

KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - 29

Lazarus lay dead in his tomb. Mary and Martha had pleaded with Jesus to come to them in their need – they pleaded ‘he whom you love is ill’. For two days Jesus delayed. Lazarus was dead when Jesus arrived and his sisters distressed – unable to understand why Jesus delayed, while knowing that if Jesus had been there their brother would not have died.

Jesus told the sisters that their brother would rise again – he told them that he is *the resurrection and the life*. Then he asked: *Do you believe this?* Jesus, their friend, one they had welcomed into their home, had shared meals with, had sat and listened to, now asks if they believe he is *the resurrection and the life!* This was the most stupendous claim! There could be no greater challenge to their faith: that the friend they knew so well was God – *the Lord and giver of life!*

Martha do you believe this? Martha cared for Jesus, she had fed him, waited on him, had lavished all manner of kindness and care on him. She knew him so well – the length, colour and texture of his hair, the colour and gaze of his eyes, his height, the form and size of his hands and feet. Now she is asked to believe that her friend is *the resurrection and the life!* That challenge comes to us too! *Do **you** believe?* My response to this claim of Jesus determines whether or not I will experience this resurrection power in my life, for ‘whoever **believes** ... has everlasting life’ (John 3.16).

Have you ever wondered why it is **believing** that saves – why it is **faith** that saves? Not some vague idea of ‘faith’ in something, in anything, but **faith in Jesus**. Why *faith*? Why not hearing? Why not achieving – why is it *believing* in Jesus that saves – and nothing and no one else?

1. *faith* contributes nothing – it simply relies on Jesus.
2. *faith* accepts and trusts the claims Jesus makes – *faith* recognises Jesus alone is the *Truth* and alone is to be trusted with our lives.
3. *faith* is willing to go God’s way and accept God’s will – it lets ‘God be God’.
4. *faith* in Jesus is not possible without the light and life the Holy Spirit brings and gives – *faith* is impossible for the ‘natural man’ but free to *all* who ‘call on the name of the Lord’.
5. *faith* is the empty hand, open to receive all God gives – *faith* knows that salvation is *all of grace* – and it is *faith that gives God the glory!*