I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

The scientific world is divided over whether or not DNA is the essence of life. Of course, as believers, we know that God is the Source and Creator of all life. Life issues out of the living God! We agree with Christian biologist, Hessel Bouma III, "God is the Creator. Therefore, nothing that God made is god." Certainly, nature is not its own maker! So, the truth is that God, the Maker, not DNA, is the essence of life!

The Gospel of John is a Gospel of life. The word "life" is found almost forty times in this Gospel, and it reveals that Jesus, Who is God, is the essence of life. We are confronted with this emphasis in the very first chapter. Concerning Christ, John declared, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (1:4). Later, explaining to those who rejected Him that He was the essence of life, Jesus said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40).

The Christian experience is one of life. To receive the Lord Jesus, is to receive life. Later, in this Gospel, Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (10:10). Believers do not just have to try to live the Christian life. Christ is our Life! The Christian life is not Christ plus something, or Christ with something, but it is Christ, and Christ alone. With Paul, we can say, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

In the text before us, Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live." Here, Jesus promised Easter before Easter! He had not concluded His earthly ministry; He had not gone to the cross; He had not come forth from the grave; But, He proclaimed that He was "the resurrection and the life!" Before His resurrection, He promised resurrection!

Like all of the "I Am" claims of Christ in John's Gospel, this great "I Am" statement points us to the sufficiency of Christ. In this declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life," He reminded Martha that in the face of death, and in her hour of sorrow and grief, He was everything she needed. This is a declaration of Who Christ is, an unveiling of His Person! Here are words of divine fullness!

Some have taken that Old Testament revelation of God, "I Am that I Am" (Exod. 3:14), as a blank check. Personally, I feel that the title represents much more than that. To me, it seems to present the total being of God, not just a bank account. But, if we were to think of that name as a blank check, then in the "I Am" claims of Jesus, He is filling in the blank. Again, from this vantage point, He is saying, "I am all you need!"

I am not very clever, but I do know what to do with a check that has been filled in, signed, and given to me. I take it to the bank! I cash in on it! And, wise is the Christian who learns to cash in on
the sufficiency of Christ. His fullness is more than a conversational piece! In His fullness, all the
divine resources are available to us, and are to be appropriated by us.

Now, as we come to this great "I Am" statement, "I am the resurrection and the life,"
and to the subject, "Jesus: The Essence Of Life," what is the message? To better understand this truth, let's
examine the words of this particular revelation, and the context in which it was given.

First of all, without question, in this great claim of Christ, we are pointed to:

1. THE ATTRIBUTE OF DIVINE LIFE

It is evident that "life" is a big theme in John's Gospel. But, the emphasis is not just on life. Rather,
the message is that of divine life, eternal life! It is God's life that is needed! And, it is God's life that
is revealed in Christ! Hear the testimony of Jesus, Himself. He said, "For as the Father hath life in
Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (5:26).

In his second book, referring to Christ as the essence of life, the Apostle John confessed, "For the
life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life,
which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1:2). The Apostle Paul also
proclaimed Christ as the essence of life, saying, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God
is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Let's meditate upon this divine trait as it is revealed in Jesus. We notice, first of all, that:

A. Christ's Life Is Independent Life

Because the Lord Jesus used the title, "I Am," in the statement, "I am the resurrection and the
life," He revealed that His life is independent life. To use the words of another, "God, the first
Cause, Who is without a cause, and is the Cause of all, is independent. He, receiving His being
from none, is independent of any; which can only be said of one; there is but one independent
Being, and therefore but one God" (John Gill).

Angels derive their life and existence from God. The earth derives its life from Him. You and I
derive our existence from Him. But, Jesus does not derive His life, or borrow His life from any
other source. He is the Source! He is not the stream, the creek, or the river. He is the headwaters!
As God, Jesus exists and lives in and of Himself!

Christ's life is independent life! But, let me add,

B. Christ's Life Is Invigorating Life

Jesus did not just say, "I am life." He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He is resurrection
life! The idea is that He is Life, even the life of life. He is strength, but also the strength of strength.
He is power, but more than that, He is the power of power. He is more than a religious concept.
He is a living Person. He breathes life. Jesus is the resurrection and the life!

