

Monday Morning Rewind - May 26, 2008

Happy Memorial Day. Today we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. It is also a time to remember loved ones we've lost. Yesterday, J.R. Simplot, Idaho's wealthiest citizen, passed away. Also passing to her rest yesterday, was Mrs. Ritter, mother-in-law to Eagle Adventist School principal Larry Pitcher. From rich to poor, celebrity to unknown, all die. But because of the One who made the ultimate sacrifice on Calvary, we can celebrate our freedom, not just from the tyranny of dictatorship, but from the tyranny of the grave!

On Sabbath we heard Jesus declare to Martha, the grieving sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus stood before her declaring Himself as the eternal, indestructible life of almighty God. He appeared to give us that same eternal, indestructible life, and we may have it if we feed on Him, follow Him, and put our faith and unshaken trust in Him. This is the gospel in a nutshell.

"He who believes in me will live," Jesus said, "even though he dies (The first death). And whoever lives (is alive spiritually, having been born again) and believes in me will never die" (perish eternally in the 2<sup>nd</sup> death)" (John 11:25, 26). When we believe in Jesus He gives us what He has-life as God intended and life as God Himself lives it. Eternal life. An indestructible life. And we are "perish-proof." Not sleep-proof (1<sup>st</sup> death illustrated by Lazarus), but perish-proof (2<sup>nd</sup> death).

Jesus waited four days after Lazarus died to call Him back to life. I believe He did this to prove that no matter how badly decomposed from sin we are, the love and power of God can still reach us!

Jesus' word is as good as His touch. He is the living Word of God, and the same voice that spoke, "Let there be light," in the beginning, and spoke the commandments from Mt. Sinai, now speaks life to the dead man. "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43)

Earlier Jesus had prophesied: "A time is coming when all who are in their graves (not in heaven or hell) will hear his voice and come out" (Jn. 5:28). In Lazarus, we get a glimpse of that day. In *that* day "all" will come out-but on this day in Bethany, He has to limit the power of His word to one called Lazarus. If He didn't specify, the general day of resurrection would have come too soon and everyone would have come out!

Notice Jesus didn't say, "Come back!" or "Come down!" But "Come out." Lazarus hadn't gone anywhere but in that tomb waiting the command of the Word of Life.

**This we believe:** "The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day, death is an unconscious sleep for all people; It is a state from which it is possible to awaken. When Christ, who is "the resurrection and the life," appears-"The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thess. 4:13-17)

Lazarus heard the voice of His Creator and friend, and the dead man came out! Hallelujah! Jesus holds the keys to death and the grave and assures us that this is not the end. As we pause to honor those we've lost today, let's be sure to thank the One whose death and resurrection transforms our death into a mere sleep from which He will awaken us. Rewind to John 1:4; 5:26; 6: 14:6; Acts 4:15; Heb. 7:16; 1 John 1:1,2; 1 John 5:20 and Rev. 1:18 to see again, the quality of life Jesus offers to each one of us. He's offering it to you today. What a God! What a Savior!-Pastor Randy