentence or the thesis of what I think that you see here is this, that Jesus can comfort our soul and conquer our grave because he is the son of God. He can comfort our soul and he can conquer our grave because he is the son of God. Now, I want to break that into three different pieces, okay? If you want to take notes, this is the first few words here is this, is that Jesus is able to comfort our soul. He’s able to comfort our soul.

Now, I’m sure you have, I know that I have, made specific decisions in life knowing that it was the best thing for myself or maybe for my family or perhaps the church, but also knowing that that decision, even though it’s in my best interest or our best interest, I knew perhaps that it would not be not just well received, but it would likely be misunderstood. As a result of that, when it’s a small thing, I’m just like, “I’ll just ... I’ll just keep it on the down low. It won’t be a big deal.” This happens nearly every, I don’t know, January when we have this stale Halloween candy from the Fall Festival that’s still there and the boys think it’s just still so valuable, and so, they go to school and usually in the year I’m like okay, now it even tastes like each other ‘cause everything has just been sitting there and throw it away, knowing it’s in the best interest of everyone involved, but also knowing that it would be misunderstood that if I did that in front of the boys. All of us, in places of authority, we make decisions and we don’t always advertise all of our decisions, even though we know that they’re the best thing, simply because some people may not understand.

Well, Jesus made a decision to stay two extra days when he was asked to come and there’s no way that he could keep this hidden. We know this because there’s a courier that actually send word to Jesus who knew that he got the word, his own disciples knew that he got the word, and the sisters knew that he got the word, and yet, he still stayed. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, their pain is palpable and I think that their pain is directed in two different areas.

It's really important for us to be wise as people to recognize that peoples' pain is normally not just one thing. It's a mixture of a lot of things that all come together. I think about this situation and not only are they grieving the death of their brother, but they're also incredibly disappointed in Jesus. He comes and Martha hears that he's on his way. She leaves the house and goes out and she starts. She says, "If you had been here my brother would not have died." And hardly without pause, though, even though she's expressed affirmation and disappointment, that she then has room in her heart still at that moment to talk about theology. She said, "But you know what Jesus? I ... I know. I know that whatever you ask of God, God will do for you."

Jesus, recognizing where she's at, says, "Martha, I want you to know something, Lazarus is going to rise from the dead." And she ... as evidenced by her incredible theology from the Old Testament where she's reading and she knows that there's a rescuer that will come and when that rescuer comes, everyone who believes upon that rescuer will be saved and literally even though they die, they will live again. And she says, "I believe. I know that Lazarus will rise again in the final day, at the final resurrection." And Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Why is that so important? What he's saying is, "I am the arrival of that day." And John is very, very passionate about us seeing that Jesus is claiming to be the God of the Old Testament. Repeatedly, John writes down the claim that ... those times when Jesus spoke specific words in order to tell us he really is God. Those words are 'I am'. If you guys remember, this is the fifth time we've talked about this, we've got two more times, Moses, he's out in the wilderness, he's hanging out with a bunch of sheep, God shows up in in a burning bush, he walks over and he says, "This is holy, take your shoes off. I got a task for you. I want you to go back to Egypt where you came from and I want you to take my people, I want you to lead them out to a promise land." And Moses, in all honesty, I mean just honest [inaudible 00:14:18], he goes, "Well, who are you? Like what's your name? And when I get back to Egypt, if I actually go about doing this, and they say 'Well, who sent you?', what should I tell them?" So God says this, "Tell the people 'I am' has sent me to you and this is my name forever."

I am, what that means is this, is that God ... it's a term ... it's a title of incredible mercy and generosity. What he's saying is, I am what you need. You need peace? I'm peace. You need direction in life, you need light? I'm the light of the world. You need a door to get to Heaven? Well, I am the door. You need someone to protect and provide for you? Well, I am the good shepherd. And here Jesus is, he's standing in front of mourners at a home, really close to a tomb where a good friend has just died ... we need a resurrector, we need a resurrection, we need somebody's who's life, that's our greatest need right then. Jesus looks right into the situation, he goes, "You need help with death and I want you to know something, I am the resurrection and the life. That's who I am."

And to prove that Jesus is so for us, he says, “Martha, I want you to think about something for a second.” He says, “Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live.” Well, that’s for Lazarus, isn’t it? Lazarus is in the tomb. He says, “Whoever believes, even if he dies, he shall live.” He says, “I love Lazarus this way.” But then he addresses it to Martha and to the rest of us who are still living and he says, “And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.” In other words, that will not be the final place of your life. Jesus is saying, “I love you and I love your brother and I am not late, Martha. I came at the right time to love you the best way that I can and the way that you need.”

