

## Bibles???

### The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 11

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John –

Here is chapter 11, John records for us a pretty remarkable event; and we know that this event (like every other event in the gospel of John) is being told for one specific purpose: our belief in Jesus.

So, that means that John chose to record this event about Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (Matthew, Mark and Luke – no mention of this event) but John does - in order to give us more evidence, in order to persuade us and show us that there is something different about Jesus.

He is the Christ, He is the Son of God, He is the One that the OT constantly points to and He is our only hope for eternal life.

We saw Jesus make the profound statement in our study last week – not only to Martha but to us as well –

Lazarus is dead

Tragedy had come to three individuals that Jesus who knew who Jesus is (seen the signs that He did, they had heard Him teach) –they loved Jesus and Jesus loved them.

Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was very sick – Jesus come quickly -  
But Jesus didn't come immediately.

Instead He waited two days before setting out to Bethany where the family lived.

By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days.

There was purpose in His delayed response. Prolonged suffering does not negate  
God's love for us.

There was purpose in their prolonged suffering.

And that purpose was that they see the glory of God displayed through their suffering.

So Martha met Jesus before He walked into the town

And she expressed to Jesus, her disappointments, her sorrow – “Where were You –  
You’re too late?”

And Jesus responded – Your brother will rise again

Martha,

“Yeah, I know he will. He will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Martha had been paying attention to Jesus – her theology was correct –

And then Jesus responds with -

[Jhn 11:25-26 NKJV] 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

So, if we believe in Jesus – if we put our faith and trust in Him, death is not the end, death will simply be a doorway.

Death is simply the beginning.

Though we die, we will live.

He is the resurrection and the life. He is the One who raises the dead to eternal life.

In our study this morning, Jesus is going to give Martha, Mary and us proof of the claim He made in vs 25-26, and He is going to do it by raising Lazarus from the dead.

Let's pray...

[Jhn 11:28-44 NKJV] 28 And when she had said these things (Martha), she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29 As soon as she heard [that], she arose quickly and came to Him.

I am going to backtrack a little because I didn't spend much time on Martha's response last week.

When Jesus announces to Martha that He is the resurrection and the life,

He then asks her – do you believe?

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

She didn’t just nod her head and say uhuh or “whatever you say Jesus” or Yes, I believe

She is responding with -

“Yes, I believe that You are the One the Scriptures said would come & reverse the Fall, Yes, I believe that You are the Redeemer Who will lift the curse & conquer sin & death”

That is what Martha was saying –

And when she had made this declaration – she goes back into town and tells Mary in secretly – "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

Why secretly, because she wanted Mary to have the privilege to have a private conversation with Jesus in the same way that she had just had.

She wanted to give Mary the opportunity to pour out her sorrow to Jesus.

Remember, this is day 4.

For four days, they have had friends and family around them, mourning with them.

It was also customary during this time to hire professional mourners to mourn with them – and wherever you went, they went – that was their job.

Even if you were really poor, the expectations were that you would hire at least two flute players and one professional wailing woman.

BTW, this is a practice that is still common in the Middle East and in Asia.

So Mary, as soon as she hears that Jesus is looking for her, she takes off.

**30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. 31 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."**

Jesus is outside Bethany waiting for Mary to arrive, the professional mourners and the family members that were comforting Mary – they see her take off, and they go after her.

They assume that she is going to the tomb – remember, Martha told Mary in secret that Jesus was looking for her.

This crowd is going to play a big part in what's going to happen because they are going to be eyewitnesses to what is going to occur.

**32 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."**

Mary is broken and hurting as she comes to Jesus.

The death of her brother has caused her deep pain.

And she falls at His feet and says, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Do these words sound familiar?

They should because these were the same words that we saw Martha speak to Jesus last week in verse 21.

"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

You see church,

I think that Mary and Martha had this conversation among themselves for four days.

In their time of despair, in their time of sorrow

Why did Jesus not come immediately?

Why did Jesus heal others but not our brother Lazarus, the one He loves?

Therefore, when they both make it to Jesus, out of the abundance of their heart, their mouth speaks. “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

As I mentioned last Sunday, it is ok for us to come to Jesus with questions, it is ok to come to Him broken, it ok to come to Him and to be honest with Him as we express our sorrows and disappointments to Him – as long as we don’t lose sight of who He is and the power He possesses.

Let’s look at Jesus’ response.

**33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.**

Now, in our study last week, when Martha came to Jesus

Jesus responded with several statements to Martha

Jesus told Martha that her brother will be raised, and then He told her that He is the resurrection and the life, and then He asked her if she believed.

We could say that Jesus and Martha had a theological conversation in the face of pain and suffering, right???

But not here –

With Martha, Jesus spoke.

With Mary, Jesus was silent.

Turn with me to the gospel of Luke 10 -

**[Luk 10:38-42 NKJV] 38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."**

Martha was a doer – and because she was a doer, Jesus gave her something to do.

Mary on the other hand, she was always at Jesus' feet.

