

Jesus and Lazarus

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Date: 02 July 2017

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[0 : 0 0] we can turn in our Bibles to John chapter 11. John chapter 11 and we will read from verse 1. This is God's word.

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 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.

So the sisters sent word to Jesus, Lord, the one you love is sick. 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. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. Then he said to his disciples, let us go back to Judea. But Rabbi, they said a short while ago, the Jews tried to stone you and yet you're going back there. Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light. After he'd said this, he went on to tell them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up. His disciples replied, Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better. Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant naturally. So then he told them plainly, Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe, but let us go to him.

[1 : 4 2] Then Thomas, called Goodimus, said to the rest of the disciples, let us also go that we may die with him. On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the room for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and made him to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. Lord, Martha said to Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha answered, I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? Yes, Lord, she told him. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world. And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. The teacher is here, she said, and is asking for you. When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the

Jews who had been with Mary in the house comforted her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Where have you laid him? He asked.

Come and see, Lord, they replied. Jesus went. Then the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying? Jesus once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. Take away the stone, he said. But Lord, said Martha, the sister of the dead man, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days. Then Jesus said, did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, Father, I thank you that you've heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. The dead man came out, his hands and

feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, take off the grave clothes and let them go. Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did put their faith in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. What are we accomplishing? He asked. Here is this man performing miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him. And then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. Then one of them named Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, spoke up. You know nothing at all. You do not realize that it's better for you that one man died for the people than the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own, but as a high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation. And not only for that nation, but also for the scattered children of God to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on, they plotted to take his life. Therefore, Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead, he withdrew to a region near the desert to a village named Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus. And as they stood in the temple area, they asked one another, what do you think? Isn't he coming to the feast at all? But the chief priests and the Pharisees have given orders that if anyone find out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him. Amen. And may God bless that area of his word to us. John chapter 11 is a chapter that it begins on a note of frustration. Because it begins with people who are in extreme need. And they're having to do one of the hardest possible things for people who are in extreme need. And that is having to wait. When we are struggling in a situation and we feel like we can become involved and we can do things that will address the problem that we're at the center of, it's bearable. But when we're in the middle of a situation and we see something that pains us, maybe someone like we see Lazarus going down in health and there's nothing we can do, it's the most excruciating thing to have to endure. And that's what we find this family doing. We're introduced to this family here in John chapter 11. Lazarus and Mary and Martha.

Lazarus and we find them and they're in their home in a state of distress. Lazarus in a state of extreme illness. And we can imagine them sitting there and looking at the clock as the clock ticked and time passed and they waited for Jesus. And he doesn't seem to be coming. Lazarus was sick. And Lazarus was Jesus' friend. You know that from the passage. He was dear to Jesus. Lazarus wasn't down with a common cold. He was very sick. And so his sisters, Mary and Martha, they're worried. So what do they do? They send for Jesus.

[8 : 27] Why did they send for Jesus? They sent for Jesus because they knew Jesus. They'd enjoyed fellowship with Jesus. They had a relationship with Jesus. Their home was one of the few homes that we find in the Gospels where Jesus was willingly welcomed in and ministered to in terms of his physical needs. You can read about that in Luke chapter 10.

And so they called out and they asked for the help of Jesus. Just a question in that location before we really get into this.

Mary and Martha and Lazarus, their home was a home where Jesus was welcomed. their home was a home where Jesus' presence had been felt and enjoyed and seen.

Is your home a home where Jesus is welcomed? Is your home a home where the name of Jesus can be heard regularly?

I remember working some years ago now on a job. It was the Brands Bog to Mems and Pipeline on the east coast of Scotland over Aberdeen, Shirley. Quite a remote place. I used to go from time to time. And I remember going on one occasion and the first occasion I went out there.

[10 : 03] And there was no hotels anywhere nearby. So I booked a random bed and breakfast. The only one I could find that was close to the site. So I booked it. I worked a day's work. Finished at the end of the evening.

And I went into this bed and breakfast. Knocked on the door. And I was greeted by this kind of large elderly lady. And the warmth that we were greeting made me think, could she be a Christian? Just because there was such a warmth and such a connection instantly. And then there was a sort of sense of peace in the home.

And I thought, could it be, of all the homes that I could have chosen in this area, could this be possible? So I had my eyes open. And as I went through the main hall and taken into the lounge area, I glanced.

