

RUSH 2010
“The Jesus I Thought I Knew”
Part 3 – Saturday PM
I AM The Resurrection & The Life

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Intro:

- We’re spending this weekend examining that very question, who is Jesus.
- It’s always an interesting experiment going on the street to get people’s feedback, because Jesus is offensive.
- The mere mention of his name raises pulses and emotions.
- And everyone has an opinion as to who Jesus was, and is.

Who Do You Say I AM?

There's *Therapist Jesus*— who helps us cope with life's problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.

There's *Starbucks Jesus*— who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid, and goes to film festivals.

There's *Open-minded Jesus*— who loves everyone all the time no matter what (except for people who are not as open-minded as you).

There's *Touchdown Jesus*— who helps athletes run faster and jump higher than non-Christians and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.

There's *Martyr Jesus*— a good man who died a cruel death so we can feel sorry for him.

There's *Gentle Jesus*— who was meek and mild, with high cheek bones, flowing hair, and walks around barefoot, wearing a sash (while looking very German).

There's *Hippie Jesus*— who teaches everyone to give peace a chance, imagines a world without religion, and helps us remember that "all you need is love."

There's *Yuppie Jesus*— who encourages us to reach our full potential, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.

There's *Spirituality Jesus*— who hates religion, churches, pastors, priests, and doctrine, and would rather have people out in nature, finding "the god within" while listening to ambiguously spiritual music.

There's *Platitude Jesus*— good for Christmas specials, greeting cards, and bad sermons, inspiring people to believe in themselves.

There's *Revolutionary Jesus*—who teaches us to rebel against the status quo, stick it to the man, and blame things on "the system."

There's *Guru Jesus*—a wise, inspirational teacher who believes in you and helps you find your center.

There's *Boyfriend Jesus*—who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.

There's *Good Example Jesus*—who shows you how to help people, change the planet, and become a better you.

And then there's *Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God*. Not just another prophet. Not just another Rabbi. Not just another wonder-worker. He was the one they had been waiting for: the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

This Christ is not a reflection of the current mood or the projection of our own desires. He is our Lord and God. He is the Father's Son, Savior of the world, and substitute for our sins—more loving, more holy, and more wonderfully terrifying than we ever thought possible.

- The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is.

This Weekend:

- This weekend, we're trying to discover the real Jesus by examining his own words, his "I AM" statements in the Gospel of John.
- My prayer is that those of you who are unsure or unconvinced of the true identity of Jesus will come face to face with his own words, and come to a place where you can put your faith in the true I AM
- I also pray for those of you who have been following him for a while, but maybe with some doubts, or questions.
- John says he writes these things that you might know that Jesus is the one who was to come, the Messiah, the Savior of the World!

Review:

- It's been quite a journey (review weekend, texts and emails)
- Started last night talking about Jesus as the bread of life.
- This morning, Jesus said he is the way, the truth, and the life.

- Text & email questions.

Today – John 11

- Tonight, we're looking at Jesus' claim to be the resurrection and the life.
- And at the end of this message, I'm going to invite you to respond to the Jesus who is.
- I believe this is going to be a pivotal night in many of your lives, so I'm going to ask us to bow and invite God to speak in a powerful way.

Prayer:

First Funeral:

- I'm not sure if you remember the first funeral you went to.
- I do.
- I was 7 years old I think.
- It was held at the my church.
- I don't remember who it was for, but I do remember not understanding much.
- I know I didn't realize the depth of what I was seeing, the finality of this ceremony
- And I even remember getting in trouble by my parents for making a joke about something to my siblings.

Funerals: Coffin

- Since then, I have been to many funerals, and each has impacted me quite deeply, for different reasons.
- We have a coffin on stage tonight.
- We thought long and hard about doing this because of the strong symbol and emotions that are attached to it.
- But it's important to wrestle with this subject, because will all face it.

Humor:

- I read the story of some friends who were hanging out one day, when the conversation turned to the issue of death.

- One of the friends asked the others, "What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?"
- One friend answered, "I would want people to say, 'He was a great humanitarian who cared about his community.'"
- A second replied, "I would want people to say, 'He was a great husband and father, an example for many to follow.'"
- The third friend gave it some thought and answered, "I would hope someone says, 'Look, he's moving!'"
- I think we'd all like to have that said about us.

Struggle with Death:

- The truth is we live in an age that does its best to deny death.
- Few of us have seen someone die.
- Last week, it was incredibly hard to watch the 21 year old luger leave the track at the Olympics and strike a pole at 140 kilometers an hour.
- That is shocking.
- We like to keep death at arms length.
- People rarely die at home anymore, but in sanitized health care facilities.
- We build coffins that look like plush, oversized jewelry boxes and cemeteries that look like peaceful gardens.
- We use euphemisms – passed away, moved on - to gloss over what we dare not say.
- And all of this is cultural, springing from the heartfelt wish to make death pleasant.

