

# The LORD Is My Light

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7 March • Monday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Psalm 27:1-6, 13-14

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>2</sup>When evildoers assail me  
to eat up my flesh,  
my adversaries and foes,  
it is they who stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup>Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war arise against me,  
yet I will be confident.

<sup>4</sup>One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to enquire in his temple.

<sup>5</sup>For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will lift me high upon a rock.

<sup>6</sup>And now my head shall be lifted up  
above my enemies all round me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

<sup>13</sup>I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living!

<sup>14</sup>Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

## Meditation

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Fear seems to be a common factor for many of us. Psalmist had gone through real times of fear. He mentions “all my fears” in Psalm 34 and the fear of “valley of shadow of death” in Psalm 23. Time and again his powerful enemies threatened him. They were wicked ones, like cannibals, all out to eat (finish) him. Note the words “evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh” They were many in numbers like “an army” encamping against him. It appears to be a lonely battle against forces of evil. God’s people do face the battle with the wicked ones. The intensity of the attack may bring fear.

Friends, let us not lose heart. God does not abandon us and disappear in times of trouble. He will be close to us and is forever with us.

“We are created for faith not for fear”. Psalmist did not succumb to fear but submitted himself to the Lord. He persevered in prayer. His heart and mind focused on God. Note the words - “I have asked” “I shall seek”. Look at his longing. “I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life”, “I may behold the beauty of the LORD”, “I may meditate in His temple”.

He quickly turned to God and found shelter in the presence of God. That was his regular exercise. God was his fortress, a strong protection for him. Under His wings, He found comfort. He exposed his fears to Him in trust and obedience. He received the radiance of God

in those dark spells. In the midst of darkness, he found light in God. When darkness threatens to kill us, the light of God gives us life and vitality. God's light is a blessing to all of us. So, let us not be afraid. With God we are not a minority. God's light alleviates all the fear of darkness.

Our confidence is in God who is our defender. He responds to the cry of His people in wonderful ways. Now, the battle becomes His. He will "hide" and "conceal" us in His tabernacle in the day of our trouble. In due time, He will lift us up before our enemies. The countenance of His face shines on us constantly. Victory comes through Him and by Him.

He is God of Justice too. He will certainly vindicate us. The adversaries stumble and fall. "Their doom is sure!" God will decide their fate.

But, God's people can walk steady even in the dark patches of life. They can worship God joyfully and powerfully even in adverse situations of life. They can bring sacrifices of praise when enemies destroyed the temple. What a way to worship Him!

Friends, true faith is a personal relationship with God! Because God is with us, we can carry on the journey of faith in this fallen world with wicked ones around us.

## Prayer

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God of all mercy and grace, thank You for being the light of our lives. Lead us in the path of light. You are our Hiding Place, help us to draw closer to You and experience Your comfort and protection in our difficult circumstance.

## Action

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In times of fear, let us examine whether our fears are real. If they are real let us draw our strength from God to face the battle. Allow God to deal with the enemies. Worship God in trust and obedience.

*Rev R Prahbu  
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Emmanuel Tamil Annual Conference  
The Methodist Church in Singapore*

# See the Day Drawing Near

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8 March • Tuesday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Hebrews 10:18-31

<sup>18</sup>Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

<sup>26</sup>For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a fearful expectation of judgement, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup>How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup>For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

# Meditation

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We are living in the last days and we must make adjustments and align our lives to this truth. It is not easy to do so though, because we have been told this truth too often and for too long.

This truth confronts us again today. The day is drawing near. We may still find it difficult to make adjustments to our lives as we face up to this truth. The reason may be that we are too cluttered in our crowded world. There are too many things for us to see to, so much so that we cannot see the day drawing near.

Let us ask God to use another truth to help us see with greater clarity. It is the truth regarding God's judgement and vindication on that day. It is expressed in terms that can jolt us. It speaks of a fearful expectation of judgement, a fury of fire that will consume and a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

I do not think that we would be jolted into making dramatic changes overnight. But hopefully we can begin to see more clearly the day is drawing nearer. See what is happening in the world around us. The signs of the end times are compelling if only we can see. When we do see, we should then begin to make the adjustments to, and attempt the realignment of, our lives.

