



THE AUTHENTIC JESUS | CORPSE RAISER (3)

March 26, 2023

John 11:1-44

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

10 MIN

What's one thing you had to wait for that ended up being worth it?

WORSHIP

10 MIN

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, creator of life, you call us out of our dark places, offering us the grace of new life. When we see nothing but hopelessness, you surprise us with the breath of your spirit. Call us out of our complacency and routines, set us free from our self-imposed bonds, and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace, In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, we pray. Amen.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER—Psalm 107:1-9, 15

¹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble**

³and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

⁴**Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;**

⁵Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

⁶**Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.**

⁷He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

⁸**Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!**

⁹For he satisfies the longing soul,
and the hungry soul he fills with good things

¹⁵**Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!**

SCRIPTURE READING

*¹Now certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."
⁴But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus 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. ¹⁰But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." ¹²The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

²⁸When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus 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." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I 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." ⁴³When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴The 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."

BIBLE STUDY Summary and Connection

40 MIN

For the past few weeks, we have been looking into the gospels to discover *The Authentic Jesus*. So far, we have discovered Jesus to be scandalous in his association with people he called friends, radical in the claims he made, and authoritative in the miracles he performed. We have discovered Jesus to be both a compassionate friend and a commanding teacher. We have seen Jesus exercise authority over nature and human nature. This week we will discover Jesus as the Lord who is sovereign over life and death.

Today, we will take a close look at John 11:1-44. This familiar Johannine passage deals with the death and raising of Lazarus by Jesus. John uses this long narrative (44 verses), to masterfully draw us into the story with excellent dramatic development. It is important for us to understand John's literary techniques from the outset. Throughout the gospel we see John employing irony, deeper message, and double meanings to establish theological truths about Jesus' identity and sovereignty over life and death. As a narrative, this story is obviously about a man whom Jesus rescues from the pangs of death. However, it is also a symbolic story that gives us insight into Jesus' identity, his power, and his upcoming death and resurrection. In other words, the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from death foreshadows Jesus' death and resurrection. Lazarus' miracle points to Jesus' Lordship over death and the power of resurrection life.

This narrative structure could be summarized into four things that Jesus does which establishes one fundamental truth of who Jesus is — "I am the resurrection and the life." Let us briefly look into the four things that Jesus does in this passage:

Jesus waits: This incident happens in Bethany, a village just east of Jerusalem over Mount of Olives, about two miles away (11:18). Early in the passage we learn about Lazarus' illness and Jesus receiving the message from Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary. We learn about the central theme of the story in Jesus' response to the message: The ultimate result of Lazarus' tragedy is not his death, but God's glory, and the impact on the disciples' faith in God. It is important to know that Jesus' delay is not the cause of Lazarus' death. In fact, when Jesus arrives in Bethany after delaying for two days, Lazarus has been dead and buried for four days. This means that Lazarus likely died right after the departure of the messengers. Jesus waits, and his waiting is significant. The Jews believed that the soul of a dead person remained in the vicinity of the body for three days. Lazarus was considered truly dead by the fourth day. Thus, Jesus' delay serves not to promote Lazarus' death, but to heighten the significance of his own miraculous work.

Jesus weeps: Jesus arrives in Bethany, and he sees Mary and the mourners weeping. The Greek verb *klaio* describes loud wailing and crying. Loud wailing and public displays of grief was very common in Jesus' day. In verse 33 we see Jesus' response to the wailing — Jesus is deeply moved. In Greek the verb *embrimaomai* describes outrage, resentment, fury, or anger. Jesus' anger is displayed in his weeping (11:35). Jesus is overcome by the futility of suffering and death in light of the reality of his own death and resurrection. Jesus, in other words, is angry at death and the devastation it brings. New Testament commentator Gary Burge makes an insightful observation: "*Jesus' tears should be connected to the anger he is feeling so deeply. The public chaos surrounding him...and the scene of the cemetery and its reminders of death — the result of sin and death — together produce outrage in the Son of God as he works to reverse such damage.*"

Jesus comforts: This story gives us a deep insight into the emotional life of Jesus — his compassion and sympathy towards sufferers. Martha meets Jesus before he enters Bethany (11:30). We see Martha's deep faith and confidence in Jesus' authority. Jesus comforts Martha by reminding her that Lazarus will rise again. Martha, like the disciples, fails to understand the deeper meaning of Jesus' words, and simply agrees by saying, "I know he will rise again on the last day." Jesus gently corrects Martha and reassures her by pointing to the reality of the power of resurrection life in the here and now. As Christians, we can trust Jesus with not only life but also death. Only Jesus can provide comfort in both life

and in death. Furthermore, we see Jesus comforting Mary (11:32-34). Notice Martha and Mary's words to Jesus: They both say, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (11:21, 32). However, Jesus' response to them is remarkably different. Jesus knew both Martha and Mary's personalities. He addresses Martha's grief by providing theological assurance, and Mary's grief with emotional assurance. We see Jesus enter into Mary's sorrow by weeping with her (11:35). Jesus is the sympathetic savior who comforts us by entering into our grief and ministering in our suffering.

Finally, **Jesus raises Lazarus**: Jesus arrives at Lazarus' tomb (11:38). Jesus' confrontation of death at Lazarus' tomb foreshadows Jesus' confrontation of death on the day of his resurrection. Jesus' prayer (11:41-42) reinforces the theme and purpose of this miracle — to glorify God, and to deepen the disciples' faith in God. Jesus commands Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Jesus' command is followed by a spectacle that symbolizes the power of salvation — the Word of God restores life. Lazarus comes out of his tomb. Most importantly, this miracle also points to the ultimate and all-encompassing sign of victory over death — the cross and resurrection of Jesus. In his seventh and final sign, Jesus points us to the ultimate fact that Lazarus' empty tomb anticipates his empty tomb — The Lord who has power over life and death has power over his own life and death as well. As Christians, we join Lazarus as the beneficiaries of the living hope of resurrection in Jesus who is the resurrection and the life.

1. Looking at the Bible

What does the text say? What according to you is the theme of this passage?

- In verse 4 we read about Jesus' cryptic response after receiving a distressing message about Lazarus' illness. What does Jesus mean by, "this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it?"
- What was the significance of Jesus visiting the tomb of Lazarus on the fourth day?
- In verses 23-27 we see the interaction between Jesus and Martha on the topic of resurrection. How are we to understand resurrection — is it primarily a future hope as Martha believed, or a present experience as Jesus claimed (11:26)?
- Why was Jesus deeply moved and greatly troubled in his spirit (11:33, 38)?

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- In this story we see the humanity of Jesus displayed in his comforting presence with Mary and Martha. We see the divinity of Jesus displayed in his commanding power calling Lazarus to come out. Why is Jesus' comforting presence and his commanding power important in our suffering?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- In this story we see Jesus delay his visit to Bethany by two days while Martha and Mary waited for him to arrive. What is the significance of waiting in Christian life?
- How does this passage help you to understand Jesus using tragedy — personal suffering or death of a loved one, to glorify God's name and to deepen your faith in God?

4. Looking at our World

- In light of this passage, how does Christianity offer a robust understanding of death? How does this passage give us hope and confidence to live in a culture that avoids the fatality of death?

SHARING

15 MIN

Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

KINGDOM

PRAYER

15 MIN

Pray that we would see ourselves called by God.

Include other prayer requests.

SENDING

5 MIN

God's word is a lamp to our feet. Christ's teachings are a light to our path.

May God's word take root in our lives. May Christ's love nourish and sustain us. Amen.