Mask Death:

- But it masks a profound anxiety that even the prettiest funeral service cannot disguise.

- For it is at the face of death that we are forced to stand naked, confronting the stark reality of our mortality that we would rather not look at directly.

Jesus Response:

- It is into this world, our world, that Jesus speaks this I AM statement.
- He asks us to lean in close.
- And then he says these amazing words. . . .but it's not over.
- It's really just beginning.
- Death is not the final frontier.
- It is a transition.
- It is the turning of a page to a new world, a new reality, a new life, everlasting.

I AM:

- Let's look at how this comes about in John 11.

Read John 11:1-6

Honest Request:

- Let me stop there and unpack this section for a moment.
- The chapter opens by establishing the friendship between Jesus and this family, Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
- Obviously Lazarus' illness was a concern of Jesus because the sisters sent word to him saying: "Lord, the one you love is sick."
- I look at the request in *verse 3* almost as a prayer.
- Simple, honest appeal. . . we make those today.
- "God, the one you love is sick. . . do something."

Wait A While:

- His answer sometimes shocks us. . . "Wait a while"
- **Verse 5.** "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days."
- Jesus loved them, yet he stayed.
- We don't like that word "yet".



- It's like the word "but"
- It means that whatever went before is being tempered by what is going to come afterwards.
- Jesus loved them, but he didn't do anything right away.
- We want Jesus to do something right now!
- Anything after this moment seems to be too late.
- And when He does not act, we question his love or his power.

God's Timing:

- However that isn't the real question.
- The question isn't whether God loves, or whether God is powerful.
- The question is whether we operate on our timing or God's timing.
- We want Him to come now, but he responds in His time.
- Jesus knows from the very beginning that the sickness will not end in death. . . he knows what's going to happen.
- It's for God's glory that this has happened.
- You may be walking through a dark valley today.
- You need to know that you aren't walking alone.
- And even though you may feel that God isn't answering, you might be living in the midst of the "yet".

Read Verse 7-16

Why Not Heal Immediately?

- Why didn't Jesus go right away to heal Lazarus?
- He explains in *verse 15*: "And for your sake, I am glad I wasn't there, because this will give you another opportunity to believe in me."
- Friends, today, Jesus is presenting you an opportunity to believe in him, to put your faith and trust in Him, to turn to Him.

Read Verse 17-19**Jewish Mourning:**

- When they got there, Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.
- That meant the journey must've been at least two days long, because they waited two days before setting out.
- Here's something interesting I found out as I was preparing for this message.
- The custom of that day was to mourn near the graves of the deceased, because they believed that the person's spirit hovered around the place where the body was laid for up to three days, to see whether it might be permitted to enter again.
- But after three days, the spirit knew all hope was past, and would depart.
- The Jews would mourn the loss of a relative for thirty days, with the first three days being called days of weeping, followed by seven days of lamentation because all hope was gone.
- Jesus arrived after all hope was gone.

Read Verse 20-27**Martha's Faith:**

- We read in Scripture that Martha was the "active" sister, perhaps the older of the two.
- When she heard of his arrival, she ran to meet Jesus and greeted him with a very honest statement: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."
- You and I have probably said that in our own lives.
- "God, if only you had showed up, if only you had intervened, if only you had taken interest in our situation, this wouldn't have happened."
- That's natural. That's normal. That's expected.

What We Do:

- The key is what we do with the next thought.
- Our tendency is to go on saying, "You must not care. . . You must not love me."
- Martha spoke in faith: "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."



- It makes you wonder what she was expecting.
- Probably not what Jesus responded with: “Your brother will rise again.”
- Martha knew that, but she was thinking about a future resurrection.
- Jesus was speaking more immediate:

Resurrection & the Life:

- Here’s the verse you will want to underline.
- *John 11:25-26* Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”
- That’s a crazy claim to make if you’re just a good teacher.
- If I stood up today and said to you that I am the resurrection and the life – he who believes in me will live, even though he dies, you would rightfully hand me your “cuckoo clocks”.
- But Jesus can make that statement because he is indeed the resurrection and the life.

Jesus “IS” Resurrection:

- Now note, Jesus did not say that he could *provide* resurrection and life.
- That in itself would be astounding.
- Jesus said he *is* the resurrection and the life.
- In other words, eternal life and rescue from the finality of death are not merely gifts obtained by appeal to God.
- They are aspects of what it means to live a life in association with Jesus.
- Resurrection life is found in Jesus himself.

Physical Death:

- Of course, this does not mean that followers of Jesus will not die a physical death.
- We know this to be true.
- Nor does it mean that it is wrong to grieve the loss of a loved one.
- That in no way shows a lack of faith or trust in God.
- What Jesus is saying is this is not the end.
- Life will exist beyond the grave.