There are important things we can do as part of the adjustment and realignment of our lives. Firstly, draw near to God. Take full advantage of your precious right of access to Him. Secondly, draw close to one another as a church, so that you can better encourage one another to keep the faith and inspire one another to love and do good works.

## Prayer

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I come before Your throne of grace with renewed gratitude for Your work on the cross that makes it possible for me to stand before You and be fully accepted by You. Draw me to Yourself and help me to draw near to You daily. As I spend time in Your presence, please help me to see things above and the signs on earth. I want to see the reigning and returning King. Help me to live for You.

## Action

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Do a quick check on your devotional life and your church life. Are you spending time with God daily and are you embracing the church family? Be interested in what is happening in the world and in the church that point to the soon return of the Lord Jesus.

*Ps Lawrence Chua  
Senior Pastor  
Living Sanctuary Brethren Church*

# Following the Good Pastor

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9 March • Wednesday of the Fourth Week in Lent

John 10:11-21

<sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup>There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup>Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” <sup>21</sup>Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

## Meditation

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Jesus’ teaching on the leader as a shepherd was so novel that other religious leaders thought He was insane (v19). The image of a lowly shepherd; whose only power lies in protecting His flock and defending them from other predators; do not seem to be fitting for a religious leader.



In fact, the term “pastor” was derived from this very same word and image. A shepherd or pastor is someone who owns or loves those under His care to the extent that He will “lay down his life.” Jesus was not forced to do it, it was within His right to take up or to lay down. He was a willing Pastor.

After two millennia of Christendom, we have to admit that we tend to move away from that idea and seek to position church leadership on the ambit and language of power and prestige. As an Anglican “senior clergy,” I am fully aware of this constant drift. I know of Anglicans who will never call their clergy “pastors”, as that is a “lowly” term reserved for those who are non-ordained church workers. Other “independent” churches imbibe the celebrity culture and accord their senior pastor preferential treatment, something that even our current politicians have avoided. We may think we are observing a “culture of honour”, but we could end up dishonoring Christ.

No student is above his teacher (Lk 6:40), and if the term pastor-shepherd is good enough for Jesus, it should also be good for us. By all means, honour your pastor and his work, but in a way which helps him to walk in the steps of Christ. Help your pastor to be a pastor.

## Prayer

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Dear Father, You have sent Your Son not just to procure salvation for us, but also to reveal the heart of the Chief Shepherd and Pastor. May our pastors and members continue to exemplify and celebrate the pastoral nature of the ministry of Christ and His Church.

## Action

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Do something to reflect the pastoral nature of Christ ministry. Is there something you can do today for someone which is a “foot-washing” equivalent?

*Revd Canon Terry Wong  
Vicar  
St Andrew's Cathedral*

# He Will Swallow Up Death Forever

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10 March • Thursday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Isaiah 25:1-9

- <sup>1</sup>O LORD, you are my God;  
I will exalt you; I will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful things,  
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
- <sup>2</sup>For you have made the city a heap,  
the fortified city a ruin;  
the foreigners' palace is a city no more;  
it will never be rebuilt.
- <sup>3</sup>Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;  
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
- <sup>4</sup>For you have been a stronghold to the poor,  
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,  
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat;  
for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,
- <sup>5</sup>like heat in a dry place.  
You subdue the noise of the foreigners;  
as heat by the shade of a cloud,  
so the song of the ruthless is put down.
- <sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
- <sup>7</sup>And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
the veil that is spread over all nations.
- <sup>8</sup>He will swallow up death for ever;  
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all  
the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.
- <sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day,  
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he  
might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

## Meditation

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### **When the breath of the ruthless reigned**

The chapters leading up to Isaiah 25 were a series of prophecies against the ruthless nations in Isaiah’s day. Jerusalem was not exempt either for, like her godless neighbours, she too had forsaken the LORD Almighty. It was a dark period in Israel’s history. Like them, there are times when we experience periods of extreme darkness in life. Sometimes, it is the outcome of our mistakes and sins, but at other times, it is due to the onslaught from the breath of the ruthless around us. Whatever the reasons, it seems to be a common lot for humanity to experience times of extreme distress. What do we do in these times?

