

These verses raise the issues of unanswered prayer and the loss of a loved one.

Verse 21: Martha expresses her feelings to Jesus indicating that if he had been there two days earlier her brother Lazarus would not have died.

Verse 22: 'But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask'

Martha had switched into a spiritual state because her soul had been touched in the presence of Jesus. The key to understanding unanswered prayer is to focus on Jesus.

Paul in 2 Cor 4: 7-10 indicates that we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

These are opposite states that are in tension that is released by the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Verses 23 and 24: Martha's response to Jesus' declaration that her brother will rise again is a piece of knowledge which I guess she has picked from Job 19 :25-27.

Verse 25-27 : When Jesus announces to Mary that He is the Resurrection and the Life, it is interesting to note what Martha did not say. The typical English response to such an announcement would be : 'Really! That is interesting. I did not know that'. Instead she proclaims her belief in Jesus as Lord. Her previous response in verse 24 came from her mind. Her declaration of faith in verse 27 comes from her soul.

Later, at the crucifixion, Martha would see Jesus on the cross. Previous to her meeting with Jesus Martha would have said 'He was a good man, a great teacher. He meant a lot to me'. Instead, Martha could now declare 'there the Son of God died for me'.

On Friday, at Camp Bastion, a small group of soldiers raised up a tall wooden cross. This was not just a preparation for their Remembrance Service today but an act to signify that the Cross is the true victory over evil. The genie of evil may be out of the bottle but Jesus is out of the tomb On Good Friday there was darkness over the land. The lights had gone out all over Palestine. Three days later, the lights came on all over the world. The Resurrection and the Life of Jesus has burst upon the world and the darkness of evil has not prevailed against them.

As a result, it is His life we receive today. Jesus said that this meal of bread and wine was at the same time His life: His body and His blood. That as we eat and drink this meal we are receiving Him, His life.

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