And within two minutes, I could see texts from the wall. I could see books, spiritual books, dotted about. And sure enough, this was a home where Christ was welcome.

So is your home, is my home a home where Christ is welcome? Can his name be heard? Is worshipping as a family together something like you do?

[11:26] You used to hear about the bricks in every home in these parts. Has the book been set aside in favour of the TV and the iPhone?

Or is the book still open? Do you as a family do what this family did when you hit crisis? Not go and try and fix it yourself, but first and foremost call upon the name of Jesus for help.

Because that's what the sisters do. Look at verse 3. The sisters sent word to Jesus. Lord, the one you love is sick. And I've said this to you before.

I'll say it again because I think it's such an important point. Here we have a great model for prayer. For those who are asked to pray in public.

For those who pray in the closet in private. Often we wrestle with this whole idea of how do I pray and what do I say? I haven't got the training. I haven't got the eloquence.

[12:31] I haven't got the freedom to be able to speak. I can't pray. Well, here's a correction. You can pray. And you can pray as they pray. How many words?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Lord, the one you love is sick. They don't tell Jesus what to do. They don't try and prescribe a solution.

They just take the one that they loved and they know that the Lord loved and they bring him to them in prayer. They pray. And Jesus heard verse 4.

But the way that Jesus responds in this instance, for the sisters especially, it's distressing. First point today is Jesus waited.

We see that in verse 6. Perhaps surprising and yet this is what Jesus does. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he didn't drop everything and run to the place where Lazarus was.

[13:35] When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. Why? That's the question. Why did Jesus not clear his diary, set aside every other thing, and head to the place where there were those who were in distress and where a friend is deteriorating fast?

Why did he not respond in terms other than waiting? Well, for the sisters, they had no idea why. And I think it's important that we note that.

They sit in their homes and they wait and they wait and they wait. And they don't know why Jesus is not responding to the call that they made upon him.

They're in the dark. Often that's how we feel when we feel. We're in the dark. We're asking for help. We're asking for an answer.

Nothing's coming. Nothing's coming. So we start to question. Has he heard? Well, he had heard. Does he care? Absolutely he cares.

[14:51] But we can't always see why he waits. But we are given the answer in this chapter as to why Jesus waited. There's three reasons why Jesus waited. The first reason is Jesus knew that Lazarus' sickness would not end in death.

Look at verse 4. When he heard this. Jesus said this sickness. When he gets the news about his friend. He responds by saying this sickness will not end in death.

Now note what Jesus didn't say. Jesus didn't say Lazarus will not die. He said this sickness will not end in death.

Lazarus would die. But then Jesus who was in himself the resurrection and the life would bring him back to life. And think about this.

We don't have the record of it. But Lazarus died again. A second time. We don't know how. We don't know the circumstances. But yet again. That sickness that overtook Lazarus when he died the second time.

[15:59] It would not end in death. And that's true for all who love the Lord. Whatever sickness assails us.

Whatever condition overtakes us physically. It will not end in death. Each one of us.

One day. Will physically die. All of us. We will die. But if we love the Lord.

If we trust the Lord. If we have done what I was speaking to the children about. And asked for forgiveness of sin. And asked him to come into our lives. If we can say the Lord is my shepherd.

It will not end in death. Because we will be led through death's dark veil. Into life that is everlasting.

[17:01] And what a comfort of that is. I can think of at least four families. In this congregation alone. Who in the last week. That have been dealing with death. But when is the death of a loved one?

Who knows the Lord. And who trusted the Lord. We know death is not the end. For it. Why did Jesus wake?

Because he knew. That this sickness would not end in death. The second reason that Jesus waited. Was because Jesus knew that glory. Would come through this tragedy.

Verse four. When Jesus heard this. He 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. And again.

That's a point. That we just. We struggle to come to terms with. We can't see this. In the instant. We see only through a glass dark thing.

[18:05] We see just in the present tense. But God is the one who sees crystal clear. And he sees the eternal scene.

The end from the beginning. The beginning from the end. Not in a straight line. He sees it all. And when is that kind of vision. Things that look a disaster to us.

Can be used for glory. And they are used for glory. For Lazarus' sisters. This looked like it was utterly hopeless. For Lazarus himself.