### **The righteous judgement of God prevails**

Isaiah calls the nation to trust in God’s prevailing righteousness. In prophetic vision, he sees the city becoming a heap of rubble, the fortified town a ruin, the foreigner’s stronghold becoming a city no more. The ruthless will be brought to justice. Again, in prophetic insight, Isaiah discerns that these judgements were all “plans formed of old”—marvellous things that the LORD does in his perfect righteousness (vv2-3).

The LORD’s judgement is not only righteous; it is also redemptive (vv4-5). Hence, the poor and the distressed find the LORD to be their refuge; a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.

### **The LORD will reign**

The LORD will reign. In his reign, He will roll out a

feast in place of famine, sight in place of darkness, and life in place of death. The LORD Almighty's reign will so pervade that death itself will be swallowed up forever (vv6-8).

Are you confronted by dark valleys and depressing times—with no apparent relief in sight? I encourage you to take heart and look to the LORD Almighty, for His faithfulness is perfect and He can deliver you.

## Prayer

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Be still and quiet for a minute. Picture the Lord reigning in sovereignty over all details of your life's circumstances. Confess any known sin and trust in the LORD's saving grace (v9).

Dear Lord, sometimes it is so hard to lift up my head or my heart in dark and dreary times. But help me not to be given over to despair. Instead, help me to remember that You are always faithful, and You will fulfil Your plans from long ago. You will judge rightly and reign righteously.

## Action

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I will say:

Surely this is my God, I trusted in Him and He saved me.  
Let me rejoice and be glad in His salvation.

*Rev Dr Jimmy BC Tan  
Lecturer  
Trinity Theological College*

# God Gives Life to the Dead

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11 March • Friday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Romans 4:16-25

<sup>16</sup>That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness”. <sup>23</sup>But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup>who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

## Meditation

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God promised Abraham that he (Abraham) would be the father of many nations (vv17-18). Its fulfilment is made possible because Abraham believed it in spite of all the odds of human thinking. Thus, even though Abraham and his wife Sarah were well-advanced in their years, he did not waver in the fact that God could still give them an offspring. Even though his body was as good as dead (v19), Abraham trusted in the God who gives life to the dead (v17).

Not only that, for the readers in Paul's time, the reference to the faith of Abraham would automatically conjure the most characteristic episode in his life—when Abraham was instructed by God to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. This connection between the faith of Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac is well documented in the ancient Jewish writings. Abraham, who believed that God was able to give life to the dead, was willing to obey as told. Paul said that Abraham did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God because Abraham was convinced that God was able to do what he had promised (vv20-21). The perceptive reader would have understood this to refer to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22). Of course, Abraham's action was halted before Isaac was really killed; God was pleased with him.

Thanks be to God! As a result of Abraham's faith, salvation is made available to all who share in that faith (v16). This blessing is available to us all because of the faith of Abraham!

The same God, too, has made many promises to us as Christians. Jesus says that He would never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5), and this promise is precious to those who find themselves in the midst of life's troubles. We are also told not to worry about life itself, because our heavenly Father would see to our need (Mt 6:25-26). How are we trusting in God's promises in our lives? Like Abraham, our faith can be used by God to bring about the fulfilment of His word. Not only would we be blessed; those who come after us would be blessed as well, because of our trust in the Lord's promise. Abraham is the model of faith for the ancient Jews; he is the model of faith for us, too!

## Prayer

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Our gracious Father in heaven, thank You for Your promises to us, Your children! May You grant us the faith to trust in Your word, and be assured of Your faithfulness as we meet life's challenges. Make us channels of blessing, so that others in our lives may be blessed as we put our faith in You, just as the faith of Abraham has brought blessings to many!

## Action

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What has God promised that would be particularly meaningful to you this week? What would it mean for you to put your trust in His promise? How could others around you be blessed as a result of your faith? Share with a fellow believer what is in your mind, even as you contemplate on the implications of God's promises to you!

