

Bibles???

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

Turn your bibles with me to John 11

Now, because it is Easter Sunday and we are all here celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior – usually, I would have to prepare a topical message like I did for Friday –

However, by the grace of God, I get a free pass this year, because in our Sunday Morning verse by verse study through the Gospel of John, we now come to the story of Lazarus – which is a picture of what was going to occur, just a few weeks later on Resurrection Sunday.

So you if you were expecting to hear a topical study on the Resurrection – you will have to wait until next year –

In the first 10 chapters of the Gospel of John, we have seen several instances where He displayed His power over the physical aspects of this life.

He restored sight to the blind

He healed the lame and the paralyzed

He healed the sick

He turned water into wine

He multiplied fish and loaves of bread and fed the multitudes

And as we saw a few weeks ago, He even walked on water

But the sign that John is going to tell us about today, on Resurrection Sunday, displays to us that Jesus possesses a power that stretches far beyond the physical into the eternal.

He possesses power over life and death, which is a power that only belongs to God.

Not only does this miracle give us a glimpse of Jesus' resurrection, it is also the last miracle that is recorded in public until His resurrection – from now on, there are no announcements – Jesus is going to spend the remaining few weeks preparing His disciples and us for the things that were to come.

And the other significance is that that following this miracle, we will see the heat begin to really turn up in regards to his crucifixion.

The miraculous healing of a dead man will ultimately lead to the death of the Son of Man.

This is a beautiful chapter church –

Because in it – we see Jesus' compassion in the midst of tragedy.

Let's pray...

What happens when we die?

This is the question that becomes the litmus test for any philosophical or religious belief in the world.

What happens when we die?

Because there are some people (a lot of people) who believe that after you die, you are reincarnated.

That you come back as an animal according to how you lived

So then you live your life in fear because the last thing you want is to come back as a flea or a fly or a cat

Some people believe that after you die – that' it – it's over. So their philosophy is, I am going to eat, drink and be merry because this is as good as it gets.

However, Christianity says that the believer doesn't die – but lives again.

[2Co 5:8 NKJV] 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

That is a promise to the believer – that the very last breath we breathe on earth will lead to the very next breath in the presence of the Lord.

That is hope church

No one likes talking about death

But the reality is that every single one of us here today has been touched by death.

And there will come a day when we will face death ourselves and spend eternity in one of two places.

We will spend eternity with the Lord who saved us and shed His blood for us or we will be resurrected to a life apart from God.

So let's take a look at our text -

[Jhn 11:1-27 NKJV] 1 Now a certain [man] was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was [that] Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

In the first three verses here, John introduces us to this tight knot family.

It was a real family, living in a real town and they were experiencing a real problem.

Lazarus is sick. He is ill. He is weak and feeble, on the brink of death.

However, Lazarus is not going through the trial alone.

His sisters are making every effort to care for and look after their brother who is sick.

John also introduces us to Mary – however, the incident that John refers to here in verse 2 actually happens later on – this happens in ch 12

And I believe that John is doing this to let us know which Mary he is writing about

But also he's telling us of the type of relationship Jesus had with this family.

This is a woman and this is a family that loved Jesus.

This is a family that enjoyed a close and intimate relationship with Jesus.

They loved Jesus, and Jesus loved them.

And because of their close relationship with Jesus, they know who He is – they know the works He has done –

So they send word to Jesus to let Him know of their brother's sickness.

Church, this is a cry of desperation.

"Lord, help the one you love get better. We know you're able!"

4 When Jesus heard [that], He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

In a few verses, we are going to see that this illness will lead to death.

Lazarus is going to die from his illness.

So, is Jesus wrong here? No

What Jesus is saying is that this illness will not end in death. Though he will die

because of this illness, Jesus will bring him back to life so that God may be glorified.

Death will not have the final say; Jesus will be glorified through the illness.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

So here, John provides for us Jesus' reaction when He hears the news that His friend, Lazarus is severely ill –

Does Jesus drop everything and run to lay hands on Lazarus? No

There is a delay.

Now, for those of us that have been here during our studies in John – this is the 3rd delay that Jesus has had when a loved one asked Him to do something.

At the wedding feast, Mary told Jesus – They have no wine

Jesus' response, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

A delay

In chapter 7, Jesus' brothers tell Him, "If are who You say you are, why don't You go up to Jerusalem and reveal Yourself at the Feast of Tabernacles"

Jesus response, "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

A delay

Now, if I received a call that my kids were in trouble, I would drop everything that I was doing – and I am pretty sure that most of us would do the same here.

And I think that John presents the story in such a way that the readers fully expect and anticipate Jesus to stop what He's doing and run to the aid of Lazarus.

"If Jesus loved Lazarus, then he would act quickly in delivering him from this trial."