She's at Jesus' feet in Luke 10

She's at Jesus' feet here in John 11

And we will see her at Jesus' feet later on in John 12 when she anoints His feet with oil and wipes His feet with her hair.

There is no better place for Mary to be in than at the feet of Jesus – so instead of speaking to Mary in her pain, as we will see – He wept with her in her pain,

He sympathized with her

**[Heb 4:15-16 NKJV] 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all [points] tempted as [we are, yet] without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Sometimes, in the midst of pain and heartache, silence is not bad.

We don't always have to have an answer.

We don't always have to have an encouraging word.

Sometimes our brother or sister in pain needs to be reminded of the gospel.

Sometimes we need to lift up the head of a suffering saint and point them to our eternal hope in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes we need to share and explain, and comfort through words, just like Jesus did with Martha.

But, sometimes our brother or sister in pain needs you to be silent and weep with them.

Sometimes, rather than try to lift up their head, we need to bow our head with them and hurt with them.

That is what Jesus is doing here in His response to Mary

Church, we are to do the same. As Paul tells us in Romans 12(15), we “rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep...

I had you make a note of the word groaned – because a better translation of the Greek word that is used here is the word to describe the snorting of a horse.

He is looking at all this grief that is before Him, at Martha’s weeping, at Mary’s weeping, at the crowd that follows Mary – at their weeping and He is becoming agitated.

He’s not mad at Martha or Mary or the crowd.

He is not mad that they have failed to recognize Him as the resurrection and the life I think what we see here is that Jesus is face to face with his enemy: Satan, sin, and death.

Jesus, is looking eye to eye with death, is about to give his enemy a foretaste to how He will defeat him.

Jesus, in watching Mary and the Jews mourn, in looking at the tomb, He’s angrily standing toe to toe with his enemy, sin and death, and by raising Lazarus from the grave he’s saying, “Your greatest blows will prove to be ineffective.

You are about to throw everything you have at me by trying to kill me, and it's not going to work. You will lose. In the same way that I'm about to raise Lazarus from the grave, I will rise from the grave. And there's nothing you can do about it."

**34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept.**

As Jesus stood near the tomb of His friend, the sorrow overwhelmed Him.

He felt what we feel when a loved one dies.

He wept.

Church, here we gain insight to the heart of our Savior who loves us and cares for us in our deepest pain.

Three times in the scriptures we find Jesus weeping

Here in John 11 – where he cried at the tomb of Lazarus

Luke 19:41 – where He wept over Jerusalem – and their unwillingness to receive their Messiah

Luke 22:39 – He cried in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He wrestled with the reality of His approaching death upon the cross and the suffering He was about to endure.

Each time we find Him weeping, it was always in response to the effects of sin and what it has done to people's lives.

**36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" 37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"**

A few months earlier, Jesus had healed the man that was blind from birth.

And I don't think that the crowd is mocking Jesus

I think they are being sincere – they are saying that it is a shame that Jesus who has the power to heal someone from blindness didn't have the opportunity to heal someone who He had such an emotional connection to.

The truth is – He could have healed Lazarus.

But He didn't – & He didn't for a good reason – to show that His power is even greater than the power to heal.

He has the power to give life to the dead.

**38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 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."**

At the beginning our study today, I went over Martha's response to Jesus' announcement and question.

She said, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Here Jesus tells them to roll away the stone, and Martha says – Lord, I wouldn't do that if I were You, Lazarus is pretty dead – KJV "he stinketh"

You see, the Jews didn't practice embalming.

They buried the dead the same day and simply laid spices and fragrances on top of them to try to cover up the smell of decomposition.

So what Martha is doing here is she is doubting God.

She wants her brother back – but now, doubt and fear have set in.

You see in verse 24, she told Jesus, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

I trust God with the big things – I trust God in the eternal things

But because things are starting to smell – I don't trust Him with the little things in our lives – I don't think He can do anything for my brother.

You see,

Reality is pushing down hope.

We do the same thing church –

How many of us early risers were worried this morning at 5 AM whether the sun was going to rise this morning?

How many of us are worried if the sun is going to rise all this week?

Big picture – no problem – God is in control

But then we get a text of a sick family member or a notification about the chaos occurring in our government and we begin to panic.

I believe in God – and then we spend the entire day panicking.

We trust Him for the future, but we don't trust Him right now.

Now, why would Jesus ask them to roll away the stone?

After all Jesus could have done it Himself –

In fact, at His own resurrection – in a few weeks from this event, He rolls away the stone Himself.

I think He does it because He wants us to exercise our faith

Do you believe? That was the question that He asked Martha –

If you believe – roll the stone away.

And I believe that we see a tremendous application in our lives from this portion of scripture.

Because the Lord wants to do great things in our lives – but in order to do these things, He asks us to roll away the stones.

And many times, our response is similar to Martha's

I wouldn't do that Lord – what's behind that stone is pretty stinky.

He is offering to heal us from our bitterness, anger, anxiety, depression, envy, jealousy, addictions

The promise has been given – the prerequisite is that we roll away the stone and expose it and allow Him total access to the situation.