- Death is not the final frontier
- The grave can not hold you.

Believe This?

- So Jesus says “I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”
- Throughout his ministry on earth, Jesus always called for a response.
- It’s not enough to hear his words.
- We need to respond to them. . . personalize them.

Martha’s Response:

- Martha makes an amazing statement of faith when she said in verse 27 “Yes Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

Our Response:

- What about you. . . how would you respond to that same question?
- Do you believe this?
- What is keeping you from wholeheartedly declaring your faith?

Words vs. Action:

- Now the truth is, we know words are cheap, but actions speak louder.
- And in this case, Jesus’ words were backed up in a powerful way.
- Let’s carry on with the story.

Read John 11:28-45

Put Faith in Him:

- *Verse 45* – “Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.”

- Interesting: When they saw, then they believed
- Same happened in John 2 when Jesus turned water into wine, John 9 when the blind man was healed
- When you see God's miracles, you have a choice of what to do with them.
- The point of these miracles is simple, that you may believe.
- Because yes, it was great to have Lazarus back from the dead.
- But you know what? He would die again.
- The greater question is how you respond to someone who claims to be the resurrection and the life, and then raises someone from the dead?

Jesus & Funerals:

- You know what is so amazing?
- Think about this for a minute.
- Jesus broke up every funeral he ever attended!
- *Matthew 9* – Jairus's Daughter
- *Luke 7* – A Widow's Son
- Now Lazarus!
- "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

Foreshadow Jesus' Death

- What Jesus could do for Lazarus by opening the tomb was a foreshadow of what he could do for himself.
- The tomb that could not contain Lazarus could not contain Jesus either.
- And the grave will not contain us either.

Dying vs. Death:

- If I were honest with you, I can truly say I am not looking forward to dying.
- I just don't want to be there when it happens.
- But I am not afraid of death.
- Because I know it is not the end.

- And I know whom I have believed in.
- I have put my faith, my trust, in the one who says I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Your Confidence:

- Do you have that confidence?
- You can.
- This same Jesus who said it and proved it, speaks to you and me.

C.S. Lewis – Narnia:

- Let me close with a quote from C.S. Lewis that I love, because it speaks of the life beyond.
- On the final page of the final book of The Chronicles of Narnia, some of the children who have been to Narnia lament that they once again must return to their homeland—the Shadow-Lands. But Aslan (the lion who represents Jesus) has the best news of all for them:
- [Aslan spoke to the children,] "You do not yet look so happy as I mean you to be."
- Lucy said, "We're so afraid of being sent away, Aslan. And you have sent us back into our own world so often."
- "No fear of that," said Aslan. "Have you not guessed?"
- Their hearts leaped and a wild hope rose within them.
- "There was a real railway accident," said Aslan softly. "Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadow-Lands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream has ended; this is morning."
- And as he spoke he no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great

Story, which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

Invitation:

- Tonight, I'm going to invite you into chapter one of the great story, which no one has read, which goes on forever, and in which every chapter is better than the one before.
- I'm going to ask you to leave your seats and come to the front.
- Jon and the team are going to come and lead us.
- You come as well. . . bring a friend or a youth sponsor.

Response:

Song "Untitled Hymn"

Prayer

Prayer time after at the front.



Personal Reflection Questions

Reflection Questions

1. What is your greatest fear when it comes to the idea of dying?
2. How would you most like to go? Least like to go?
3. Why do we try to sanitize death?
4. When was the last time you attended a funeral? What was it like? How have funerals impacted your own faith?
5. Who is the closest person to you who has died or is dying?
6. What concerns you the most about dying?
7. What does it mean to have a “saving belief in Jesus”?
8. Look at Martha’s response to Jesus’ question in *John 11:27*. What does that reveal about her faith?
9. As Christians, we love to speak of the cross, and the crucifixion. Why have we often overlooked the power of the resurrection?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

- It’s interesting to note that Jesus broke up every funeral he attended! Look at the accounts of how Jesus raised others from the dead:
 - *Luke 7:11-17* – A Widow’s Son
 - *Matthew 9:18-26* – Jairus’s Daughter
- Further study on the Resurrection:
 - *John 3:14-18*
 - *John 6:63*
 - *Matthew 25:46*
 - *John 5:28-29*
 - *John 17:1-3*
 - *Acts 24:15*
 - *1 Corinthians 15:12-22*
 - *Romans 6:23*
 - *1 John 1:2*
- What do we learn about Martha from the way she talks with Jesus in *John 11:21-27*? Could you make the same statement of faith that Martha did in verse 27?

Taking it Home (Application)

- On a scale of 1 (none) to 10 (completely), how confident are you that you will live eternally? How would you live your life if you were more confident?
- At the end of time, the key question God is going to ask you is, ‘What did you do with my son, Jesus’. How will you answer that question?