

Sermon Growth Guide

March 19, 2023

Unbound - I Believe

John 11:17-27 (ESV)

Key Verse: John 11:25 (ESV) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,”

Big Idea: Jesus is the life-giving God; whoever trusts in Him has eternal life, beginning now.



Foundations

The day that Jesus arrives in Bethany is called by some the “hopeless day.” This is because it was understood that God always works on the third day. But not only that, the people of Jesus’ time also thought that a person’s soul hovered over their body for three days, keeping alive the hope that perhaps they weren’t dead. But the fourth day? Not a chance for life. By the fourth day, death ruled. And this was when Jesus decided to come.

That delay creates all sort of questions, but the big question is, “Why the delay?” Mary, Martha and Lazarus were among Jesus’ best friends. Couldn’t Jesus show some of the same urgency that must have been in the message Jesus received about Lazarus’ illness?

But Jesus’ purpose is not just to restore Lazarus to life. Jesus wants to demonstrate that He alone is the source of life. Had Jesus come earlier, some would have said that Lazarus’ soul had just re-entered his body. In the words of *The Princess Bride*, he wasn’t dead, he was only *mostly* dead.

So, on the hopeless fourth day, Jesus shows up to make the most astounding claim—the most certain thing, death, does not have the last word. Jesus does, as He boldly claims when He declares to Martha that He is the resurrection and the life.

Understanding God’s Word

Read John 11:20–27 and John 4:7–15.

We don’t have audio or video that would help us understand the tone of this conversation. How would you describe the flow of this conversation? Compare it to Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well. In both cases, what is Jesus offering and why do you think both women receive His offers with boldness?

Applying God’s Word

In verse 11, Jesus says that Lazarus is just sleeping. While it is a metaphor for real death, sleeping can also describe how we go through life before Jesus raises us to new life in Him. From what kind of “sleep” does Jesus awaken us in this life?

In verse 25, Jesus declares that He is the resurrection and the life. In what ways is this statement both a claim and a promise?

Witnessing God’s Word

The world is frenetic in its efforts to find life, only to be disappointed in the brief shelf life of its remedies for staving off death. In what ways does, or can, your life demonstrate that?

You have been made alive in Jesus...now. What qualities of your life are markers of the kind of life Jesus gives?