Of course, because He is the life of life, life issues from Him. He gives life! He imparts life! J. C.
Ryle called him "the Root and Fountain of all life." Robert Murray M'Cheyne referred to Him as the
"the Author and Spring of all resurrection." Whether in the physical realm, or in the spiritual
sphere, He reveals His invigorating life. Because Christ is the Life and the Life-Giver, we are
encouraged concerning the salvation of sinners. Too, it encourages us in relationship to His
people, and the need of revival. Oh, may He breathe upon us with resurrection life!

We not only see that Christ's life is independent life, and invigorating life, but:
C. Christ's Life Is Inclusive Life

It is very interesting that Jesus put these two truths together. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Lazarus needed both a resurrection, and life after a resurrection. So, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection." That would get Lazarus up! Then, Jesus added, "And the life." That would keep him up. Thank God! Christ's life includes every needed form of life!

Some time ago, a man told me, "Preacher, Jesus saved me, but if it was not for AA (Alcoholic's Anonymous), I could not stay sober." I tried to explain to him that the Christ Who saves is the Christ Who keeps! Dear friends, Jesus not only has enough life to get us up out of the graveyard of sin, but He has enough life to keep us living for Him. Oh, His fullness is underlined here. I am the resurrection and the life."

Have you heard some Christians say, "I need to get my batteries charged!" The truth is, believers don't run off batteries. Are we only looking for a momentary high, or are we living on Christ? Is Christ our life? Is He the life of life for each of us? Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." May God help us see that will work when everything is going well, or when all hell is breaking loose. May we draw from this fullness!

Furthermore, in this great claim of Christ, we are clearly confronted with:

2. THE AUTHORITY OF DIVINE LORDSHIP

Embodied in the phrase, "I am the resurrection and the life" is the claim of divine Lordship. It isn't that Jesus is going to be Lord, but He is Lord! Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus did not merely merit a Lordly status or become Lord. He was Lord when He arrived in Bethlehem! He lived as Lord! He spoke as Lord! He ministered as Lord!

It intrigues me that the first word Martha spoke in this Bethany scene was "Lord." When she went out and met Jesus, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:21). The remaining words of her conversation were not so commendable. She seemed to complain about the timing of His arrival. However, she began by ascribing to Him Lordship.

In the great "I Am" revelation to Martha, we are made aware of:

A. Christ's Personal Lordship

In His claim, "I Am," Jesus was declaring Himself to be as much Lord as God the Father. As well, in His claim to be the "I Am," Jesus was claiming to be as much Lord as God the Holy Spirit. Although He is one with the Father and the Spirit, the Lord Jesus is God Himself. He is the great "I Am" Himself. Therefore, He is just as much Lord as the Father and the Spirit.

It is nowhere suggested that Jesus borrowed from the Father's Lordship or the Spirit's Lordship. Neither is it implied that Jesus simply leans on the Father's Lordship or the Spirit's Lordship. Again, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." And, as the great "I Am," Jesus Christ is Lord. Personally, individually, completely, Jesus is Lord!

The great "I Am" claim also sets forth:

B. Christ's Present Lordship

The word "am" in the statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," suggests "to be, or to be present." It has to do with right now, the present tense. Here, we are reminded that the God of the past, and the God of the future, is the God of right now! He is "the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). Jesus is Lord right now!
Dwelling on the past few days of sorrow, Martha said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:21). She was looking at the great "I Am" and living in the past! Yet, in the next minute, she jumped out into the future, and said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (11:24). If we're not careful, we'll do the same thing! We will rejoice over what God has done in the past, and in all that is ours in the future, and miss Who He is, and what He's doing right now. May the great "I Am" help us to experience Him as our present-tense Lord!

Looking at this claim of Lordship, we are also reminded of:

**C. Christ's Perpetual Lordship**

I have already alluded to the initial "I Am" revelation given to Moses at the burning bush. Although the title, "I Am that I Am" (Exod. 3:14), may never be fully explained, it does seem to indicate, "I will be what I will be." "Whatever opinions," wrote the prince of expositors, "are adopted as to the correct form of the name and other grammatical and philological questions, there is no doubt that it mainly reveals God as self-existent and unchangeable. He is what He is. Lifted above time and change, self-existing and self-determined, He is the fountain of life, the same for ever" (Alexander Maclaren).

