

Briefing Document: Resurrection Sunday-“The Final I Am and Where’s Your Focus”

April 5, 2026

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the theological and practical insights from the April 5, 2026, service at New Life Family Worship Center. The central theme explores the final "I Am" declaration of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John, specifically His identity as "the resurrection and the life." The discourse emphasizes a shift in focus from earthly circumstances and grief to the exclusive power and presence of Christ. Key takeaways include the definition of death as "sleep" for believers, the intentionality of Christ’s timing in the raising of Lazarus, and the threefold role of Jesus as the Creator of physical life, the Recreator of spiritual life, and the Guarantor of eternal life.

The Concept of Death as Sleep

A foundational element of the discourse is the redefinition of death for those within the Christian faith. Drawing from the narrative of Lazarus in John 11, the teaching highlights a "new" perspective that was not fully comprehended by the disciples until after the ascension of Christ.

- **Temporary Separation:** When Jesus states in *John 11:11*, "*Our friend Lazarus sleeps,*" He introduces the concept that for a believer, death is not permanent. It is described as a temporary state, akin to physical sleep, from which one will eventually wake.
- **The believer vs. the Unbeliever:** The document distinguishes between the "temporary" nature of death for the believer and the "permanent" nature of eternal damnation for the unbeliever.
- **Thomas’s Resignation:** The transcript notes the trepidation of the disciples, specifically Thomas, who understood that returning to the vicinity of Jerusalem (Bethany) posed a lethal risk. His statement, "*Let us also go, that we may die with Him*" (*John 11:16*), reflects a somber commitment to Christ despite a lack of understanding regarding the impending miracle.

The Theology of the "Final I Am"

The declaration "I am the resurrection and the life" is presented as perhaps the most critical assertion regarding the exclusivity of Jesus Christ. The context of this declaration—a funeral—highlights the irony and power of Christ’s authority over death.

Intentional Delay and Divine Timing

Jesus delayed His arrival in Bethany for four days. This was a strategic choice designed to dismantle contemporary superstitions:

- **The Three-Day Superstition:** During this period of Jewish history, a common belief suggested that the spirit remained near the body for three days after death.
- **Absolute Proof of Death:** By waiting until the fourth day, Jesus ensured there was no doubt regarding Lazarus's physical state (noted by the reference to the odor of decay). This ensured the subsequent miracle could only be attributed to divine power.

Shifting Focus from Future to Present

A significant portion of the teaching addresses Martha's reaction to Jesus's arrival. Martha initially limits Christ's power to the past or the distant future:

- **Past Regret:** She believes that if Jesus had been there sooner, He could have healed her brother.
- **Future Hope:** She acknowledges the Pharisaic belief in the general resurrection on the "last day."
- **Present Reality:** Jesus challenges this by declaring His identity in the present tense. As stated in *John 11:25-26*: "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*"

The Threefold Role of Christ

The document outlines three distinct ways in which Jesus Christ functions as the source of life for humanity.

1. Creator of Physical Life

Christ is identified as the only architect of physical existence.

- **Scriptural Basis:** *Acts 17:25* states that "*He gives to all life, breath, and all things.*"
- **Application:** This includes the formation of life in the womb, asserting that every breath is a gift from God.

2. Recreator of Spiritual Life

The teaching posits that all humans are born "spiritually dead" due to inherited sin, a condition traced back to the Fall of Adam and Eve.

- **Inherited Iniquity:** Referencing *Psalms 51:5*, the text notes: "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*"
- **The Necessity of Rebirth:** Only Christ can "re-erect" a dead spirit. This is linked to the conversation with Nicodemus in *John 3* regarding the necessity of being born again.

- **Abundant Life:** Jesus's mission is described in *John 10:10*: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

3. Guarantor of Eternal Life

The final role is the assurance of heaven. The term "resurrection" is defined as the act of being "stood up" by the Holy Spirit. While humans are "horizontal" (dead) in their sins, Christ makes them "vertical" (alive) in Him.

Conclusion: Martha's Confession and the Christian Mandate

The culmination of the message is Martha's shift in focus, resulting in a threefold confession of faith. In *John 11:27*, she states: "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

- **The "Yes, Lord" Factor:** This confession represents the "key to Christian success." It moves the believer's focus away from personal grief or need and onto the person of Jesus.
- **Centrality of Christ:** The teaching concludes that once salvation is secured, every other blessing is "icing on the cake." The primary mandate for the believer is to maintain an unwavering focus on Christ's love, grace, and mercy, regardless of current suffering or uncertainty.
- **The Magnitude of Love:** The service emphasizes that Christ's sacrifice was personal; even if only one person had sinned, the magnitude of His love would have led Him to the cross to satisfy the wrath of God and secure redemption.

Note on Greek Vocabulary: *The source context discusses the meaning of the word "resurrection" as "to re-erect," but it does not provide specific Greek terms or vocabulary within the transcript. Consequently, no phonetic pronunciation guide is required for this document.*