*Rev Dr Leonard Wee  
Lecturer in New Testament  
Trinity Theological College*



# The Shepherd Who Laid Down His Life

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12 March • Saturday of the Fourth Week in Lent

John 10:1, 14-18, 27-29

<sup>14</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

<sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

## Meditation

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We only need to open the newspaper each day to see that our world is filled with destruction, sorrow and pain. This darkness is something Christians are not exempt from, for we live in and amongst this fallen world. John 10 begins with the sobering reminder that there are thieves and robbers in this world – they come to steal our joy, kill our trust, and destroy our hope in God. Whether they do so brazenly in the open, or

maliciously and in secret behind our backs, their desire is to cause chaos within the sheepfold, and sow discord between the sheep and the shepherd. Thankfully, we have great hope in our good Shepherd, whose love and power overcomes every destructive agenda.

Like sheep, our security in the face of vicious and powerful enemies comes neither from ourselves, nor from others. It must come from Jesus Christ the good Shepherd, who made Himself known to us and laid His life down for us. His love is so great that He does not care only for His own fold; He also wishes to bring those from other communities into His flock, never to be snatched out of His hand. He provides assurance to His sheep by laying down His life not powerlessly, but authoritatively. In His power, He chose to save sinners by dying on the Cross, and in His power, He chose to rise again, giving us abundant life. In Him there is true security amidst the world's darkness.

Christ calls to us, and we should hear His voice, recognise it, and trust Him. If we enter into fellowship with Him, we can face the world's challenges fearlessly, for we are in the fold of the good Shepherd who leads us by His power and love, from darkness into His marvellous light.

## Prayer

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Father, thank You for the good Shepherd who laid down His life for sinners, granting us salvation. Thank you that He has authority not just to lay down His life, but also to raise it up again, giving us assurance that when we die with Him, we also will rise with Him. Help us to trust completely in Him as long as we live.

## Action

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Read the Scriptures daily to know the Shepherd, to listen to His voice, and follow Him. Place complete trust in Him, even in the darkest situations in life.

*Rev Ezekiel Tan  
General Secretary  
The Bible Society of Singapore*

# I Am the Resurrection and the Life

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13 March • Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 11:17-27, 38-44

<sup>17</sup>Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, <sup>19</sup>and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup>She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

# Meditation

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Bold claim made by Jesus:

“Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”  
It cannot be denied that throughout His ministry Jesus made claims about Himself that appear outrageous, unless they are in fact true.

In John chapter 5, Jesus healed a paralytic and in the discussion that follows, declares Himself to be the Son of God. In chapter 6, Jesus feeds the 5,000 and says that He Himself is in fact the “bread of life”. In later chapters, He heals a blind man and declares Himself to be the “Light of the World”.

Son of God, Bread of Life, Light of the World and now in John 11, Jesus states plainly, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

I believe these statements of Jesus find their vindication firstly in the actual resurrection of Lazarus but even more so in the actual and real resurrection of Jesus Himself. It is His resurrection that reinforces and confirms the truth of the statements Jesus made about Himself.

How do you respond to these statements of Jesus?

Martha demonstrates great faith in Jesus “But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you” (v22).

In response to Jesus’s claim to be the resurrection and the life, Martha said, “Yes, Lord; I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

My own confession of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord moved me from darkness into wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

The resurrection of Lazarus proves that Jesus has power over sin and death. He is the resurrection and there is life in His name. Our Lord’s own resurrection provides us with a wonderful confirmation of His authenticity and vindicates His claims.

We face the future with confidence and joy because our Lord is the resurrection and the life.

## Prayer

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Bread of Heaven, light of the world, resurrection and life, our Saviour and Lord. We give You thanks and praise for who You are. We confess our need of You and confidence in You.

We believe You are the resurrection and the life. Nothing is impossible for You. Our confidence and hope is in You. We praise Your name today.

## Action

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Why not use today to tell someone of the confidence you have in the resurrected Jesus. Share your story of moving from darkness into the wonderful light that is Jesus.

The key here is the confession of faith. Martha expressed her faith in the person of Jesus Christ.

She believed Him. She confessed Him. It is in confessing Jesus Christ as Lord of all that we experience fullness of life and resurrection power.

Yes Lord, I believe!

*Colonel Lyndon Buckingham  
Territorial Commander  
The Salvation Army  
Singapore, Malaysia & Myanmar Territory*