

NAIL YOUR COLOURS TO THE MAST

THE GREAT I AM #4 – I AM THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE

Introduction: Photo of oil rig / tornado / lightning



- “We heard the roar”
 - Covid
 - Lockdown
 - Bushfires
 - Floods
 - Lightning bolt of war that shows how fragile our world can be
- In Jesus’ time: they faced political uncertainty
 - Weather crisis
 - Lockdowns
 - Personal health issues
- Key people: Mary, Martha & Lazarus
 - All friends and possibly related to Jesus
 - Lazarus died.



ILLUSTRATION: Nailing colours to the mast¹

In the “Age of Sail”, ships were identified by the flags (or “colours”) that they flew from the top of their masts. At a time before radio, this was vital, allowing sailors to identify who was on their side and who was the enemy. This action has given rise to all sorts of English phrases. So sometimes ships would disguise themselves by hoisting other flags and would “fly under false colours.” If they then suddenly changed their flags to reveal their true identity, they were “showing their true colours.”

In a sea battle, any ship that wished to surrender would lower her colours. There is a story of how, during the great sea battle of Camperdown in 1798 between the English Royal Navy and the Dutch, the colours of the British flagship were shot down.

¹ www.canonijohn.com 19/03/2020

Recognising the danger that this would be taken as a sign that the British had surrendered, a sailor, Jack Crawford, climbed to the top of the main mast and, ignoring heavy fire, replaced the colours, nailing them to what was left of the mast.

The battle continued, and eventually the Dutch fleet was destroyed. Some historians consider that it was this victory that allowed “Britain to rule the waves” of the world for the next 150 years. In which case, Jack Crawford’s single act of heroism has consequences of extraordinary significance.

1. Identity comes from Whom You Serve

- Mary and Martha are in grief / shock (vv 21, 32)
- Martha’s response:

John 11:22 *But I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask.*

2. Going Deeper with Jesus

John 11:25 *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?”*

- Jesus the “I am”

Colossians 1:15-17 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by Him and for Him. His is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

- Jesus is Resurrection and life
- Resurrection = the act of bringing some thing that has disappeared or ended back into existence or use.²
- Jesus was there at the beginning and will be there at the end.
- What needs resurrecting in your life?

² Cambridge Dictionary

3. The Compassion of Jesus

- Does Jesus care about my loss?
- Does God the Father care about my situation?
- When we look at Jesus we see the Father (Colossians 1:15-17)

John 11:33-37 *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" He asked.*

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

But some of them said, "Could not He Who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

- Notice the different reactions....
 - See how he loved him...
 - Why couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?
 - It is the age-old question.... *"If God is so powerful, why doesn't He stop evil?"*

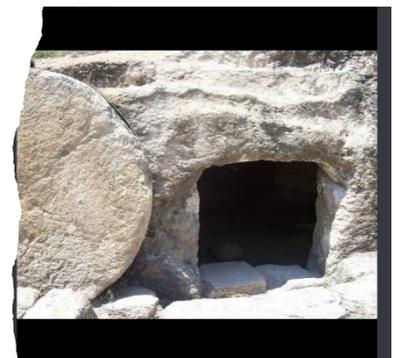
Revelation 21:3-4 *I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

- The old order has not passed yet
 - We have received the first fruits (spiritual birth) but NOT our immortal bodies.

4. The Instructions of Jesus

A) "Take away the stone!"

- Remove the obstacle that holds you back
 - Toxic relationships
 - Unforgiveness
 - Anger, resentment
 - unbelief



B) Speak in Faith

- First in prayer – Jesus said “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me...”
- Speak LIFE into that situation.

C) Remove the Grave Clothes

- Get rid of anything that has the stink of death / destruction attached to it.



Conclusion: The second thing about the “nailing the colours to the mast” is that it made surrender to the enemy virtually impossible. It was a bold act of defiance, saying in effect, that we will sink rather than admit defeat.

