

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.<sup>18</sup> Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,<sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.<sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

<sup>21</sup> “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”<sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

<sup>24</sup> Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;<sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” (NIV 84)

Theme: Through faith Coralee lives even though she has died.

I didn’t know Coralee to the final five years of her life. But one thing always stood out to me about Coralee—she was always busy. It seems as if she was always busy doing something. Even well into her 80’s she never had a problem finding something to do. Much of her time was spent putting others first, volunteering to do the things she loved to help others.

I know that she spent many hours volunteering her time in various classrooms. She was involved in 4-H. She was always teaching one way or another; often busy doing this or that, especially if it involved children.

She was also busy at here at Holy Cross. She loved to teach God’s little children in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, and other various activities that we’ve had. During my time here Coralee spent many weeks cleaning the Church, even when it became harder and harder for her to get around. I could go on with many other examples, but you probably know them better than I do.

Why did Coralee spend so much time at the Lord’s house, when she was already so busy with everything else going on in her life? It

wasn’t just because that it was simply who Coralee was; it was because of the love she had for our Savior.

Busy. That is one of the best ways you can describe Coralee. She was busy almost to the end. It was March 5<sup>th</sup>, I believe, when they took her into the hospital when she finally complained of pain. Four and a half months and then the Lord finally called her to home—not on highway 23, but to her heavenly home.

Death is never easy. It’s never easy to see a loved one suffer; to watch them struggle to do the most basic things, to see them fight and fight with little or no results. Coralee desperately wanted to go home, or to get better and to get back to her busy life. During the past few months Coralee and I talked about how she was looking forward to getting better so that she could spend some more time volunteering in different classrooms. She fought to the end but the Lord had other plans.

But we aren’t hear today to talk about Coralee’s earthly life and how she was always so busy—that offers us no true comfort whatsoever. We also aren’t here today to merely talk about her death. No we are here to talk about the new life in heaven she now enjoys through her death.

During the past four and a half months I shared many different devotions with Coralee. This past Sunday I visited her for the last time with many of her family members there with her. And one of the portions of Scripture I shared with her is what I chose for your comfort and encouragement today. As I was reading Coralee this text I got to Jesus’ words in verses 25 and 26, **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”** And without being prompted Coralee answered along with Martha, “Yes.” Coralee knew her Savior from death. She wasn’t afraid of dying. She knew and believed and confessed along with Martha her faith in Jesus as her one and only Savior. Her answer, of course, didn’t surprise me—and I don’t think it surprised anyone else in the room that day. Coralee believed that Jesus Christ alone was her Savior from sin and death.

Coralee’s body may be in that casket in front of us; she may have breathed her last, but she is far from dead. For her soul lives on—it

was immediately taken to heaven. While her body lays here motionless; Coralee is busy in heaven. She is busy singing the praises of her Savior. She has joined the ranks of angles and saints in the heavenly choir.

Why? It wasn't because Coralee was so nice and pleasant. It wasn't because she was such a good person. But rather it is only because of Jesus Christ. He is the long-promised Messiah—or Christ, the Savior of the world. It was Jesus Christ who took our sins upon himself; becoming a sinner for us and suffered through the eternal punishment of our sins. It was while he was upon the cross that he credited us with his perfect life—his righteousness was placed upon us. So that when the Lord looks upon us he doesn't see horrible miserable sinners who deserve his wrath and punishment, but he sees us as his pure and innocent children—perfect and holy in his sight. All of that wouldn't matter much if Christ hadn't also be raised from the dead. But that is exactly what happened three days after he died. He rose from the dead, defeated death, and gives us that victory.

What Christ did for Coralee, he also does for you and me, he did for the whole world. He suffered and died for all people. He paid for the sins of the whole world. All of these gifts won by Christ are offered to us for free. And these gifts are received by faith. And faith too is a gift given to us by the Holy Spirit as he works through the gospel. When Coralee answered 'yes' along with Mary the other day, she was confessing her faith in our Savior. And so we know that she is now in heaven with him.

And that is where our comfort today lies. Not in the life of Coralee and not in friends and family. But in the love and grace of Christ. That is what Coralee believed. And even though she is dead, she is now living in heaven. The same can be said for you. You will live even though you die. When you die you too can be reunited with Coralee. You will see her again and you will join in singing the praises of our Savior with all the saints forever. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone you will dwell in his house forever.

And so we can rejoice even while we mourn. Today it is okay to be sad and mourn. We have lost a loved one and will no longer see her face or hear her voice on this earth. And yet we rejoice too. Coralee is. She is not mourning her passing. She is not sad that she is no longer with us on this earth. She has a life free from pain and sorrow. She is with Don and all her fellow believers living with her Savior!

And so our heart rejoices as we look forward to that time when the Lord calls us home so that we may join her in glory ever-lasting. And we look forward to that day when the Lord returns again—the Resurrection of the Dead. On that day we will be made complete. Our bodies will be raised and made like Christ's great and glorious body. And then body and soul once again together, we will be made as created us at the beginning of the world—our whole selves—body and soul, perfect and holy. Forever. And then you will join Coralee and all other saints in rejoicing. The Lord has saved you and you will live with him forever.

Coralee was busy throughout her life. But now she is at rest. My final words to you today are the comforting words of the Apostle John as he gives us this glimpse of heaven as we read in the last book of the Bible, Revelation: **I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."**