Applying this principle to this "I Am" claim of Jesus, we hasten to admit that He is the immutable, unchanging Lord! Perpetually, eternally, He is the "resurrection and the life." And, because Jesus is eternally the same, back at the burning bush in the Sinai Peninsula, we hear Him say, "I Am." Yet, in little Bethany, in Martha's and Mary's sorrow, we hear Him say, "I Am." And, dear friends, today, where you and I live, He says to us, "I Am." What He always has been, He is, and what He is, He forever more shall be. God help us to trust His Lordship!

In Christ's "I Am" claim, we have been made aware of the attribute of His life, and the authority of His Lordship. But, in this great statement, we are also directed to:

**3. THE ASSURANCE OF DIVINE LOVE**

Three times, in this chapter, we are confronted with Christ's love for Lazarus. When the sisters sent Jesus word of Lazarus' sickness, they said, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick" (11:3). A few verses later, it is emphatically stated, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (11:5). Even, at Lazarus' tomb, when "Jesus wept" (11:35), the Bible says the Jews commented, "Behold how He loved him" (11:36).

Although there are only three references to His love, the entire account seems to underscore His love for Lazarus and his sisters. The fact that He came to Bethany reveals His love. His personal contact with both Martha and Mary speaks volumes. His prayer at the tomb surely shows His interest. But, in the comforting, assuring, words, "I am the resurrection and the life," we especially sense His love for this family.

**A. Jesus Assures Those Who Are Saved**

He gave the self-revelation of Himself to one who knew Him and followed Him. After He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life," He added, "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (11:25, 26). She affirmed her faith, responding, "Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (11:27).

Perhaps, dear Christian, something has died in your life. Your faith-life may seem to be inanimate and lifeless. Your prayer life may feel dead. Your hope may be hopeless. You can't sense the flow of divine life in your heart. Oh, that you may hear Him say to you, "I am the resurrection and the
life." He would revitalize your faith, your hope, your prayers, your entire Christian life. He gives renewed assurance to those who are saved, to those who are His genuine followers.

Looking back over the chapter, it is clear also, that:

**B. Jesus Assures Those Who Come Short**

I don’t think we should judge Martha or Mary. But, it seems to me that they both were full of doubt and despair. I agree with David Thomas, who wrote, It was "unbelief . . . the sisters exhibited." I even hear a measure of accusation in their comments to Jesus. Both of them said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:21, 32). It appears that deep down they were a little offended or hurt. But, instead of rebuking them, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

This is a word of hope for those of us who have come short. Have you become full of doubt and hopelessness? Are a little hurt over the way the Lord has worked, or not worked, in your life? Oh, in mercy and love, He says to you, "I am the resurrection and the life." Although you may have come short of His glory, He comes to renew the assurance of His love in your heart.

Lastly, from a general observation of this account, we are encouraged with the fact that:

**C. Jesus Assures Those Who Experience Sorrow**

When Mary burst into tears, Jesus did not fuss at her for crying. He knew that both their hearts were broken. He felt their pain. In fact, we read that "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled" (11:33). And, it was in this environment of sorrow and brokenness, that Jesus gave the assurance of His love, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Dear sorrowful heart, the Lord Jesus is not upset because you have become burdened down with sorrow. He is not embarrassed by your tears. He has a heart for you! He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). And, He is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15). Hear Him speaking to your heart, "I am the resurrection and the life."

This message was birthed in my heart at 3:30 a. m. in Baptist Hospital, Winston Salem, North Carolina, in the year 1993. Our youngest daughter, Akaisha, was at the point of death. She seemed to get worse every day. To say the least, our hearts were broken. But, early that morning, while in the waiting room, I picked up a Gideon Bible, and, from the depths of my heart, I said, "Lord, we’ve reached the end of the road. Isn't there some word?" In the middle of the night, I came to these words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Dear friend, He is everything He claimed to be and more. He is the resurrection and the life! He is the essence of life! He is all we need! And, wherever we are, and whatever we are going through, He is all we need right now! May the Spirit of truth take the Word of truth and evidence this truth in our lives! Amen.