

John 11:1 Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

John 11:2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

John 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Jesus had friends in the town of Bethany—Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. Lazarus had become sick. Mary is identified as the one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair. The sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick. They knew He would want to know because He “loved” (phileo—had a special bond of friendship) Lazarus. I think it is also a message with expectation. They knew Jesus was the Great Physician and could heal their brother; He was known for His miracles of healing.

I was listening to Jon Courson recently, and he made an interesting point. The sisters didn’t identify their brother as the one who loved Jesus, but as the one that Jesus loved. That is such a powerful truth. The Lord’s love for us is faithful and never-ending. It is not dependent on what we are doing for Him. It’s dependent only on our position in relationship to Him—as friend, child, brother/sister, bride.

John 11:4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

John 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

When Jesus got the message, He stated that this sickness would not end in permanent physical death. God would use Lazarus’ condition to glorify His Son. Although Jesus loved this family, He did not leave to go to them until two days after hearing the news. It is important to note that Jesus’ love for this family was shown by allowing them to experience a time of testing that will result in a stronger faith for them as God is glorified through the miracle yet to come.

John 11:7 Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

John 11:8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

John 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

John 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Then Jesus tells His disciples that they were heading back to Judea. They tried to discourage Him and reminded Him that not long ago the Jews had tried to stone Him. Jesus basically told them there were twelve hours of daylight. One who walks in the light of day won’t stumble, for he sees by the light. It is when one walks by night that he stumbles—because he can’t see. I think Jesus was basically telling them—“You are not telling me anything I don’t know. I know

what to expect from these people—I see where I am going. You can make wiser choices when you can see. It's when you walk in the dark—go places and confront people without knowledge of what to expect—that you can expect to get into trouble.”

Another paraphrase of McGee: Walking in the light is walking in the Father's will. Our steps are sure and secure in His will.

How do we know His will? Predominantly through His word.

Psalm 119:105 “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

John 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

John 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

John 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

John 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

John 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Then Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was asleep, and He was going to wake him up. They quickly responded that if he was just sleeping, he would soon get better. The disciples didn't realize that Jesus meant Lazarus was dead—so He told them what He meant. He also explained that this was better since it would provide solid proof for them to believe that He was God's Son.

The disciples still didn't get it. Pastor Bob compared life to a puzzle. It gets bigger and harder as we grow spiritually. We don't have the picture for reference; we have to put it together a step at a time in faith.

John 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Thomas spoke up and said, “Let's go,” even though he felt that they would all be killed in the process. I don't know what exactly Thomas believed about Jesus, but he obviously believed that he was better off dead with Jesus than alive without Him.

I found an interesting comment by David Guzik: “Church tradition says that Thomas was called “The Twin” because he looked like Jesus, putting him at special risk. If any among the disciples of Jesus were potential targets of persecution, it would be the one who looked like Jesus.”

Whether true or not, that statement is thought-provoking. The more we are conformed to the image of Jesus and “look” like Him through our testimony, the more likely we are to be targeted for persecution. Though not so apparent in America in the past, it is becoming more and more apparent as we adopt new laws and the rulers of our land position themselves in direct opposition to the

will of God. Sadly, it is not only the rulers of our land, but also many who are serving as “pastors” in the church today.

John 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

John 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

John 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

By the time Jesus got there, Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish leaders had come to comfort Mary and Martha.

I decided to do some extra research on the four days and found a teaching by John MacArthur (www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/sg1533.htm) that stated that Jewish tradition held that “a person's spirit floated around the body of the deceased for four days, hoping to gain a reentry. On the fourth day, because the face was no longer recognizable, it was believed that the spirit would depart.” This miracle should have definitively proven Jesus to possess the authority He claimed to have through God the Father.

John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

John 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

John 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

John 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

John 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Martha ran to meet Jesus when she heard that He was coming. Martha confronted Jesus and appeared to rebuke Him; she knew that if He had been there Lazarus would not have died. However, she also showed her faith in Jesus when she added that she knew that even now God would give Him whatever He asked. Jesus then told her that Lazarus would live again. Martha thought He was speaking of the resurrection in the “last days” even though she had just expressed her faith in the fact that He could ask for Lazarus to live now.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Then Jesus told her that He was the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Him will live (spiritually) even if he dies (physically); and whoever lives and believes in me will never die spiritually nor would he ever be physically

separated from God. Then He asked her if she believed what He said. She answered by saying that she believed He was the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world. (cf notes on 6:41-43)

Martha's answer to Jesus seems strange at first. But in her statement of belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, she was declaring her belief in all that He taught whether she understood the teaching or not.

Several things jumped out at me as I read this story. Martha spoke of a "resurrection at the last day." Jesus had taught that the dead would be resurrected for judgment (5:28-29). Since Martha believed Jesus to be the Messiah, I'm not sure when she expected this to be—probably soon if she expected Him to reign as King. I don't know if the words used made it clear to Martha the difference in physical and spiritual death (ref vs 25). By her answer, it sounds like her response was like mine often is when I don't really understand what I'm reading in the Word. It is a response of—I may not understand all that you are trying to tell me Lord—but I know whatever it is, IT IS TRUE because of who you are.

Pastor Bob – God uses us, like Lazarus, as tools for His glory as He works in our life. Our reactions to the trials in our life impact others.

John 11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

John 11:29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

John 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

Then Martha went back to tell Mary that Jesus was there and asking for her, and she immediately went to Him. He was waiting where Martha had met Him outside of town.