She runs back in and she whispers in Mary’s ear, “The teacher is calling for you.” So Mary gets up and she walks out and a trial of mourners who’ve come just to console, they say, “Well, she must be going out to the tomb, let’s go too.” Now, Mary and Martha and all the ... they all come out and there’s Jesus. And Mary drops in a heap at Jesus’s feet, crying. The only thing that can come out of her mouth is, “If you had been here my brother would not have died. Where were you when we needed you?” It’s interesting, these aren’t just words because we’re told that Mary was weeping. These are words that are truly escaping in-between sobs. Have you ever talked to somebody who’s literally just like really crying at that moment? It’s a difficult conversation, isn’t it? They’re trying to breathe and formulate sentences and cry at the same time, and this is Mary. Mary, in full board emotions, she’s saying, “Jesus, had you been here, you could’ve helped, but you weren’t here.”

What you find next is stunning. It’s a revelation of Jesus that you don’t see very often in the Scriptures, but it’s a revelation of who he truly is. You see, we see lots of places in the Bible where he’s strong and victorious and he’s sovereign, he’s authority, we don’t see God crying very often, but you see it here. And John stacks up four different phrases to tell us how emotional Jesus became when he’s talking to Mary at this moment. It’s amazing if you think about it, right? It says that Jesus cried and the words that he uses to explain this, they’re ... they’re more than what you and I just naturally see in English. It says in ours, “He was deeply moved in the spirit and greatly troubled”. Verse 35 says, “Jesus wept,” and then verse 38 says that “Jesus was deeply moved again”. Most of us think, “Well, that’s like cry hard versus the little whimper cry, sob cry.” It’s not necessarily what’s happening here.

See, these words are also used outside of this section in other places of John and the New Testament to describe something that’s more fierce, it’s more raw, than just crying. In fact, when you see the word ‘deeply moved’, it’s the word for stirred. Back in John, chapter five when there was the pool and all the people who were sick would gather and they would get up and they would ... they would stir the pool, this is the word that’s used here. It’s the same one. Jesus who’s perfectly calm, all of a sudden, the water became agitated. It was like a hot tub, just bubbling and this was Jesus. It says that he was greatly troubled. He was truly disturbed. Some translations actually say instead of that, they say “And he was indignant.” There’s a sense of anger in the word indignant.

There's all of these things that are colliding together and it's really interesting that when you read like theologians and commentaries and everyone kind of things, "I think is why he was so emotional. This is why ...". And I think they were all wrong, only in the sense that they didn't include everybody's thoughts together. I think it was a lot of things. I think his emotion was, not only raw, I think it was very, very complex. I think his ... his heart was literally spilling over with several things, one of which would have been empathy. He's seeing people he loves deeply mourning the death of their brother and it makes him sad. I think he also is grieving because Lazarus was one of his friends. I also think he's standing in front of a world that's so broken and he remembers how he created it and death was not a part of what he intended from the beginning, it was not supposed to go like this. And everywhere Jesus is walking on this Earth, he's seeing everything broken from what he created and the pinnacle of brokenness is human death. And here he is at a grave. There's just the brokenness that he sees and it troubles him.

I also think he knows that he's within two weeks of getting in his own grave. And he knows that that's coming, that I will be in one of these very soon. And I also think that he is grieved because people he loves are disappointed in him. Think about it. You and I, we're created in his image, right? What that means is, when you express naturally, sometimes what that means is, that's an expression of how he would express. How do you like it when someone comes to you and says, "Had you been here"? We feel accused, we feel saddened. And somehow, this pot, it was like this great big cauldron, and all these emotions, they're all pouring in all at one time, and it just spills out and Jesus just erupts with emotion.

In some ways, friends, this is an amazing thing 'cause it proves he's not a stone. He's not emotionally frozen. Well, on the heels of Mary saying this, the crowd, they start talking. And verse 37, some of them said, "Could not he who open the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?" What are they saying? Surely he could have, but he didn't. And if you notice verse 38, it says, "Then Jesus, deeply moved again", the word 'then' can also be translated therefore, meaning on the heels of the crowd of mourners, saying, "You could've helped but you didn't", he's deeply moved again.

