

The AUDACITY of JESUS:

Embracing His Offensive Identity

Almost everyone has an opinion on who Jesus is. Some say he was a brilliant teacher, a great prophet, or an ethical role model. The only problem with these ideas is that Jesus never claimed to be any of those things; instead, he insisted - repeatedly - that he is God. Few people accepted his bold claim - that he was the one true God in flesh - was offensive, and some accepted it, while others turned back and no longer followed him. (John 6:66) All month long in February, The Story Church will explore the audacious claims that Jesus made about himself in His own words. These controversial statements will leave us with two choices: to take him at his word and accept he is God, or to reject his divine identity and dismiss him as a fraud.

March 1, 2026 - I Am the Resurrection and the Life

With this message series, we're focusing on the audacious claims of Jesus. Let's begin with a definition:

AUDACITY (noun) - courage or confidence of a kind that other people find shocking or rude

What makes death scary for so many people?

JESUS and LAZARUS

John 11:5-7 - Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

What is so strange about Jesus' reaction to the news of Lazarus' illness? How would you expect him to respond under the circumstances?

John 11:11-15 - [Jesus] went on to tell [his disciples], "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

What did Jesus reveal here about his reason for waiting two days before going to Bethany?

What miracle did Jesus perform by the end of this story, and why was it so extraordinary?



JESUS and MARTHA

Besides the fact that she was Lazarus' sister, what else do we know about Martha from the gospels? (Luke 10:38-42)

John 11:20-27 - When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

What was Martha’s first reaction when she encountered Jesus?

What did Martha get right about the resurrection in this conversation? What was she missing?

What does Martha’s interaction with Jesus reveal about the dangers of a partial understanding of Jesus?

JESUS and MARY

What else do we know about Mary, the sister of Lazarus? (Luke 10:38-42, John 11:2, John 12:1-8)

John 11:32-37 - When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

What did Mary get right about Jesus in this conversation? What was she missing?

What does it mean that Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit and troubled”? If he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, why did he weep?

How did the testimony of former Senator Ben Sasse speak to you? What gives him such courage in the face of certain death?

How would your life change if you truly believed that Jesus *is* the resurrection and the life?



Overflow is TONIGHT!

Overflow is a monthly gathering for 6th-12th grade students with worship, teaching, fun group games, dinner, and raffle prizes. No registration necessary - just drop off your student at The Loft (located upstairs) on tonight from 6:30-8pm!



Women’s Retreat with Wendy Speake

Save the date to join us for a spring women’s retreat on Saturday, March 21 from 10am to 2:30pm! This retreat is open to women of all ages and life stages. Learn more and register: thestory.church/events



Save the Dates: Holy Week & Easter

Visit our website thestory.church/easter to save the dates for all of our special Holy Week services and events, and to learn more about serving this Easter!