

Listening Beyond the Grave

Scripture: John 11:1-44 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

Introduction to John 11: The Death of Lazarus

- *Read the first section of text - John 11:1-6*
 - *Explanation of text*

1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** (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.) **3** So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4 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." **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days;

- *Read the second section of text - John 11:20-25*
 - *Explanation of text*

20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. **21** "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;

Point #1: Your pain is purposeful (slide)

We must shift our focus from the overwhelming feeling of our circumstances to the overwhelming presence of God.

Jesus is seeking to move us into a higher level of experience with Him, which requires a new and higher level of understanding who He is. Martha and Mary knew Jesus on a certain level but the text illustrates He wanted to do even greater.

(Slide): Isaiah 54:7 - For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer.

- Reference John 11:21-25

Martha begins to talk to Jesus from her past experiences and she enters into a conversation with Jesus that speaks of both faith and doubt.

(Slide): Experiential understanding is to believe in something that you have seen, touched, and verified. It is understood because you actually did and experienced it for yourself.

Point #2: Your pain can lead to deeper trust (slide)

Jesus is calling us to trust what He is doing with our pain. He is calling us to courageously trust Him in the deep places of the unknown.

Point #3 - Your pain is a love story (slide)

- Read the third section of text - John 11:32-35

32 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."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. **34** "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

Jesus cares and is concerned with you. Even though the pain is purposeful, Jesus doesn't deny that it hurts. Jesus loved this family and even though He knew what He was about to do, He still felt the sting of what Lazarus' death meant to his sisters and loved ones.

Jesus is in it with you!

(Slide): Isaiah 63:9 - In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Point #4: Your pain comes with instructions (slide)

- Read the fourth section of text - John 11:38-44

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. **39** "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."

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I know 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."

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **44** 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 him go."

In this season, it is important for you to follow the instructions from the Lord. It is time to remove the stone from the grave because God is getting ready to resurrect the dead thing in your life.

Jesus cries: Lazarus, come forth! Jesus is calling for you to come forth and for the dead thing in your life to come forth but you have to listen from beyond the grave.