He then comes to this grave. It's an amazing thing that Jesus ... you say, "Wait a minute." This whole point is supposed to be that Jesus comforts us and all we'll ... all I'm showing you is how disturbed Jesus was at this moment. What I think I want you to see here is simply this, is that his emotions are one revelation of his glory. They're raw and they're complex, but listen, they're always in perfect alignment. What that means is this, he always cries at things that he should be crying about and he's laughing at things that he should be laughing about, and he never gets those confused. His emotions spills out in appropriate directions and in appropriate ways for what's in front of him. And this should help you and I because when you're sad, he can be sad. He ... he can sympathize, he can empathize with you. He hurts with you.

Two applications to this first point, they're both very similar, at least most of the words, right? The first is this, is let's run to Jesus with our disappointments and receive his help. Most of us in this room have prayed at some point in time "Where were you when I needed you?" If you haven't, let me tell you, I have. I'd say ... I pray about every week, at some point in time. And it's not always about me. A lot of times, it's about you. This week, I left somebody's house and they were really hurting and I left and I said, "God, why? Just do it. Just help them. I know you have the authority and the power, just help them."

And what I want you to know is that Jesus is not intimidated by those thoughts. I ... I believe that and know that and would stand up here and actually tell you that on behalf of him because he put Psalm 44 in the Bible. I don't know if I'm going to have time this morning to read Psalm 44 to you but you can write it down, you can read it. Psalm 44 is really unlike most of the Psalms in that most of the Psalms, there's a pouring out of the soul and then there's usually some summation where God kind of answers the bell and ... or there's some affirmation at the very end that says, "You know, but I'm going to hope in God because this is who he is." You sort of get dragged through the trenches and then, all of a sudden, the Psalm is like "Okay, good. We're all happy again."

Psalm 44, nobody gets happy. It's just down, down, down and then Psalm 45. It's done. And what you see if Psalm 44 is five different verses of the Psalm, and the first verse he's just saying, "You know what? You were always faithful to our forefathers. I know you can do this because you did it before." Second verse, he basically says, "And we believe in you. I'm believing in you. I'm trusting in you. I know you can do this." The third psalm ... or the third verse of the psalm is just the blistering accusation of God. "You failed us in this way and you failed us in this way and you failed us in this way." It's really breathtaking. And then you get to the fourth and that's when you find some confusion. In the fourth verse, he starts saying, "You know what? You've done all this and we were perfect with our part of the covenant. We didn't even sin against you." And you're like, "What?" It just shows some of us, we get kind of confused about how righteous we really are and that God really should be doing things for us. And then the last little verse, God says ... or, no ... the psalm says, "God, this is what I really need you to do, I need you to get out of bed and help me." He says, "Rouse yourself, get up, and help." Period. Over.

Now, why ... why would I go there? Well, it's stunning to me that God would allow something like that to stand without him answering the bell, and I think the reason he does is because he knows that in any relationship, there is disappointment. Even if the other person is in the right, there's disappointment because there's a lack of understanding. He knows that we are in a relationship with him and he knows it's not a license for us to sin and accuse him of evil doings, but he knows that the heart spills out when we don't understand what he's doing, when we don't understand his pace in life, his timing. Why are you doing it this way? And he says, "I just want you to know, I acknowledge that and that doesn't scare me. That's not intimidating to me."

You see, James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and he’ll draw near to you.” I just want to encourage you that when you’re disappointed, even if you come to him and all you can say is, “God, I don’t get it.” Come to him. You need to come to him. You see, what you see is that Jesus is unique in his ability to literally craft the plan to care for each one of us at the place where we’re at and the needs that we have. Martha, if you remember, comes and Martha is overwhelmed but her pain still has some room for theology. So she brings it up. She says, “But you know what, God, like I get it. I’m really disappointed in you, but I know that you can do ... you have a special relationship. You could ask God and he can do stuff and he would do what you ask.” So Jesus crafts a plan to care for her that includes not only comfort but also theology. It’s with Martha that he says, “Okay. You can stomach some talk right now about ... on the resurrection and the life and ...” But you notice for Mary, Mary’s pain at that moment, she may have had just amazing strong theology, but at that moment, her pain was crowding everything out, all she can do is cry. So Jesus doesn’t give her any theology at that moment, he just cries with her.

He’s an amazing, amazing caregiver. You see like a perfect parent who has two children and at bedtime, goes into each of their rooms and cries with one and then gives a very, very pertinent word of advice truth to the other, is there with all of their heart with both of the children, meeting both needs. Jesus is our wonderful counselor.

