



John 11...The Lazarus Story Continued

Lesson #33, By Gerald Cumby, Teacher

John 11:1-16: "Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." 4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." 8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." 11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." 12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. 14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

- **"This sickness is not unto death":** Lazarus was already dead when Jesus said this, but He knew the end result would be **the glory of God**, not death. Jesus also knew that the events recorded in this chapter would set the religious leaders in determination to kill Jesus. This meant the end result would be **that the Son of God may be glorified** in His death and resurrection.
- Jesus had a close relationship with this family. When **Lazarus was sick** it was natural for them to bring their need to Jesus. It was expected that if He miraculously met the needs of so many others, He would meet their need also.
- After Jesus heard Lazarus was ill...He stayed ministering in the area for 2 more day (delaying his journey to minister to Lazarus and family!)
What??
- The delay was probably mystifying to the disciples and agonizing to Mary and Martha. It sure would be to us if our pastor knew that I (or you) was seriously ill...and our he did not come immediately. Calling or texting would not be enough if he were noticeably able. However, if the disciples heard Jesus state that Lazarus was only sleeping, they were even more confused. You can't go in to check on Lazarus because the authorities were trying to kill him.

- “The only right understanding of this answer, and our Lord’s whole proceeding here is, — that *He knew and foresaw all from the first.*” (Alford) Our pastor, as good as he is, does not know the outcome of a serious illness.
- Jesus admits that Lazarus was dead and stated so to the questioning disciples (v.14).
- **Why all the confusion? Jesus wanted the disciples to see the significance of the power of God...even to raising the dead.**

John 11:17-27, “On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.

CLIFF NOTES: On reaching Bethany, Jesus consoles Martha, promising resurrection and life to those who believe in Him. Martha expresses faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.

- ***Friends comforting the family are an important ministry of the church.***
“The love of Jesus does not separate us from the common necessities and infirmities of human life. Men of God are still men.” (Spurgeon)
- **What significance was the fact that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days?**
 - ✓ Jesus waited **four days** because He knew the Jewish superstition of that day that said a soul stayed *near* the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body. Therefore, it was accepted that after **four days** there was absolutely no hope of resuscitation.
 - ✓ **To fulfill Scripture... “Nothing is impossible with God.”**

Jeremiah 32:17, “Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! **Nothing is too hard for you.**

Luke 1:37, “**For nothing will be impossible with God.**”

Matthew 19:26, “**But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”**”

“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died”: Martha honestly stated her disappointment in Jesus’ late arrival. She believed that Jesus was able to heal her brother while he was sick yet still alive. It’s possible that she didn’t even consider that Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the dead *now*.

“Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You”:

There can be great power in “**even now**” prayers.

Martha was not confident that Jesus would raise her brother. Instead, she said that she would still trust Jesus *despite* this disappointment.

“Your brother will rise again”: Martha understood that her brother Lazarus would **rise again** with all the righteous on the **last day**. She did not even consider that Jesus might immediately bring Lazarus from the dead.

- ✓ We may comfort a grieving person by saying, “You will see him again.” We sincerely mean it and sincerely mean the comfort, but we don’t mean “You will see him again right now.” *Jesus meant that Lazarus would rise again right now.*

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live”:

- Jesus boldly challenged Martha to trust that He was the source of eternal life.
- Jesus presented Himself as the champion over death.
- While humanity in general fears death, the Christian can only fear dying.
- The believer will never die, but simply make an instant transition from an old life to a new life.

“Those that believe in Jesus Christ appear to die, but yet they live. They are not in the grave; they are forever with the Lord. They are conscious they are with their Lord in Paradise. Death cannot kill a believer, it can only usher him into a freer form of life. Death comes to the ungodly man as a penal infliction (**inflicting** punishment on the offender as a consequence of his wrongdoing), but to the righteous as a summons to his Father’s palace: to the sinner it is an execution, to the saint an undressing. Death to the wicked is the King of terrors: death to the saint is the end of terrors, the commencement of glory.” (Spurgeon)

“Do you believe this?”

- ✓ Jesus challenged Martha not to debate or intellectual assent, but to *belief*.
- ✓ She must believe Jesus was who He said He was and that He could do what He said He could do.