This seemed to be. Such a tragedy. And such a painful thing. That Jesus. As he waited. Knew. That this was going to be.

The means of glory. And it was. That's why we're still talking about it. Two thousand years later.

[19:01] We're still talking about the day. That Jesus waited. As the sisters stretched. And as Lazarus felt the life.

Drain out of his body. What we see in this passage. Is the glory of Christ. We see the sovereign power.

Of God. We see the good news. Of the gospel. The fact that Jesus. Can overcome death. All that flows.

From a situation. That seemed to be so dark. And depressing. Jesus waited. Jesus waited.

Because. He knew the sickness. Would not end in death. Jesus waited. Because. He knew that glory. Would come through tragedy. And Jesus waited.

[19:56] Because he loved them. Not because he didn't love them. But because he did love them. Verse five. Jesus loved Martha.

And her sister. And Lazarus. I don't know about you. If I loved. Just the order of that verse. Because we know Martha.

And we know me. And we know Lazarus. And we can think back. To Luke chapter 10. Where Martha gets it wrong. Jesus comes to their home.

Martha's charging about. Getting the dinner organized. Not listening to a word. That Jesus says. And getting more and more stressed. More stressed. And rustling teeny in the burger van. As all the pressure of dinner's on them.

And Martha's there. And she's on her own. In the kitchen. The sweat's coming down her face. She's getting more and more stressed. Where's Mary? She's sitting at Jesus' feet. And so Martha protests and says.

[20:57] Tell her to get to work. Jesus says. Martha. Mary's the wise one. She wants to be with me. She wants to listen to me. Dinner will come and go.

Martha got it wrong. But Jesus loved Martha. And her sister. Mary. And Lazarus.

You got it wrong this week. You will have. I have. The devil will tell you. Jesus doesn't love you. Because you get it wrong. This passage.

Even that line. Is a corrective. We get it wrong all the time. But Jesus loves us. Jesus waited.

Because he loved him. Now think about this one. Just as we. Before we move on. From this point. If you think about a child.

[21:57] Because essentially. That's what we are. Before God. You think about a child. And if you sit down. A six year old child. If we got the Sunday scope. And we put them along.

The back wall here. And we said. We'd like to interview you. Please. About how you feel. Your parents are doing. In bringing you up. Do you think they're doing a good job. Do you think they're doing a bad job. Are you perfectly happy.

With the terms and conditions. Of your. Your life at present. Or are there some tweaks. That might improve things. Now if we ask that. Of any of the children. I'm sure they would have. Some protests. I get sent to bed.

At eight o'clock. I got a shelf. At half past nine. I got broccoli. In my plate. Last night. For dinner. I don't like it. These are all things. That. Children would tell you.

That they just. Object to. In their. In their life. But just a wee. Bit down the road. When they're a little older.

[22 : 53] And they think back. Over their childhood. They'll realise. What they can't see today. They'll realise. That they will put to bed. At a clock. And make it eat broccoli.

Not because their parents. Hated them. But because their parents. Loved them. And wanted the best for them. And even in this. Case.

Martha. And Mary. And Lazarus. When he awoke. Would emerge. From this scene. Knowing. So much more. About how.

Christ. Loved them. And how much. They could trust. And the application.

For us. Is straightforward. There are times. In our lives. When. Like. Little children. We go through things. We'd rather not go through. We go through trials.

[23 : 48] And tribulations. As we stand. We'll come to them. Tonight. In James. And we suffer. Real pain. And we cry out. To God. We ask.

For answers. And we wait. And we wonder. Why. The answer. Doesn't seem to be coming. And we look. At our circumstances. And the more. We look at our circumstances.

The more we wonder. Why this is happening. So what do we do? We look at God's word.

We come back. To passages like this. We see. How God works. We look at the character. Of Christ. We look at the works. Of Christ. We look at the cross.

Of Christ. Which appeared. Even to the disciples. To me. The most. Hopeless symbol. People on earth. For three days. As they felt.

[24 : 48] The absence. Of Christ. In their lives. And yet. They were soon. To realise. That what seemed. To be so destructive.

And so hopeless. Was eternally. Glorious. To be so So if you. Have issues.

Where you are. Battling with God. Over the pain. That you are going through. At present. In your life. Be encouraged. To be encouraged.

