

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." 11After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." 12The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." 13Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." 23Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." 28When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35Jesus began to weep. 36So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" 38Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." 40Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" 41So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." 43When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

45Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Imagine a great piñata, full of precious treasures. Whacked once, twice, again and again. A crack opens – a treasure slips out – a preview of that moment when the piñata is burst – treasures pouring down.

Imagine a dam in an arid land, restraining millions of tons of water. The smallest crack appears – life giving water seeps through. Another crack and another – water dripping, spurting – absorbed by the dust of the land below. Then the dam bursts water flowing, flooding, quenching the thirst of the land.

Imagine a new tomorrow God has prepared for this world. A tomorrow of delights and treasures – of light flooding every darkness, water quenching every thirst, of life overwhelming death itself. Imagine that tomorrow being stretched beyond its limits – springing leaks, bursting seams – tomorrow seeping into today. Already.

How else are we to understand all that Jesus did? Two fish and five loaves feeding five thousand hungry people. Jesus took a whack at the piñata of the kingdom of God and a feast fell out.

Or the blind man who received his sight? One moment only darkness – a lifetime of darkness. With the touch, the word of Jesus and a washing in the pool and a little of God's tomorrow soaked through to give him sight.

Or Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead?. Jesus told them to take away the stone – Martha objected, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.” But Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” and the sweet aroma of life greeted them. A sniff of that aroma is ours in Lazarus' story but we are bathed in that aroma when Jesus calls our name. Tomorrow seeping through to today, soaking into today, bursting into today.

Jesus.

“I am the resurrection and the life,” Jesus said. “Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Is.

Sometimes people will ask what I know about heaven. I suppose they are asking about the furniture, or the cuisine, the guest list or the activity department. But the only answer I have to their question is Jesus. What do I know about heaven, about God, about eternity? Jesus.

Jesus is the point of heaven, the hope of heaven, joy of heaven. “I am the resurrection and the life,” said Jesus. But now Jesus, the tomorrow of God, has burst into today.

Hear what Jesus says, “I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life.”

Hear what Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Hear what Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die will live and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

St. Paul declares the same truth in different words as he asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? No in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As you and I live by faith in Jesus the tomorrow God has prepared is ours already for God’s love in Jesus is ours already. The treasure has burst forth, the life giving water has quenched our thirst, the life that will never be overcome by death is ours.

As you and I live by faith in Jesus in our words and deeds, treasures are falling out of the piñata – thirst quenching waters are seeping through cracks in the dam and the light of God is shining in the darkness. In every moment that is lived in faith in Jesus God’s tomorrow bursts through for our neighbors.

Today a dry one is soaked with the love of God in Jesus Christ. Daniel will be baptized and all the love and forgiveness and life that is in God's tomorrow will wash over him today. And as he grows we will tell him and show him that he belongs to Jesus.

And so do you. Amen.