

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

1.1

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God knows exactly what we need.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will trust God to meet my needs however He sees best.

SERIES 1: JESUS, OUR SAVIOR

THE ON-TIME GOD



FOCUS VERSE: John 11:40

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

LESSON TEXT: John 11:32-44



Lesson Title: The On-Time God

Icebreaker: Tell about a time when something happened in your life with perfect timing.

» *If you were Martha or Mary, what would you do when you heard Jesus was coming? What emotions would you feel? Would you feel anger? disappointment? hope?*

I. FOR GOD'S GLORY

A. Jesus Loved His Friends

B. Jesus Waited

C. In His Love, Jesus Sometimes Waits to Respond to Our Needs

» *Has God ever made you wait for an answer to prayer? Describe how the timing worked out when He finally came through for you.*

II. THE DETOUR

A. Jesus Traveled through Judea

B. The Disciples Were Confused, Possibly Even Cynical

C. I Will Remain Faithful, Even When Jesus Does Not Do What I Want

» *What would you be willing to give up in your life if it meant seeing great miracles?*

III. JESUS' COMPASSION

A. Jesus Reasoned with Martha

B. Jesus Wept with Mary

» *Who do you identify with more, Martha or Mary? Can you share a time when Jesus either opened new truths in answer to your questions or simply wrapped His arms around you and comforted you?*

C. Jesus Raised Lazarus

D. I Will Trust Jesus to Meet My Needs However He Sees Best

» *What "stone" is Jesus asking you to roll aside today in order to get your miracle? What are you going to do?*

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to build our faith in the waiting
- For God to give us the courage to do whatever He asks of us to demonstrate our faith

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: John 11:32-44

Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is one of the most frequently referenced and iconic stories of John's Gospel. Several layers of application can be drawn from this story: from Jesus' interactions with His disciples before arriving in Bethany; to Jesus' interactions with Mary, Martha, and the gathered mourners; to Jesus' emotional display; to Jesus' public prayer while standing before Lazarus's tomb.

Jesus' emotions are mentioned frequently throughout this passage: Jesus "loved," "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," "wept," and "[groaned] in himself" (John 11:5, 33, 35, 38). While some scholars contest the exact purpose of these emotions, they demonstrated Jesus' full and complete humanity. While Jesus was completely God, He was also completely human, which included having within Himself the capacity for a full range of human emotions. Furthermore, these emotions demonstrated Jesus' empathetic connection toward humanity, His creation for whom He cared deeply.

Another key and overarching theme of this passage is God's glory. Jesus told His disciples the purpose of Lazarus's sickness was for Jesus to be glorified. Immediately before raising Lazarus, Jesus reminded the gathered crowd that they would see God's glory. While the story builds on the scaffolding of Lazarus's sickness, death, and resurrection, the entire passage ultimately focuses on Jesus. The miracle was not designed as an end unto itself; Lazarus undoubtedly eventually died again. Rather, Jesus' every action and decision were carefully chosen to bring glory to God and affirm Jesus' status as God manifested in the flesh.

This focus on God's glory was further demonstrated in Jesus' words to Martha. If she understood that Jesus encompassed all resurrection and life within Himself, she would have had a proper perspective on God's glorious sovereignty over all circumstances, even physical death.

The focus on God's glory is also seen in the fact Jesus chose to publicly announce His prayer before raising Lazarus from the dead, which Jesus stated was for the sake of the onlookers. By implication, Jesus' prayer announcement might not have been strictly necessary for the miracle to occur, but Jesus was equally (if not more so) interested in increasing the onlookers' faith in God and His glory.

WHILE JESUS WAS COMPLETELY GOD, HE WAS ALSO COMPLETELY HUMAN, WHICH INCLUDED HAVING WITHIN HIMSELF THE CAPACITY FOR A FULL RANGE OF HUMAN EMOTIONS.

DAY 1

John 11:32

Then when Mary came 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.

Biblical Insight

Mary's words to Jesus were a repetition of her sister's words in John 11:21. For both sisters, these were the first words they spoke upon seeing Jesus, demonstrating their joint lack of understanding of the current events. However, a key difference between Mary and Martha in these verses was their posture. While Martha simply walked up to Christ and began speaking, Mary collapsed at Jesus' feet in worship and reverence. Despite saying the same words, their two very different postures portrayed two very different tones.

Daily Devotion

In 1914 a driver took a wrong turn. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife no doubt fretted and stressed in the back seat, worried they would reach their destination late. Because of this mistake in direction, their car passed Gavrilo Princip, a member of a nationalist group called the Black Hand. Princip shot them both, ensuring they never reached their destination at all and set in motion a chain of events leading to World War I.

Decisions and arrival times often lead to life-changing events and consequences. Human brains grapple with the difference between humanity's sense of timing and that of a sovereign God. Our lives are not a random series of chance and choice culminating in consequences beyond God's control. No matter when God steps on the scene, He is always cognizant of what He is doing, and He is always exactly on time.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

John 11:33–37

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

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

³⁵ Jesus wept.

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

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?