Be encouraged. To open the Bible. Be encouraged. To look to Christ. Be encouraged. To look back. To that cross. To see the extent.

To which. He loves you. And keep on trusting. That's the life of faith. You want to please God.

[25 : 44] That's how to live. Keep on trusting. Even when you can't see why. And Mary and Martha.

Would emerge from this scene. Knowing how much God loved them. And how much. They could trust him. Even though they didn't want to be. In the centre of this. In the moment. So the first point here is.

That Jesus. Wakened. The second point here. Is that Jesus wept. Jesus wept. Verse 35.

It's actually the shortest verse. In all the Bible. Two words. Jesus wept. But it's one of the most profound verses.

And deep verses. In all of scripture. Because what we see. In this verse. Is God the son. Weeping. Why did Jesus weep.

[26 : 46] Well he wept. Because he loved Lazarus. Who died. And he loved the family. Who were grieving.

And he felt for them. He entered into. What they were feeling. And as the crowds. Who were gathered.

With the family. Looked in on this scene. At how moved they were. Because their response. To Jesus tears.

Was to say. In verse 36. See. How he loved them. And in this part. Of the.

The narrative. Of John 11. We see so clearly. Something that we often miss. And that's the humanity. Of Christ. Jesus.

[27 : 39] Is the God. Man. He's fully God. But he is fully man. He's not a superhuman. Who doesn't feel. What we feel.

He feels. What we feel. He more intensely. Feels. What we feel. Than what we feel. If that makes any sense. Jesus. Emotions.

What he experienced. Is heightened. To what we experience. Yes. He was God. The son. But he was man. He had feelings. He had a relationship. With these people. These were people. That he loved. These were his friends. So when. His friend. Lazarus. Dies. He feels the grief. And when he sees. The sorrow. That overwhelms. That family. He enters into.

[28 : 37] And when. He. Sees. The brokenness. Of the world. That he. Created. He went.

And I think. We can learn a lot. From the humanity. Of Christ. And the compassion. Of Christ. Especially men.

I include myself. First. I'm not a crier. I'm not one of these people. Who just. Starts the. The tears. Just. It's just not how I'm. I'm wired. But that's not something.

To be proud about. And that's not something. To resist. It's not a sign of weakness. To be moved. It's not a sign of weakness. To show emotion.

It's not a sign of weakness. To cry. Because here. We see. The God. Of the universe.

[29 : 41] Here. We see. The almighty God. The omnipotent. All powerful. God. And he's weeping.

Jesus was acquainted. With grief. And I think that's a comfort. I think it's comforting.

To see what a friend. They had in Jesus. And it's comforting. To consider what we sang. What a friend. We can have in Jesus.

Because just as Jesus sat with them. And stood at a tomb with them. And cried with them. Jesus is always ready to sit with us.

And stand with us. And weep with us. In fact this is. This is the whole purpose. Of the day.

[30 : 43] That we enjoy today. It's a day for our bodies to recharge. A day for us to stop work. But primarily this is a day.

Where we will take time to be with Jesus. One of the sad things that. We know.

And people who have suffered loss. Know most acutely. Is that when. They are often grieving. In the most raw form. They feel isolated.

Because people don't know what to say. And so they feel isolated. And the easy thing to do.

Is for us to withdraw. And there's been tragedy. And say. Well what can I say. I might say the wrong thing. I'll just stay away. Jesus.

[31 : 44] Never does that. We do that. Jesus. Never does that. Jesus weeps for us. And there's comfort.

In his weeping. But there's also hope. In his weeping. Yes. Jesus went. But Jesus didn't weep.

As one who is hopeless. And defeated. Sometimes we see people. And they weep. And you can just see. They're utterly broken. And they've got no strength left.

And they've got no hope left. And they're just melting before us. That's not the kind of weeping. That we observe in this chapter. Yes there were tears.

Yes there was sorrow. Yes there was grief. Yes there was compassion. And empathy. But these were tears also. That had indignation. And anger in them. Verse 33 and verse 38.

[32 : 45] There's a phrase in these two verses. That we need to note. When Jesus saw her weeping. Verse 33. And the Jews who had come along with it. Also weeping. He was deeply moved in spirit.

