

# The Gospel of John A Death for the Glory of God.

## John 11:1-10

### INTRODUCTION:

Turn to John 11. As we go through the scriptures verse by verse, we experience different approaches. The vast majority of the Gospel of John is laced with profound truths for us to understand. As we come to chapter 11, we come to a narrative. It is the account of the miracle of our Lord raising Lazarus from the dead. Although the story is very familiar to us, in its detail, it is very rich. So we want to make sure that we cover the detail. John chooses this miracle as his last and most monumental public miracle that Jesus performed.

There is no other account of His miraculous work where we see so vividly the convergence of Christ's humanity and deity. We see His sovereignty in His power and His display of glory in overwhelming death. We also see His humanity, His sympathy, His affections, and His relationships to an earthly family. This miracle, as important as it is, only occurs in the Gospel of John.

The purpose of this miracle is to display the power and sovereign nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also intended to increase the faith of those who were eager to believe.

### **John 11:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.”

There is a third purpose of this miracle and that is to give momentum to the unbelievers who were trying to press the issue of Jesus' murder. This actually happens just before His final Passover. He is to die by God's plan on the Passover as the true Passover Lamb.

Now, as we open the chapter, let me read to you the beginning of the account.

### All Stand and Read Scripture

### **John 11:1-10 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days *longer* in the place where He was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this He *said* to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup> The disciples *said* to Him,

“Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking 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 anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

## Prayer

### BODY:

#### I. THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

We are initially going to look at the characters in the story, which means the man Lazarus, the sisters, and the disciples. But, of course, as we look at those characters, the dominant character in the whole story is obviously going to be Christ. Let us start by meeting this man, Lazarus.

#### **John 11:1 (NASB)**

11 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

“A certain man”. That’s about all we know, a certain man. We don’t know anything about him. This is the only time he is mentioned. We have no idea about his past. But we can assume that he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ because Jesus loved him and his family. We know that Mary and Martha were believers.

#### **John 11:27 (NASB)**

27 She (Martha) \*said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world.”

And Mary responds the same way,

#### **John 11:28 (NASB)**

28 When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”

So this is a family that had come to believe in Christ. They lived in the village of Bethany. That is another interesting note because at the time that Jesus gets this message, He’s in another Bethany.

#### **John 10:40 (NASB)**

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there.

That place where John was first baptizing was also called Bethany. So there was a Bethany beyond Jordan a day away from the Bethany of Lazarus and his two sisters.

When Jesus and the disciple left Jerusalem and went to Bethany beyond the Jordan where John the Baptist started to minister, He began to reap the harvest of what John

had planted in proclaiming Him. And the people out there said everything John said about Him is true, and they came to believe.

So they are having a wonderful ministry there in that other Bethany, but here comes a messenger to Him with word about this man, Lazarus. It also tells us that Bethany was the village of Mary and her sister, Martha. Mary is an extremely common name. But this Mary is further identified for us.

### **John 11:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

This is the Mary, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. It's that Mary, that Mary from Bethany. Bethany, two miles from the eastern wall of Jerusalem.

Oh, that Mary. But wait a minute, that story doesn't come until chapter 12. What's going on here? That is okay because that story had already been told in detail in Matthew and Mark. These two gospels had been circulating for a very long time by the year 90 when John writes this gospel. And so even though he has not yet given his account of it, he knows they know of the Mary he is talking about.

### **John 11:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

Mary and Martha, sent word to Him. So this is going to take a full day to get from Bethany one to Bethany two. The message is very short. "Lord," they acknowledge He is Lord. "Behold," which means, this is urgent. "He whom you love is sick."

They don't give Jesus any instructions. They don't demand a healing. They talk only of Jesus' love for Lazarus. The word "**love**" here is not *agape*, not divine love. This is *phileō*, the love of a friend, human love. Jesus loved this man as a friend. He had personal affection for him.

I know we often talk about the **humanity of Jesus**. We have to because He is fully human. Most of the time when you hear someone talk about the humanity of Jesus they say, "Well, He lived and He hungered and He thirsted and He slept, and He was weary, and He died." And all of those are human things, but what makes humans unique is relationships, and this explains why, when He gets to the grave of Lazarus, **He cries**. He cries at the thought that His friend is dead. This is a beautiful insight into the full humanity of Jesus. He is a man and like every person, He requires a friend, somebody who cares about Him. A perfect man with all the needs of a man.

You see, this is part of what makes Him such a merciful, faithful High Priest. He was able to be in touch with all the feelings of our infirmities. He has been there. His friend, that He had great affection for, was seriously sick. We don't know what his illness was. But we **do** know why he was sick. Let's read verse 4.

## **II. THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLE.**

### **John 11:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

This is to put His glory on display so that people might believe and some did, and some who already believed had their faith strengthened. The fact that a physical issue was used to glorify God should not come as a surprise to us. Who else had physical problem that was to be used for the glory of God? Remember the man born blind?