He wants to deal with it – no matter how stinky it is.

**40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"**

Jesus didn't mock Martha, He directs her focus back to who He is and the promise He gave her.

**41 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. 42 "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."**

So, here we see Jesus praying publicly what He's already prayed privately.

Jesus is thanking God for hearing him past-tense. (you have heard)

This tells us that Jesus has already been praying for Lazarus.

In the same way that Jesus prayed for Lazarus, He intercedes on our behalf.

But, here Jesus goes to God in prayer for a specific purpose.

What is that purpose?

That purpose is the belief of those around Him.

**43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 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."**

At the calling of Jesus, Lazarus comes to life. Think about that, Jesus possesses the power to call the dead to life.

He is the only one who possesses the power to bring the dead to life.

He is the only one who is capable of defeating our greatest enemy: sin and death.

"Lazarus, come forth"

Jesus simply speaks the Father's will and heaven and earth honor His command.

[Col 2:15 NKJV] 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

And Lazarus comes out of the tomb wrapped – and Jesus orders the multitudes to help Lazarus out of his gravecloths.

Why?

His feet are bound so he can't run and tell people the gospel

His hands are bound – he can't serve anyone

His mouth is wrapped up – he can't preach the wonderful works of God.

What Jesus did to Lazarus is a picture of what Jesus did to each and every one of us – who were dead in our trespasses.

The Bible says we are dead in our sins until Jesus rescues us - That our best religious, moral and generous efforts are as filthy rags to God - And that every unsaved man and woman is decaying

Jesus has given us new life

He wants our feet to be loosen, our hands to be loosen, our mouth to be loosen so that we may go and proclaim the gospel

Unfortunately many believers fail to do this because they are still surrounded by traditional gravecloths.

He is calling us to come forth

He took the old clothes of our deadness and gave us new clothes of life.

Amen

**Let's pray...**

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

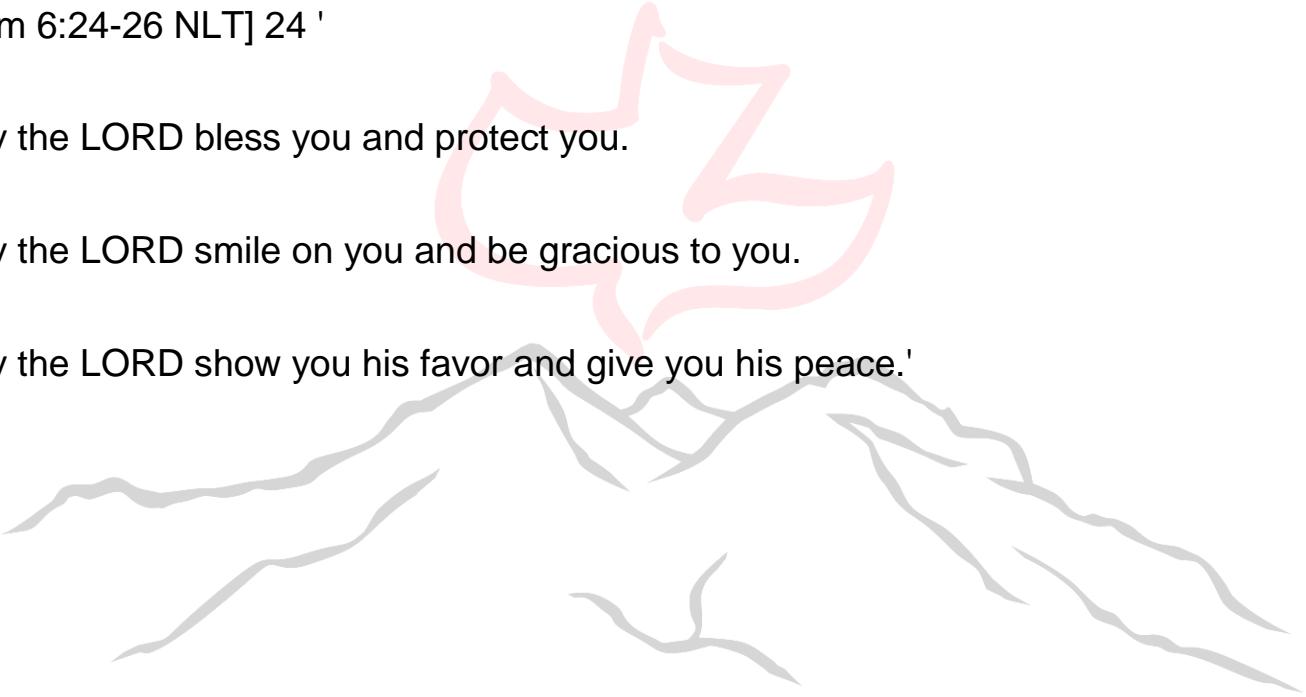
The hope of the gospel is that Jesus Christ defeated sin and death through his death and resurrection. And because of his death and resurrection, we too have been brought to life through belief in him.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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