

Dealing with Death?  
November 24, 2013  
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John 11

Opening Questions: **What is the difference between an ACQUAINTANCE and a really good FRIEND? Anyone have friends you still have contact with after many years? What's it like when you reconnect? What things in life are more meaningful with good friends?**

One of the great “human” things Jesus modeled for us during His time on earth, was having good friends. Not just the twelve He called and ministered with, others who were close. The best of these were two sisters and their brother, who lived in Bethany: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. These were true friends. They were, “come over for a meal” and “stay with us when you’re in town” friends. Friends with whom conversation is deep; laughter is easy; and at times, tears are natural.

- After Jesus healed the blind man, and the Jewish leaders attempted to stone Him, He withdrew. It was not yet in God’s timing for Jesus to die, but His public ministry was over. He pulled away and poured into his disciples preparing them for what was to come.
- One day a message came from Mary and Martha (verse 3), Lazarus was ill.
- Verse 3: Two interesting things. **How did they describe Lazarus?**
- Verse 3: **What request did Mary and Martha make of Jesus?**
- When we pray to the Father for someone we’re not asking as a favor for us, it’s because HE loves THEM. He doesn’t need our recommendations just our faith.
- Knowing the miraculous son of God, **what would we expect? What did Jesus do?**
- Verse 4: **What reason did Jesus give for this situation and His response?**
- Verse 6: **Jesus purposely waited two days. Why?**
- Verse 8: When Jesus decided to go to Bethany, **how did His disciples react? [v.18]**
- Verse 14: **What shocking statement did Jesus make? Why did this have to happen?**

John 11:17–27 (ESV)

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 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 from God, God will give you.” 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 on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who 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 coming into the world."

- Martha ran to meet Jesus. Mary stayed behind. **Based on their personalities, why is that not surprising? (Luke 10:39-42)**
- Verse 21: **What do you think Martha's tone was? What does verse 22 indicate?**
- Verse 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 on the last day."* Verse 22 indicates Martha had faith Jesus could have healed her brother, **what does verse 24 indicate further about her faith?**
- Verses 25 and 26 are two more verses to underline and put a star by.
- Jesus made his fifth "I AM" statement. *"I am the resurrection and the life."*
- Most Jews of that day believed in the concept of the resurrection. Jesus took it beyond an IDEA and PERSONALIZED it. Jesus IS RESURRECTION POWER!
- *"Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,"*
- **What difference do verses 25 and 26 make in our day to day lives? Comfort us?**
- We have a HOPE that is BEYOND this life...and it's BECAUSE OF JESUS
- Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
- Adam's SIN caused us to be MORTAL...to die; Christ OVERCAME death for us!
- Jesus continued, *"...and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."*
- **Under what circumstances will some believers never experience death at all?**
- Then Jesus asks Martha the question He asks us all: *"Do you believe this?"*
- Verse 27 shows Martha was really a great THEOLOGIAN. She may have been scurrying around cooking, cleaning, and hosting...but she had been LISTENING.
- **What three things does she say about Jesus in verse 27?**
- Martha ran to get Mary, saying Jesus was there. When Mary abruptly left, all the mourners followed her. This made for a BIG CROWD. **Not an accident. Why?**
- Mary fell at Jesus' feet. Every time we see Mary in scripture, she's at Jesus' feet.
- Let's notice two EMOTIONS Jesus, in his humanness, displayed.

John 11:33-37

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

- "Deeply moved" comes from a Greek word meaning to "snort with anger"
- "Greatly troubled" just as it sounds, means "stirred up" or "disturbed."
- **What about this scene before Him would have made Jesus so ANGRY?**

Ray Stedman writes:

*He is angry at the terrible results of evil. That is the same sort of anger you feel when you read of a little boy who is beaten to death by his own father, or molested and sexually destroyed by some adult whom he trusts.*

34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

- “Jesus wept.” The shortest and one of the most poignant verses in the Bible.
- Jesus didn’t wail loudly like the “professional Jewish mourners.” He simply wept.
- The Jews had their own theories of why Jesus wept.

36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

- **Why do YOU think Jesus wept?**

Ray Stedman again:

*It is true Jesus loved Lazarus, but he is not weeping for that. He knows he is on his way to raise him from the dead. He knows that in a few minutes this whole weeping crowd will be transformed into rejoicing people who can hardly believe what has happened; and that Mary and Martha are going to have their dear brother back again in their arms. No, he knows that; he has no doubt of it. He is weeping because he is sharing their heartache.*

We, who are followers of Christ serve a SYMPATHIZING SAVIOR. He HATES what sin in this world does to us, and he HURTS as we hurt.

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, 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 the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”

- Martha BELIEVED she’d see her brother again someday. Jesus meant THAT day.

40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”

- Martha, we just covered this: BELIEVE and you will see the GLORY of God.
- The word BELIEVE or BELIEVED appears NINE times in John chapter 11 in the ESV.
- Verse 40 sums up this whole account. To be a follower of Christ you have to BELIEVE that He ROSE from the dead, and because He did, WE will also RISE.

1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV) Paul wrote:

19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."  
43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."

- In the other two resurrection miracles, (Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:35-43; The widow of Nain's son in Luke 7:11-17 ) Jesus didn't raise his voice. **Why did he this time?**
- Some have credited St. Augustine with saying if Jesus had not called Lazarus by name, the whole cemetery would have emptied.

44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Jesus commanded the mourners with the same command he gives to death itself for every believer: "Unbind him, and let him go."

So, What's the Takeaway?

Warren Wiersbe writes,

*If Jesus Christ can do nothing about death, then whatever else He can do amounts to nothing...Death is man's last enemy...but Jesus Christ has defeated this horrible enemy totally and permanently.*

- For a BELIEVER in Christ, death is not the end...it's the REAL BEGINNING. To be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord!" (2 Cor. 5:8)
- How confident are YOU in our HOPE of resurrection? Are you bound up like Lazarus?
- Are you bound up because you've never asked Jesus to be Lord of your life?
- He's calling today in a loud voice: "COME OUT!" and live forever.
- Maybe you ARE a believer in Christ, but are bound up with the "grave clothes" of doubt that believers really will experience a bodily resurrection one day.
- Either way, this lesson gives us what we need to have CONFIDENCE in the resurrection.
- Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life...Do you believe?"