Biblical Insight

The phrase “groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” is a subject of debate among scholars. Was Jesus experiencing indignation, agitation, or even outrage? Was Jesus struck by the unbelief of those gathered? Was Jesus angry, not toward those who mourned, but toward the human conditions of sickness and death—a result of the Fall and humanity’s sin—and the grief such conditions had brought upon humanity? Or was Jesus, being completely human as well as completely God, simply empathizing with the grief of His creation? (*Apostolic Study Bible*, note for John 11:33–37).

Daily Devotion

“God is a Person, and in the deep of His mighty nature He thinks, wills, enjoys, feels, loves, desires and suffers as any other person may” (A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*). Jesus is holy; we cannot practice true holiness without Him. Jesus is righteous; we put on His right standing where our own fails. Countless differences exist between us and our faultless Savior, yet some things are the same: Jesus hurt. He felt. He experienced anger. He needed rest.

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35). The shortest verse in Scripture tells us much about our God. He chose to come in flesh, to be like us and share in our experiences. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). The same Jesus who had compassion on Lazarus has compassion on you. The next time you pray, remember Jesus knows what you are going through it all and will help you through when you ask Him.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

John 11:38-39

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

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.

Biblical Insight

The fact that a stone sealed the entrance to the tomb indicates Lazarus was likely buried in a cave tomb, something reserved mostly for middle- to upper-class families who could afford such a luxury, rather than simply burying their loved one in the ground. Since such tombs would have been conspicuous, a stone sealing the entrance would serve to help keep out looters, wildlife, and the elements in addition to being a barrier to hold in the stench of decomposition. From this fact alone we can deduce Lazarus's high social status.

Daily Devotion

They call him the Cowboy Cat Wrangler. His real name is Bob Lynch, but his nickname comes from his Texas roots. As a current resident of Philadelphia, he stands out with his signature cowboy hat. Yet his mission has endeared him to a growing public following because Bob rescues cats. Bristol, the two-year-old tuxedo cat's story is one of many that Philadelphians thrill to tell.

With cars whipping by on the interstate, Bristol's former owners abandoned him in a laundry basket on the side of the road. Between the traffic dangers, cold temperatures, and lack of food, Bristol's story looked bleak. But that's when the Cowboy Cat Wrangler showed up. At 1:00 AM, Bob navigated his van to the shoulder of the dangerous highway and managed to rescue Bristol. One soapy bath and warm meal later, Bob matched Bristol with a forever family, never to be in need of rescue again.

Our situation in sin was much more dire than a mere cat rescue. Perhaps you face a crisis in life today that seems insurmountable. However, no matter how deep the darkness or the length of the night, there is always hope in Christ. No situation, no matter how dire, disables His ability to rescue. Cling to your faith that Jesus knows where you are and is able and willing to help, regardless of what you face.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

John 11:40

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

Biblical Insight

Jesus' reminder that they would see God's glory provided commentary on His words in John 11:4, 23, and 25–26. Jesus' original words to His disciples before they traveled to Bethany was that Lazarus's sickness was for the "glory of God" and for Christ's glorification (John 11:4). Jesus promised Martha her brother would "rise again," and Jesus affirmed, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:23, 25). When viewing Jesus' words collectively, we see the focus was not solely on healing, but primarily on God's glory. To witness a miracle is to behold God's glory and turn our focus and worship upon Jesus.

Daily Devotion

Hans Lippershey was a spectacle maker living in Holland in 1608. According to the short story "The Wonderful Spectacles" by Katherine Marcuse, Lippershey's children, Gretchen and Jan, stumbled into his workshop one day and grabbed two glass lenses to play with. Completely by accident they discovered that two magnifying lenses would bring objects far away much closer in view when held in front of each other. Two Dutch children made a discovery that led to the invention of the telescope simply by changing the lens through which they viewed their own backyard.

Perspective is so powerful. Much can change with a simple shift of focus. When we magnify God in our minds and we choose to view our lives through the lens of His Word, our perspective shifts, allowing us to focus on what He is doing through it all. He is always doing much more than our eyes readily see.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

John 11:41-44

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.

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.

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

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.

Biblical Insight

Jesus' prayer to the Father provides an interesting perspective on Jesus' prayers in general. Jesus' words indicate He had communed previously with the Father in a manner not recorded, but now He publicly prayed specifically for the benefit of those gathered. One of the purposes of Jesus' recorded prayers was to serve as an example for those listening (and future readers) to learn how to pray, as well as a supernatural affirmation of Jesus as God manifested in the flesh.

Daily Devotion

By the age of thirty, Alexander the Great ruled a kingdom reaching all the way from Greece to India. He was known not only for his accomplishments, but for his leadership habits through which his accomplishments came about. He held a strong stance on experiencing what his men experienced. If Alexander's army was going without food or water, Alexander also rationed his intake, denying himself the privileges he easily could have enjoyed. If his men couldn't use horses, Alexander dismounted and walked with them. When his soldiers went into battle, Alexander placed himself prominently on the front lines alongside them.

The life of Alexander the Great validates the effects of leading by example. Likewise, our God does not merely give directives; He walks the trenches with us, showing us how to live through the life of Christ. Give thanks to God that He understands what we go through and gives us grace to go through it.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