Shake not your fist at him, run to him in prayer and his word and to his people. What we find is that Jesus will marshal his resources to help and his help may not come how we think it ought to come, but it is what need. Trust him. That means that sometimes when I’m really disturbed I go to the Scriptures and sometimes I get to the Scriptures and what I find is the word of just comfort and sometimes, it’s a word that’s just theology or it’s instruction. And I have to trust that when I open up the Scriptures that God knows what I need the most. When I come to church, sometimes I interact with God’s people and sometimes, some of you come and you remind me of something that’s true and sometimes, you just give me a handshake or a hug. And I have to just believe that in drawing near to God by drawing near to his people, that when people come up that God knows this is what Brian needs today. He cares for you, so draw near to him and he will receive help.

The second thing, though, is the let’s run to Jesus with all of our disappointments and know his love ... to know his love. When you’re beat down and you need comfort, you need to go to him, he’ll give you help and he’s going to show you his love. Why is this so important? It’s ... John thinks this is critically important you understand this, okay? I would beg you, friends, do not measure God’s love for you by how comfortable he makes your life. I realize there’s a lot of people on television that are not going to tell you that. But if comfort were the measure of God’s love, then he hated his disciples. He hated the early church and he hates most of the church today that does not live and worship in freedom and comfort. That is not the way that you measure God’s love for you.

You see, God, Jesus, loves us mainly in this life, here on the Earth, after sin, not by sparing us from pain, but by showing us his glory. I want to show you that. John, chapter three, verse 16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” I go ... see how generous God wants to be? He wants to give us eternal life, what a gift. That’s comforting, it is. But then, Jesus tells us what eternal life is and what he means by it in John, chapter 17, verse 3, and there it says this, “This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” In other words, what he’s saying is this, if you want to know what true eternal life is, it’s not that you get to live forever in comfort, it’s that you get to know God. He’s the prize. He’s the treasure of the redeemed. And John takes us a step further in John, chapter 14, verse 21. Jesus says, “He who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Now, how does God love you? Its greatest expression, its most concentrated form of his love for you, is he manifests himself to you. What does that mean? He makes himself known to you.

You see, friends, one day, you’re going to learn that he’s better than a boat and a beach house and long days. He’s better. He’s better. We struggle with that, and so we doubt his love when we don’t get our boat or when we struggle with being sick. But on this Earth, his greatest expression of love to you is that you know him and that you can adore and you can marvel at his glory, not only now on Earth but forever in Heaven. And isn’t it true, folks, that ... and how many of us can testify that in the hardest and darkest of our days, Jesus loved us, not first by taking away our pain, but by giving himself to us in ways that could only be experienced when we were going through pain? I’ll be totally honest with you, everything that I know about God, all the lessons, all the things that ... the reasons that I trust in him and hope in him most, I learned not on good days but bad days. It was not when I had my fourth pillow on the bed, it’s when I had no pillow on the bed. That’s when you want God and that’s when he shows himself to you. I would just exhort you to run to him, receive his help, and to know his love.

The second big point, right, is that Jesus is able to conquer our grave. He arrives at the tomb and Jesus immediately says, “I want you to take away the stone.” Martha resists because he’s been dead four days and she says, “This isn’t going to go well. It’s not going to smell good.” Jesus makes a connection back to verse 4 when he says, “Did I not tell you that if you believe that you would see the glory of God? In other words, Martha, I’m asking you to watch my love for you right now. I’m about to do something, I want you to watch my love for your brother and I want you to watch what I can do and will do for everyone who calls upon my name at the final resurrection.” Jesus backs up, he prays, he ... and all of a sudden, he cries out with a loud voice and he says, “Lazarus, come out.”

Suddenly, the authority of Jesus words commender Lazarus dead body. And all of a sudden, what we find is his cells regenerate. His organs engage, his blood liquefies, his lungs gasp for air, his body begins to warm, his eyes open up, his muscles begin to engage and move.

And suddenly, Lazarus, still bound up in all of his rags, he walks out of that tomb. This is the glory of Jesus Christ, friends, listen. If you know Jesus Christ, one day, this too will happen to you. You will die physically, you and I are going ... if Jesus [inaudible 00:35:34] ways to come, you're going to get into a grave one day. Actually, someone's going to put you in a grave one day. But if you know Jesus Christ, then this is the physical picture of what's going to take place spiritually in every one of our lives, where we're literally going to be resurrected to be able to enjoy fellowship with him forever. Jesus did this physically to show us what he's going to do in everyone who calls upon his name spiritually.