### **John 9:1-3 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “*It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*”

There is sickness that is just natural sickness. It just comes because we live in a fallen world. It's inevitable. There is sickness that is a discipline from God on His own people. And there is sickness that is a divine judgment. God actually smites a man in Acts 12, and he is eaten with worms. Then there is sickness that is for the glory of God.

So the sisters send this urgent message, and they know that is all that has to be said. The messenger arrives a day later. When Jesus hears from him, He said, “**This sickness is not to end in death.**” By the time the messenger arrives we know that Lazarus was already dead because when Jesus arrived and asked to have the stone removed from in front of the grave, Martha told Him that there will be a stench because he had been dead for four days . But that will not be the end of the story.

### **John 11:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

This time the word for love changes. This is *agapaō* (ah go paw' oh). This is divine love. Jesus had a divine love for the whole family because they belonged to Him spiritually. He loves with a divine love and He loves with a human love.

So when He heard that he was sick, you would expect to read, “He went as fast as He could.” It doesn't say that.

### **John 11:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days *longer* in the place where He was.

He stayed two days longer in the place where He was. The disciples probably think this is good idea. He has got enough common sense to know you cannot go back because we just escaped a stoning. So for two days they keep preaching and ministering, and people are believing. Then Jesus tells his disciples "It is time to go".

## **III. LIVING TO GLORIFY GOD.**

### **John 11:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> Then after this He *said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

This was their worst fears. This was a common problem with the disciples. Even though their desires to serve Christ were good, they often only saw things from a worldly perspective. But Jesus knew His Father's will.

Peter learned this lesson first hand from Jesus.

### **Matthew 16:21-23 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. <sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You." <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for **you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**"

Peter's intention was good, but Jesus actually calls him Satan. Peter was reminded that Jesus knew his Father's will and plan. Jesus was on earth to do His Father's will. Peter did not understand that plan.

Remember that the death of Lazarus had a spiritual purpose. Watch in the next few verses how the disciples and even Mary and Martha respond to the decision of Jesus to delay His journey to them. They just do not understand the plan of God that is going to unfold in front of them.

### **John 11:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> The disciples *said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"*

They were truly concerned and they, no doubt, wanted only the best for their Master. That is why it is so important for each of us to put our full trust and faith in God during our lifespan. Many things happen in our lives that we tend to question God about. Why would you put me through this ordeal? Just remember that God has a plan and purpose for each of our lives and many times we will be pressed through some difficult times for God's plan to be accomplished. He has promised that "**all things to work together for good to those who love God**". Just like Peter and the disciples in this passage, we must put our trust in the Lord and not get so worked up on the things that He places in our lives.

The sisters wished He had been there and never left. They both comment to Jesus "**If You had been here, my brother would not have died.**" Since they did not know God's plan, they could not imagine the miracle that was about to happen.

But now it's time to go back, and of course the disciples see it as highly dangerous. They are concerned that Jesus will be walking back into a very dangerous situation. And in reality He is! In only a couple of weeks He will be crucified on the cross. But Jesus knows that the death of Lazarus will generate a very powerful message. Jesus uses this occasion to remind the disciples that He is working within the full confines of His Father's will. He can see beyond the earthly perspective. He understands the plan that the Father has laid out in front of Him.

He gives His answer in the form of a simple proverb.

## **John 11:9-10 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

You cannot lengthen the light of the day. You cannot shorten the light of the day, right? There is nothing a friend or foe can do can lengthen or shorten the day. It is as it is and it is fixed by God, **and so are our lives!** No enemy can shorten it. No friend can lengthen it. It is the light of life which God has ordained for me, I will not stumble. That is to say, nothing will happen to me that is outside His plan. I am not walking in the dark. I am walking in the light of God's divine day. A day cannot finish before it's preplanned end.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The time allotted to us to accomplish God's plan in our lives is fixed. Let us consider that a moment. We can, in essence, do things that could lengthen our lives. But God already expects that from us. We are to use our body for the glory of God.

## **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Despite our earthly efforts, though, our lives will begin and end based upon God's divine schedule. You do not have to go hide somewhere in a cave to avoid conflict. You can be bold and step right into the face of your enemies because they cannot shorten your life. We should **continuously** seek that **faith and trust** in God in order to live with that confidence. When you face trials in your life consider that they are of God. Instead of asking "**why**" ask God how you can use that trial for His glory. Just as in the case of Lazarus, there may be a real blessing on the other side.

Jesus knew that His hour was coming, and many times He had said, "**My hour has not yet come.**" He continuously escaped all of the their mob violence and plots. This has great application for us to realize that if you are walking in the Spirit and serving the Lord, you are in God's divine lighted day. Taking precautionary steps and being a coward and will not lengthen our lives. We must remain faithful and trust in God's plan for us and allow our lives to play out according to God's timing.

**This is the Day.**