

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 21ST, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

### DEATH OF LAZARUS (JOHN 11:1-16) TWO SISTERS AND THEIR BROTHER

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were a small family that Jesus was very close with. The sisters often hosted the disciples, and on one occasion, we see Martha **"was distracted by her many tasks"** and corrected by Jesus while her sister Mary was commended for sitting and listening (Luke 10:38-42).

- Here, John recounts an event yet to take place where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (John 12:3).

### VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH

A messenger was sent to Jesus to inform Him that his friend Lazarus was sick, and He responded that **"this sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified in it."**

- Jesus knew death would not be the end result, that in Him, **death would not have the final word.**

### "AREN'T THERE TWELVE HOURS IN THE DAY?"

Jesus told the disciples that there is protection for **"anyone who walks during the day"** and that Lazarus had fallen asleep, but He was on His way to wake him up.

- Death is an enemy, created due to sin, and will ultimately be defeated by God. In the NT, we see "sleep" as a euphemism for death because **it is temporary** for those "walking in the light."

### HE WOULD BRING GREATER GLORY TO GOD

Instead of telling the messenger that Lazarus was healed as He did for the official's son (John 4:50) or going to Lazarus, He stayed in the place where He was for two days.

- **Why did Jesus delay going to Lazarus? Jesus fulfilled the request to care for his friend according to the timing and will of God, not man.**

### WALK IN FAITH, NOT FEAR

Jesus could have healed Lazarus from a distance, but He chose to go to His friend despite the danger.

- Jesus would pave the way for His followers to walk in faith. **We are given power and protection** (Mark 16:17-18) **in dark places, yet we do not seek out danger** (Luke 10:17-20).

### A TRUE DISCIPLE

Thomas, called "twin," **is known as a doubter because of his request to see the marks in Jesus' hands and side before believing that He resurrected** (John 20:24-25).

- However, **we see a true testament to the character of Thomas here in his willingness to follow Jesus, even if it means his death.**

### HE WILL RISE AGAIN (JOHN 11:17-32) LAZARUS WAS IN THE TOMB FOR FOUR DAYS

Since Lazarus was in the tomb for four days when Jesus arrived, the messenger would have returned with Jesus' words that **"this sickness would not end in death"** (v. 4) when he was already dead.

- **Jesus urges us to believe in His word and not to become discouraged even when the circumstances seem bleak.**

### WHY FOUR DAYS?

Jesus knew that Jewish superstition taught that the soul would stay near the grave for three days in hopes of returning to the body.

- On the fourth day, all hope in a person resuscitating would have been lost. **By waiting till the fourth day, Jesus would have removed an empty faith in a superstition.**

### MARTHA INTERACTS WITH JESUS

Jesus sent a promise to the sisters; now He will see how they received it. Martha was the task-oriented one. Her focus was on the "what" and not the "why," and as expected, she rushed out to meet Jesus.

- To serve in a way that honors God, **we must maintain a heart of serving that does not sacrifice the reason we serve.**

### MARY INTERACTS WITH JESUS

Mary is the contemplative sister, and as expected, while Martha rushes out, Mary stays in the house mourning with friends.

- Martha comes back and tells Mary that Jesus is calling for her, so she goes to Jesus and falls at His feet. **Where do we go for understanding and comfort?**

### THE SIMILARITIES IN THEIR RESPONSES

We do not know the heart behind the sister's proclamation that if Jesus had been present, then their brother would not have died. **Was it a declaration of faith or a rebuke of His absence?**

- **They displayed faith in who Jesus is and His teaching of a future resurrection**, but He taught them a deeper understanding of the resurrection.

### THE FIFTH OF THE I AM STATEMENTS

Jesus tells Martha, **"I AM the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if He dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"**

- **Believers will one day be raised from the dead and those who are alive and believe when Jesus returns will experience the resurrection without dying.**

### RAISING OF LAZARUS (JOHN 11:33-44) WE SHOULD HATE SIN AS GOD DOES

When Jesus saw His friend Mary crying, the text says, **"he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled."**

- The ancient Greek translates this as "to snort like a horse." Jesus was angry and indignant at the effects of death brought about by sin. **Do we share Jesus' hatred for sin?**

### FULLY GOD, FULLY MAN

Jesus has made multiple claims of His deity, and in verses 34-35, we see His humanity on display.

- Jesus knew His friend was dead but didn't know where he was buried, and upon arriving at the tomb of His friend, Jesus wept. **We do not have a Savior who is emotionless and compassionless.**

### JESUS COMMANDS THE CROWD

The sisters of Lazarus and the crowd probably thought the request to **"remove the stone"** was a strange one. Perhaps the crowd thought Jesus was so grieved He just wanted to see His friend one last time.

- The stench around the tomb confirmed Lazarus' state: He had been dead four days and now **"stinketh"** (KJV).

### HE STILL CALLS THE DEAD OUT OF THEIR TOMBS

Jesus prayed out loud **to create faith in the crowd's hearts standing around the tomb.**

- The miracle that Jesus performed at the tomb of Lazarus was not a selfish work, nor was it solely for the sake of Lazarus. **The raising of Lazarus put death on notice that He would soon conquer it, and it showed the crowds that He calls dead things to rise.**

### WE ARE CO-LABORERS WITH CHRIST

Notice the involvement of the crowd in the raising of Lazarus. **Jesus did not need the crowd's participation but delighted in those who co-labor with Him.**

- **We cannot bring the dead to life, but Jesus commands us to do a preparatory work** ("remove the stone") **and to do a work afterward** ("unwrap him and let him go").

### TWO REACTIONS (JOHN 11:45-57) THE SELF-PRESERVATION OF THE PHARISEES

Many who were at the tomb believed in Jesus because of the miraculous raising of Lazarus. Yet, there was still a group that complained to the Pharisees and held a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

- **Their decision to kill Jesus steamed from fear that their position and importance would be diminished.**

### A CHANNEL OF DIVINE REVELATION

Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest, is mentioned by John for unknowingly prophesying about the reach of the gospel.

- He claimed that Jesus should die to save the Jewish people from death, unaware that **Jesus would willingly lay down His life not just for the Jewish people but for all people.**

### HIS TIME HAD NOT YET COME

Jesus' earthly ministry has come to an end as He retreats to the Judean desert. He does this not out of fear, but because His time had not yet come.

- Jesus' final Passover on earth was near and He would make His final entry into Jerusalem. Because of the news of raising of Lazarus, many were looking for Jesus.

### SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVE

- If Jesus loved Lazarus, why did he get sick? Why did Jesus delay? **God loves us with a perfecting love. Just because we love Him and He loves us does not mean we will be sheltered from suffering.**
- **We must choose to focus on Christ and not our suffering and, therefore, give glory to God in the midst of suffering.**

### CO-LABORERS

- **Are we doing the preparatory work God has called us to? Are we working to remove the barriers that keep the dead in their tombs?**
- **Are we doing the work necessary to remove the "grave clothes" from those leaving the grave behind?**
- **Only God calls the dead to life, but we are co-laborers in Christ's redemptive work.**