But the opposite happens -

I had you make a note of the word, "so" because that is the key to Jesus' delay.

It means that it is because Jesus loved this family that He stayed where He was.

Rather than stop what he's doing and return to Bethany

Because Jesus loves them, He doesn't answer their request right away.

Because He loves them, He allows them to continue to suffer.

Because He loves them, He would rather them see the glory of God displayed through their suffering than rush to grant them healing

Church, do not miss this truth.

Prolonged suffering does not negate God's love for you and me.

The fact that you're continuing to suffer does not mean that God has not heard you, nor does it mean that God is mad at you.

Do not look to your circumstances as a measure of God's love.

We know that God loves us because of the cross.

We look to the cross – not our circumstances.

This truth doesn't remove the pain of our suffering, but it should offer us comfort, peace, and joy in the midst of our suffering.

Church, we are loved by God, and nothing can separate us from that love.

7 Then after this He said to [the] disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 [The] disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

So, after the two days, Jesus tells His disciples – pack your bags, we are going back to Judea.

Now, Bethany – where Lazarus was is in Judea

The problem that the disciples see right away is that Jerusalem is also in Judea

In fact, they are only a few miles apart.

And the last time they were in Jerusalem (at the end of chapter 10), remember, that Pharisees were ready to kill Jesus.

“Are you crazy? You want to go back?”

“Do you have a death wish or something?”

And Jesus responds with this proverb – about the sun and the light.

And here is the explanation

No matter what man does – we cannot lengthen or shorten daylight.

God in His infinite wisdom determined how much light we would get in a day

Well, in the same way that the hours of the day are determined by God, so too is the life of Jesus.

The religious rulers who are seeking to kill Jesus, they cannot shorten His life, and His disciples who are trying to preserve His life cannot lengthen it.

The number of days, hours, and minutes of Jesus’s life are predetermined by God, and nothing can change that.

Therefore, Jesus is going to walk in obedience to the Father’s will.

He will not walk in darkness; He is going to walk in the light and in doing so, He will not stumble.

Turn with me to Ephesians 5

[Eph 5:15-16 NKJV] 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Just as the number of days in the life of Jesus were predetermined by God – the number of our days are predetermined by Him as well.

And we are also called to walk in the light – we are called to walk in obedience to His will, so that we will not stumble.

11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." 12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

If Lazarus is sleeping – let him sleep, Jesus

Don't go waking him up – he will wake up on his own after he is better.

He doesn't need You

Let's just stay here where we are safe – instead of going to Judea.

However, note that John makes it very clear that Lazarus was already dead.

**14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 "And I am glad for your
sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."
16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also
go, that we may die with Him."**

Jesus disciples are totally confused now.

There is a crisis – but Jesus doesn't want to go

Is Lazarus sleeping or is he dead

First we were not going to Judea – then we are going to Judea

Are we going on a suicide mission?

Are we going to die?

But then Jesus told us the proverb about the light and the darkness

What's going on???

They just don't get it –

And I find it comforting that they don't get it because there are many times in my life
when I don't get it either.

When I don't have all the answers.

When I am walking around scratching my head like one of the disciples.

But the encouraging things for me – is not only that they are confused and not quite seeing it (so we can relate to them) – but also, it is that they don't leave Jesus

Because earlier in John 6 – we saw that many disciples left Jesus' side after He told them hard words.

These are even harder words, harder circumstances yet they don't run away.

Church, there will be times in our lives where we will have more questions than answers.

These are humbling times –

Because in our minds, we say – I have been with the Lord 10,20,30,40 years. I should have all of this figured out already

And we need to realize that we are always learning.

It would be nice to have all the answers the minute we put our faith and trust in the Lord

But there are some things that God will give to us that we will learn only through experiences / through trials.

BTW, Thomas like the other disciples is clueless to what he is saying – but something that we learn from Thomas here is that he wasn't a coward.

He might have been clueless but he wasn't a coward.

And I think that poor Thomas get a bad wrap

We know Thomas as – what?

Doubting Thomas

And he is known as doubting Thomas because he wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the other disciples who were cowering from the religious rulers (John 20)

They were cowards – he was out in the streets

That is why he says, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Here, the other disciples are telling Jesus – don't go! And Thomas is the one saying, "bring it"

He doesn't know what's going on – but at least he expresses his commitment.

He was willing to die.

So cut Thomas some slack guys.

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.

So John provides for us a time stamp – and what it tells us is that Lazarus death occurred immediately after they sent word to Jesus that he was sick.

Jewish custom was to bury the dead the same day.

So with the two day delay, it would take a day of travel to get the message to Jesus and a day of travel for Jesus to travel to Bethany.

19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

The words we hear from Martha in verse 21 –

Are all those unanswered questions that we all have when we face death of someone close to us.