And troubled. Flick to verse 38. You'll see the same phrase. Jesus once more. Deeply moved. Came to the tomb. And these words.

As we have in the English. They don't do justice to the actual original meaning of the words. They're words that speak of sorrow. But in the Greek they also speak of anger. The better translation for that wee phrase is.

Jesus became angry in spirit. And very agitated. That's the most literal they can do with it. Jesus as he came to that grave.

As he wept with these people. He became angry in spirit. And very agitated. And so the tears of Christ. They held more than grief.

[33 : 44] They held hope. And strength. And a righteous anger. And B.B. Warfield has a quote.

Which I think can do a far better job than I can. In trying to paint the picture of Jesus' approach to Lazarus. Who had died. Warfield says.

Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus. Not in a state of uncontrollable grief. But of irrepressible anger. It is death that is the object of his wrath.

And behind death. Him who has the power of death. And whom he has come into the world to destroy. Tears of sympathy may fill his eyes.
But this is incidental. His soul. Says Warfield. Is held by a rage. And he advances to the tomb. As a champion who prepares for conflict.

[34 : 53] The raising of Lazarus. Therefore. Is a decisive instance. An open symbol. Of Jesus' conquest. Of death. Death. And hell.

And I hope and I pray that we can see this. I meet so many people. Who are angry with God. Because of death.

Death. But I hope we can see. In the light of this chapter. That God is more angry about death. Than anyone. Death.

And illness. Are not God's design. They are the devil's. Distortion. And that's why. Jesus. Is angry. At this grave site. Because he sees what sin has done. He sees the devil's. Ugly mark.

[35 : 55] On humanity. And yes. It reduces him to tears. But through. The tears. There is a. Utter determination.

Termination. To deal with death. And to save from sin. So that there could be a hope. Offered. A hope. That not even death. Could take away. So Jesus waits. In response to that prayer. And Jesus weeps. As he sees death. And the final point. It's very brief. It's Jesus wars. Jesus wars. We have such an impression of Christ. Much of which. Has been given to us.

[36 : 55] By a media. And a church. Over the years. That has distorted the image of Christ. We think of Jesus. With pale skin. And soft hair.

And gentle hands. It's not the Jesus of the Bible. We think of him. As one. Who's walked over by everyone. And never has the courage.

To say anything. That would possibly offend anyone. That's the impression. That we are given. As we look at. The media's. Picture of Christ. Christ. But it's not the biblical picture.

Jesus wept. Jesus wept. And Jesus wars. And all I want to do. As we finish. Is just stand back in awe.

As we see. Jesus approach. The tomb of Lazarus. we don't see him towering before death we see him as a mighty warrior towering regally over death what does he say verse 39 imagine the confidence of Christ as he says this in the moment take away the stone can you imagine the responses take away the stone what Lazarus has been there for four days why would he take away the stone there's already a bad smell take away the stone and then verse 43 Lazarus come forth and because Jesus is the Christ because he is the great I am because he is the resurrection and the life death must submit and the grave must give up

[38 : 58] Lazarus's body and that's what happened the dead man verse 44 came out his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen can you imagine it and a cloth and a cloth around his face and Jesus said to them take off the grave clothes and let him go Jesus wars against death and death and Satan and sin must submit as Lazarus comes out and that was just a trailer that was just a point that was just a lead in to the cross this empty tomb was pointing forward to another empty tomb his own empty tomb the empty tomb that would forever bear testimony to these eternally binding words of Christ

I am the resurrection and the life he who believes in me will live even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die do you says Jesus believe us and that's the question we'll finish with let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for Jesus your son we thank you for sending him into this world we thank you for his wisdom we thank you for his compassion we thank you for his absolute power even over death and the grave over sin and Satan and we thank you that those who believe in him will be given our protection even from death from hell from the sin that is killing us and the enemy of our souls

Satan who wants to see us destroyed with him we thank you that Jesus came to save the sinner we thank you that he went all the way to the cross to make that salvation possible and we thank you that it's promised to all who will believe the sadness of that chapter is that most people didn't believe so we pray that as we go from this hall today we would go believing and knowing that we are secure in Christ for time and for eternity and we pray these things in Jesus name Amen we finish with the words on the screen and it's 1217 in the book 1217 the sound of the power of the cross and now we pray that the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit would be with us all both now and forevermore Amen