"secretly" – She probably didn't want to announce His presence because of the animosity of many of the Jewish leaders toward Him.

John 11:31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

John 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The Jews who had come to mourn with her thought she was going to the tomb and followed her. When she came to Jesus, she fell at His feet in tears saying that Lazarus would not have died if He had been there. As I think about this encounter, I can't help but remember the account of the adoring Mary at the feet of Jesus drinking in His every word, yet she still didn't understand the power of Jesus as the Son of God. She knew He could heal, but she didn't understand His authority over life and death. Her faith was limited to what she knew Christ had

done; she hadn't yet discovered that His power had no limits. He would demonstrate that through faith nothing is impossible with God.

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

John 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

John 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

John 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

Jesus was deeply moved by her tears (another reminder of His human emotions). He asked where Lazarus had been laid, so they told Him to come and see. Evidently, when they got to the grave, Jesus wept; He shed tears. The friends of the family who had come to mourn with Mary and Martha noted how Jesus must have loved Lazarus—because of His tears.

John 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Then some of them began to reason—if He could open the eyes of the blind man, couldn't He have kept Lazarus from dying. (We always want to analyze things from our own logic and limited point of view).

In going through this scripture another time, I was caught up with the statement of Jesus "groaning" in verses 33 and 38. Following is the entry for the word *groan*: **ejmbrima;omai embrimaomai**, *em-brim-ah'-om-ahee*; from 1722 and **brima;omai brimaomai** (to snort with anger); to have indignation on, i.e. (transitively) to blame, (intransitively) to sigh with chagrin, (specially) to sternly enjoin:—straitly charge, groan, murmur against.

This was not what I expected to see, so I decided to look for further help. One of the commentaries noted that this was a reaction to the hypocritical tears and sarcastic remarks of the "Jews," Jewish leaders, who were there to support the sisters. As I read over these verses several more times, that really made a lot of sense. We know that hypocrisy brought out some of the greatest displays of emotion from the Savior. (See Matthew 23)

In searching for some help in another area I ran across a better explanation by John MacArthur in reference to Jesus "groaning."

"The phrase "groaning in Himself" means that Jesus was deeply moved in His inner man. It is difficult to translate because it can have so many shades of meaning. But perhaps the best translation is "indignation." Jesus was in a state of holy indignation against the effects of sin and death. He looked around and saw the sorrow and the curse of sin and experienced internal anguish. Combine His indignance over sin with His love and the anticipation of His own atoning death and you'll know why He was emotionally distraught. Jesus was no Stoic; He was

"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ..." (Isa. 53:3). He stood in front of the tomb facing death, the evidence of sin's curse. His spirit was grieved, so consequently He groaned again in an empathetic expression of His humanity even though He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead."

John 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

John 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

John 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

As Jesus came to the tomb, His emotion was evident. The tomb was a cave with a stone in front of it. He told them to remove the stone. Martha argued; she reminded Jesus that it had been four days, and the odor would be terrible. Then Jesus reminded her that faith was the key to revealing God's glory.

John 11:41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

John 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

So the stone was removed. Then Jesus spoke to God the Father out loud for the benefit of the people who were there. He thanked the Father for hearing His prayer and acknowledged that He always heard the prayers of His Son. Jesus knew that He was asking according to the will of the Father and was assured of a positive response. He emphasized that He was asking for this miracle so that the people would believe that He was sent by God.

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

John 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Then Jesus called in a loud voice for Lazarus to come out. (I've often heard preachers say that if He had not specified for Lazarus to come out that all of the dead in that tomb would have come forth.) Lazarus came out still covered in His burial linens. Jesus told them to remove the grave clothes and set him free.

This is a vivid picture of what happens to us through the new birth. We are loosed from the bonds of death inherited from Adam by the authority of Jesus through the empowerment of the Father through the working of His Spirit.

John 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

John 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

John 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

Jesus' purpose was accomplished—many of the Jews believed in Him. Some of them, however, went and told the Pharisees what had happened. The chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the council (the Sanhedrin). They decided it was too dangerous to let Jesus stay alive and continue performing miracles. If they let Him continue to perform His miracles, the people would believe in Him; and the Romans would come and remove them from power and not allow them any say in their government. It's interesting that they weren't at all considering the fact that Jesus could actually be who He said He was. They were just concerned about their own positions of power and leadership.

John 11:49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

John 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

John 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

John 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

John 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Caiphas, the high priest, pointed out that it would be better for one man (Jesus) to die for the people rather than let the nation perish. The scripture goes on to say that this prophecy from Caiphas was divinely inspired—although that wasn't his intent. The scripture goes on to add that Jesus' death would bring together all the children of God who were scattered over the face of the earth. (I think that this was additional explanation on the part of the John, and not what Caiphas said.) I, of course, think that this refers to the time when He comes as King to reign on earth. Over and over again God shows us that His plan will be accomplished in spite of any action on our part or Satan's to try and change things.

At this point they decided to kill Jesus.

John 11:54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

After raising Lazarus, Jesus decided to stay out of the more public places until His time had come. He and His disciples went to the village of Ephraim near the desert and stayed away from the Jews.

John 11:55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

John 11:56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

John 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

As the time for the Passover approached, many people went to Jerusalem from all over the country for a ceremonial cleansing. They hung around the temple area looking for Jesus. They were speculating as to whether or not He would come to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. The chief priests and Pharisees had ordered that anyone who knew where Jesus was should report it. They wanted to arrest Him.