

The Death of Lazarus: John 11

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, [a] “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” 4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” 5 Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6 after having heard that Lazarus [b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” 8 The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” 9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10 But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” 11 After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” 12 The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” 13 Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” 16 Thomas, who was called the Twin, [c] said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” 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. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps

28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34 He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus began to weep. 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 have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

FJT Questions:

[Self-reflection] Looking at the 8 Major themes of John, which are most prevalent in this text?

[Self-reflection] Is there a particular theme are you most drawn to?

[Partner] Which verse or part stuck out to you the most?

1. What is the tone being set, by the second verse "Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill"?
2. Verse 4, "when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'" Seems counter intuitive; what do you make of it?
3. Jesus stays an additional two days before departing to see to Lazarus. What do you think he was thinking in this time?
4. Would you want to be a disciple in this time? What would you be thinking if Jesus wanted to return to Judea, where people were actively trying to kill him. (verses 7&8) ?
5. [With a Partner] Beginning with verse 9, and reflecting on our Major themes, particularly "Contrast between Light and Darkness synonymous with belief and unbelief; Jesus equals light of world who magnifies darkness that symbolizes unbelief" What do you take away from this?
6. Why do you think Jesus (Verse 11) says that Lazarus has fallen asleep, even though John clarifies Jesus knew he was asleep in verse 13 and 14?
7. Verse 21 speaks of Martha's belief. Reflecting on Jesus' delayed departure, why do you think this is the way it played out? What do you imagine Jesus' intention to be?
8. What does verse 25 and 26 "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die'" mean for you?
9. What does this say about Jesus?
10. He knew that these events were to come; why is Jesus weeping? (verse 35)
11. What does that say about who God is, and what God does for us?

Eight Major Themes of John:

1. **Creation/Birth/Rebirth:** Connection of Jesus to creative energy of God "In the Beginning"...new creation; rebirth; how Jesus' signs and words give witness to creative power.
2. **Origin of Jesus - relationship to God:** Identity of Jesus comes from God; is flesh and reveals what relationship with God is like
3. **Reveal God:** Primary role of Word made Flesh is to reveal God – in Jesus not just God's will is seen but the entire senses are engaged in encountering God: Smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch
4. **Humanity and Divinity Meet:** In becoming Human, God commits God's self fully to everything that it means to be human; conversely in Jesus we can encounter all that is God – Jesus reveals full divinity of God.
5. **LIGHT/DARK = BELIEF/UNBELIEF:** Contrast between Light and Darkness synonymous with belief and unbelief; Jesus equals light of world who magnifies darkness that symbolizes unbelief, "Light shines in the darkness" – "the Word became flesh" – when Jesus (light) exposes those who don't believe (darkness) judgment occurs and disclosure. God did not come in Jesus to judge the world but one's response to God in Jesus belief or unbelief is a judgment that is self-determined
6. **Witness** – primary category of discipleship is witness! Discipleship demands a witness of and for Jesus. Requires attitudes demonstrated by John the Baptist
7. **ABIDING:** What it means to be in relationship with God (describing and creating experiences) "meno" to abide (Used 40 times in John)
8. **Abundance!!!** Grace upon grace we receive in Jesus – more than we need! Grace is word mention only four times – all in prologue, but shown over and over again (first sign, this is what grace looks and tastes like: an abundance of Good Wine when you least expect it)