Why Lord?

Why did you allow this to happen?

Why now?

Why her?

Why not me?

Why weren't you there?

Why didn't you intervene?

Where were you Lord?

What happened?

All those questions are summed up in – if You would have been here...my brother would have still been alive

She is expressing deep disappointment

She is expressing in words the deep sorrow that she is experiencing.

"You could have done something about it. Where weren't you here?"

The reality is – that God was there and that God is there.

Lazarus' death didn't come as a surprise to God.

No death comes as a surprise to God.

[Psa 139:16 NKJV] 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When [as yet there were] none of them.

So Martha is hurting and she is expressing her hurt to Jesus

However, look at closely what she says in verse 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

It is almost as if she is saying,

I have all these questions – but I don't doubt You Lord.

I trust You.

I know You are from God.

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

You brother will rise again.

Jesus is not comforting Martha with a false hope

Jesus is speaking truth into her life.

And Martha responds in the reality of her theology

It matches what she believes.

Martha believes the words of the Prophet Daniel 12

She believed the words that Job spoke

[Job 19:25-26 NKJV] 25 For I know [that] my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this [I know], That in my flesh I shall see God,

She believed the words of the Psalmist

[Psa 73:23-24 NKJV] 23 Nevertheless I [am] continually with You; You hold [me] by my right hand. 24 You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me [to] glory.

Martha was saying, "Well at least I know that you will raise Him up in that future resurrection."

She has hope

And the application is that we must make sure that we have our theology right
Because there will be instances in our life when our theology is challenged.

Jesus said in Matt 7

Are we going to be wise builder or a foolish builder?

Is our theology built on sand or on rock?

What were the challenges? The winds, the floods, the rain, the times of trouble, death

We need to take our relationship with God seriously.

We don't know what is going to happen and when it's going to happen.

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

When Jesus comforted Martha and told her that Lazarus would rise again, Martha assumed that Jesus spoke of the final resurrection.

That this was something that would happen down the road.

Little did she know that Jesus was referring to "today"

And one of the things that we have to grasp, is that Jesus specializes in today.

We saw this on Friday –

What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus – "Today salvation has come to this house

How did Jesus answer the thief that said "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom" did Jesus say – ok, it's going to be a while – at least 2000 years - No, He said "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

That is why Jesus tells Martha and us - I am the resurrection and the life

By the way, another I AM statement

Here is the hope when we die – the resurrection

We can hope in a resurrection because Jesus Himself beats death and resurrected from the grave.

The resurrection source begins with Jesus himself.

There is no other way to obtain this promise without first putting your faith in Christ.

Not only is Jesus the resurrection, He also offer life

John 10:10b

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

We were dead in trespasses and sin

[Eph 2:4-5 NKJV] 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Do you believe Martha???

And the same question that Jesus asked Martha – He asks today.

Do you believe that God can give you this hope no matter the circumstance?

Do you believe that Jesus can give you life even in the world we live today?

Do you believe that God can be good even if life isn't so good right now?

Mary and Martha were looking at the small picture, but Jesus was looking at the big picture. They were looking at the temporal, but He was looking at the eternal. They

were looking at the physical, but Jesus was looking at the supernatural. They wanted a healing. But Jesus wanted a resurrection.

I pray that this resurrection Sunday, that He will give us eyes to see past our circumstances, to look past our griefs and give us the ability to see more of Him.

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.

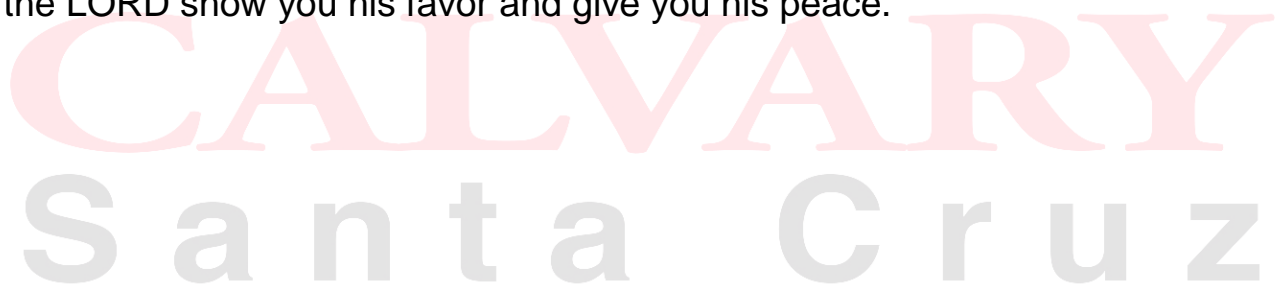
The message of Easter is that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. And death died when Christ rose..

[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.'



CALVARY
Santa Cruz