You see, Jesus is the innovator and the renovator of all things, including our bodies. By way of application, let's trust Jesus with the greatest of our fears. See, in spite of all of our efforts to stay young, we're all losing. We're all going to get older and we're all going to die. And the fact is, is that's frightening. The only people that that doesn't scare are Christians and it still scares Christians. It's frightening and it's disheartening and it's unfitting. We know, everything around us says, everything in us says this wasn't as planned for us to die. You see, death is a curse for our sin. It even as a curse was being, God was making a promise. He says, "Because of sin you will die but I'm going to send a rescuer." And Jesus Christ came and he lived on this Earth. He rose Lazarus from the dead and less than two weeks later, he was going to die on a cross and he's going to get in a grave and he's going to rise from the dead. And everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ is forgiven of their sin, is given Jesus righteousness, is given God spirit to live within us as a guarantee of the final resurrection.

You see, there's no other hope. Jesus did all this for us, and so let's trust Jesus with the greatest of all of fears. You can trust him with this. And the reasons that he can be a comforter and the reason he can be a counselor is because number three, is that Jesus is able to do these things because he's the son of God. Martha knew that he had a unique relationship with the father when he ... when she said, "You know, you've ... you're late to the scene here but I still know that if you ask something from God, he's going to give it to you." We see another portrait of this unique relationship with God the father when Jesus prays sort of an interesting prayer. He's like, "God, I know you always hear me, I'm saying this so that other people can know that you sent me, that we have this really cool, interesting, unique relationship that nobody else has like us." He's unique in his ability and his authority to do these things. We can run to him when we need because he's the son of God.

John started us, if you remember John, chapter 1, verse 1, where he says, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." That word there is for Jesus. Jesus was in the beginning, Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. And you said, "Why did he use the word 'word'?" Well, it's the same reason we use words. Let me show you a little picture, I want you to just yell out one word of what you see. All right, I heard nothing there just [inaudible 00:38:58]. All right. Okay.

Audience: A meadow.

Brian Frost: Okay, a meadow. What else do you see?

Audience: Mountain.

Brian Frost: Mountains, what else?

Audience: [inaudible 00:39:05]

Brian Frost: Flowers. Okay, okay.

Audience: [inaudible 00:39:08]

Brian Frost: Exactly. Okay. I see green, I see yellow, I see blue, I see rock, I see glory, I see all kinds of things. And all of us could use a lot of different words and that's exactly what we do. We use words to describe things so that other can enjoy them like we enjoy them. And God wanted us to enjoy him like he enjoys his relationship, and so God used words and the words that he used was Jesus. Jesus is the word. He is the definition. He is ... he's the final authoritative word that says this is who God is. And this word, verse 14, says, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we've seen his glory, glory as the only son from the father, full of grace and truth." See, if I move in your neighborhood and I build a 20 foot fence around my house, that says something about my real desire to interact with you, but if I put a little three man tent in your backyard, it says a whole different thing, doesn't it? And this is what he did. When he say, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us", the word there is literally he set up his tent. He wanted you to see him so that you could know him because that's the greatest way that he can love you.

By way of application, let's look to share the uniqueness of Jesus this week. I had an opportunity to do this last ... last Wednesday. Two people are all distraught about the election, I just say, "Let me tell you something. Let me tell you what gives me comfort today." And I just tell them about Jesus, that he is unique. You see, where there's brokenness all around us and people are disappointed all around us and there's injustice all around us, there's fear all around us, people are dying and grieving all around us and Jesus is the only answer. And Jesus tells us this, "As the father has sent me, so I'm sending you." Let's look for opportunities this week to tell people about our comfort and conquer, okay?

Let's pray together. Father, we love you. Thank you for your kindness to us that's expressed to us in its greatest ways by showing yourself to us. And we thank you so much for the revelation of Jesus that we see. Thank you, God, that you're able to comfort, that you're able to conquer, because you're God. We acknowledge you and we worship you. God, I pray that you would use this ... these moments, these last moments of our service together, God, that you would speak to us, that you would encourage us. For those in this room that are grieving the death of even a loved one, I pray, Father, that you would comfort them. Thank you so much for the opportunity to sing to you and to give to you and we pray that our singing and our giving, you would take these things, these offerings, and that, God, that you would use them for your glory and honor. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.



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