Does that mean that He would not raise her brother unless she believed?

- ✓ No; for He had determined to ‘awake him out of sleep’ before He left Perea.”

“Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world”:

- ✓ Martha answered correctly. Jesus was and is indeed the Messiah (**the Christ**). Jesus was and is God in human form among us (**the Son of God**).

The “I believe” statement is important:

Note: ‘I’ is emphatic. Whatever may be the case with anyone else, she has put her trust in Jesus.

The scholar, James Boice, called these words of Martha *faith’s foothold* –

The great mountain climbers state that one must have a firm and steady foothold before he can climb higher. It is imperative for an ascent to higher ground.

FAITH IS THAT WAY. FAITH IS THE ULTIMATE FOOTHOLD TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE PALACE OF THE KING.

John 11:28-38, “And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, ‘The Teacher has come and is calling for you.’ As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, ‘She is going to the tomb to weep there.’ Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’ And some of them said, ‘Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?’ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.”

“If you had been here...My brother would not have died”:

We wish we could hear the tone of voice and see the expressions on Mary’s face.

- This could have been a noble statement of faith, saying that if Jesus were there, they have no doubt at all that He would have healed Lazarus.
- On the other hand, it could also be seen as a criticism of what seemed to be the tardiness of Jesus.

“When Jesus saw her weeping”...He groaned in the spirit and wept:

Jesus was moved beyond sympathy and sorrowful feelings!

The grief and tears of Mary and Martha moved Jesus.

Note: God sees our tears, is touched by our tears, remembers our tears, God acts to dry our tears.

“Sometimes we are told that if we really believed that our friends would rise again, and that they are safe and happy even now, we could not weep. Why

not? Jesus did. There cannot be any error in following where Jesus leads the way.” (Spurgeon)

John 11:39-45, Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

✓ **“If you would believe you would see the glory of God”:**

Note: Jesus was fully capable of this miracle without the faith of Martha or Mary. However, without their belief they would never see the glory of God. They could see the end result and certainly would be happy, but they would miss the glory of working together with God in the fulfillment of His plan.

If only we could understand that the Lord desires to see our growing faith and that this is His objective for us.

- **Jesus lifted up His eyes and said: “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me”** Jesus likely had the traditional posture of prayer – hands raised, eyes open upwards as if looking towards heaven.
 - Jesus was confident in His relationship with God the Father.
 - The public nature of the prayer was for the sake of Mary, Martha, and **the people who are standing by**.
 - No pomp of self-glory, no wrestling in prayer even; but simple words of thanksgiving, as if Lazarus had already returned.” (Dods)
- **He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”**
 - “The loud voice was not, of course, because a loud voice was needed to make the dead hear.
 - Probably...so that the crowd could know that this was no work of magic, but the very power of God.
 - On a previous occasion (John 5:28) Jesus said that a time would come when all who were in their graves would hear his voice. This occasion was a single demonstration of that authority.
 - Jesus spoke to a dead body as if Lazarus were alive because He is God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did ([Romans 4:17](#)).
 - “If Christ had not specifically called out to Lazarus only, perhaps all the dead would have risen.” (Trapp)
- **And he who had died came out:**
 - **Jesus fought death at Lazarus’ tomb and plundered the grave.**

- **Jesus told death that He would soon completely conquer it completely.**
- **Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.**
 - Those who came to join in the sorrow of the grieving sisters did not expect that their reason for grief would be taken away.
 - Only after seeing what Jesus did...did they believe!

John 20:29, "Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Information resources:

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary>

<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary/matthew-henry-...>

<https://biblehub.com/summary/john>

[Study Guide for John 11 by David Guzik - Blue Letter Bible](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage)

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Gospel-of-John.html>

[Summary of the Gospel of John - Bible Survey | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-Survey.html)

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/.../raising-lazarus>

<https://biblesummary.info/john>

<https://www.walking-by-faith.org/teaching/new-testament/john/...>

[Raising Lazarus from the Dead \(John 11:1-44\) - Walking by Faith](https://www.walking-by-faith.org/teaching/new-testament/john/...)