

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 20TH-21ST, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

LAZARUS (JOHN 11:1-16) A TERRITORY EXCLUSIVE TO GOD

We have already seen six miracles that point to Jesus as the Savior. For the seventh recorded miracle, Jesus reaches into a realm no one is able to touch except Him: the afterlife.

- **Death is an enemy created as a result of sin and it will eventually be destroyed permanently by Christ** (Revelation 20).

LAZARUS, MARY, AND MARTHA

There is a debate that this Mary and Mary Magdalene are the same person. We do know that Martha was this Mary's sister, her brother was Lazarus, and she anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume (Matthew 26; Mark 14).

- Jesus got the message that His good friend who He loved was near death.

"...FOR THE GLORY OF GOD"

Jesus states that "This sickness will not end in death but...that the Son of God may be glorified through it." **Any crisis that brings glory to God is good, even if it is difficult and hard for us to understand.**

- Though it is true, it is hard to live out. Even so, **we must trust in God's will over ours!**

JESUS' TIMING

When Jesus first finds out about Lazarus, He pauses for a couple of days. An odd thing to do in an emergency. He then says, "Let's go to Judea," which would have put He and the 12 in danger of being killed by the Pharisees.

- **These moves would've been confusing, but true disciples trust Jesus' timing.**

"AREN'T THERE 12 HOURS IN A DAY?"

V9-10 are about time management and our motives for how we use our time. We only have so much time, and when our motives are selfish ("walks during the night"), we "stumble" because Jesus is not leading us.

- **We need to trust in God's timing, but also be good stewards of ours.**

OUR FRIEND HAS FALLEN ASLEEP

Sleep is a common euphemism for death in the NT, but the 12 missed it when Jesus mentioned Lazarus. After Jesus clearly says Lazarus' sickness won't kill him, He then tells the disciples he is dead.

- Again, all of this was preordained to glorify God and increase the faith of the witnesses.

"LET'S GO TOO SO THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM"

Thomas is mentioned three times in John, and all are negative references, but this one could be viewed as a positive too. Thomas knew their fate was questionable, but **in his loyalty, he was ready to die for Jesus.**

- **Do we possess this kind of bravery, boldness, and dedication to Jesus?**

THE LIFE (JOHN 11:17-37) FOUR DAYS LATE TO A LARGE FUNERAL

When Jesus and the 12 arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days, but the funeral would have been still lingering on because this family was very popular in Bethany.

- The depth of the situation increases and sets up a more powerful display of Jesus' power.

"YOUR BROTHER WILL RISE AGAIN"

Martha telling Jesus that His presence would have saved her brother's life wasn't a complaint, but an acknowledgment of His ability. She also seems to still hold onto some hope of Lazarus being healed.

- Jesus' response was met with a somewhat optimistic reply about Lazarus' salvation.

"EVERYONE WHO LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME..."

Though Jesus was planning on doing a powerful miracle, He wanted to make sure that Martha's priorities were in the right place.

- Though Jesus can heal our bodies, **the real focus should be on the healing of our eternal souls. If the soul is healed (saved), the body will be resurrected to eternal life.**

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Martha debated theology with Jesus in her confusing time, but Mary fell down at His feet. They were both confused and hurt, but their posture toward Jesus was very different.

- **Martha was expectant; Mary was personal. This reminds us that we should approach Jesus with our minds and our hearts.**

"DEEPLY MOVED... AND TROUBLED"

When Jesus saw the family and friends of Lazarus crying, He was upset. Why? **The anger over the effects of sin on humanity "moved" and "troubled" Jesus because He loves His creation.**

- This passage crescendos on the shortest verse in Scripture: **"Jesus wept."**

DIVISION OVER THE METHODS OF JESUS

The skeptical Jews watching this scenario unfold didn't know what Jesus had told His disciples about raising Lazarus. So, they stood in awe of His love of Lazarus and confusion for why He hadn't stopped the tragedy.

- Little did they know their perception of life, death, and God was about to be rattled.

"...COME OUT!" (JOHN 11:38-44) "REMOVE THE STONE"

It seemed like Martha is 100% on board with Jesus, but we see there's still doubt because she says, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days."

- Martha is like many of us; **we affirm that we believe Jesus, but when we have to apply the Word, we lack trust and faith.**

REMEMBER, BELIEVING IS SEEING

As Jesus mildly rebukes Martha for not listening to Him earlier, we are reminded that **in order to "see the glory of God," we must first believe in His words.**

- **If we're humble and have a sincere objective desire to find the truth, we will encounter God and see His work.**

"LAZARUS, COME OUT!"

Jesus didn't have to look up and pray in front of the crowd in order to resurrect Lazarus. John records that He did this to grow people's faith. We also read that Jesus "shouted with a loud voice" for the "dead man" to come out.

- **We see both gentle humility and the most extreme power in Jesus.**

"UNWRAP HIM AND LET HIM GO"

We can imagine the shock of every witness as Lazarus slowly walked out of the tomb. Notice John didn't record the crowd or Lazarus' response.

- The record and the miracle established faith in those seeking truth. **Searching leads to the gospel (Jesus' message), and accepting it leads to seeing God move.**

MURDEROUS HEARTS (JOHN 11:45-57)

THE UNWILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW

Many religious leaders who witnessed Lazarus became Believers, but others reported back to the Pharisees who "convened the Sanhedrin."

- There was no denying what Jesus had done, but **the desire to hold on to their way of life outweighed the desire to follow the Savior.**

CAIAPHAS

Caiaphas was not only the high priest but a very arrogant man who made a prophecy, not "on his own," about Jesus' death that went far beyond his understanding.

- **We see that God sometimes uses evil people and difficult situations to complete His plans.**

"JESUS...NO LONGER WALKED OPENLY..."

At this point, the public ministry of Jesus came to an end, and Jesus isolated Himself near the Judean desert. Though not visible, people were searching for Jesus; some wanted a show, some wanted salvation, and others had murderous intentions.

- **What are we looking for?**

THERE WILL BE DIFFICULTIES UNTIL HE RETURNS

- Jesus makes it clear that in this life there will be suffering (John 16:33), but He also makes it clear that in the next life there will not be.
- **The question isn't if we will go through hard things, but how will we handle them and will we lean on Jesus regardless of the outcomes?**
- We must learn that **this life is a temporary time when we invest in our eternity.**
- If we are in a relationship with Jesus, hard times actually make us wiser, deeper, more gracious, and empathetic. Troubles also make us more reliant on God, therefore growing that relationship as well.
- We need to humble ourselves in times of "trouble." **If we're responsible, we must repent. If someone else is at fault, we must forgive and use wisdom, and we must trust Jesus regardless of the circumstances.**
- Are our hearts positioned to live in this manner? If not, are we ready to change?

JESUS LOVES US AND IS ABLE TO SAVE

- Jesus is a **faithful friend**, a **good Father**, a **wise counselor**, and the **all-powerful God of the universe. He loves us more than anything in creation** as shown in His death, burial, and resurrection, and **He listens and responds to those who humbly seek Him.**