

Turn in your Bibles to John Chapter 11 and we will look at verses 1 to 27 today. It has been said that Death, is the great equalizer. In the beginning God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and he placed them upon the earth in the Garden of Eden to take care of the garden and the animals. They were created to live forever. Death was never the intent of God when he created the universe which mankind lives in.

God created Adam and Eve with a physical body, but as we see in Scripture they were created in the image of God. They not only had a physical body, but they have a soul, the spiritual. The physical body is not who we are, but it is the soul, the spiritual part of us that is the true self of who we are.

We are all very familiar that God gave Adam and Eve a command to not eat of the fruit of one of the trees in the garden, the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil! May I say that when God says no, we need to remember it isn't that God is trying to keep anything from us, but he is telling us he knows what is best for us. When we disobey God's commands, it is sin, and it brings devastating results.

We know that Adam and Eve disobeyed God and the devastating affect that came upon mankind was and is Death!

The physical death of these fleshly bodies is something each of us deal with or are faced with each and every day. Each pain we feel, each gray hair, each wrinkle that suddenly appears upon our body is a reminder these bodies are dying.

Each of us have dealt with death in the fact that a loved one, whether it be a family member or a friend, has died. We have felt the grief, the sting, and the pain when someone so dear to us has died. Though this body is perishable and is wasting away we have a soul that does live forever.

Since the physical body is wasting away and the soul lives forever there is a destination for our soul, and it is either heaven or hell, depending upon the answer we give to a question that we will see Jesus pose to his good friend Martha. Let's begin our study today. John Chapter 11 and we will read verses 1 to 4 to begin with.

John 11:1-4

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But 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."

The past few months we have been studying several of the seven "I AM" statements that Jesus says to refer to himself. We will see another one today. Jesus had been in the temple in Jerusalem for some time going back and forth with the Pharisees of who Jesus truly is, and what it meant to be a true follower of God. As we learned two weeks ago, Jesus has left Jerusalem.

Where did he go? Look at this map:



You see in the green area the region called Perea. We learned from two weeks ago that Jesus has gone back to the area where John the Baptist was first baptizing people. This area was also called, Bethany across the Jordan. This was not the town that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived in. Jesus may have been seeking a time of solace, but as he was there many people came to him and he ministered to them, and many came to believe in Jesus for salvation.

While Jesus and his disciples were in this area of Perea he received word that his very close friend Lazarus was ill. Jesus' response may seem a bit peculiar to us.

Jesus' response is once again according to his sovereignty, and I am going to use that word several times today. Jesus is setting the stage of what will happen soon. The whole point of what Jesus will be doing is once again to bring to light that he is the Son of God, that he is the Messiah, and that he be glorified so people will repent of their sins and believe in Jesus for salvation.

Over our study of the Gospel of John, we have seen Jesus perform miracle after miracle.

1. Jesus turned water in to wine at the wedding in Cana. Chapter 2.
2. Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well to reveal he is the Messiah. You may say that was a miracle? It was a miracle for him to meet her at that specific well, at that specific time, and the miracle of salvation came to her that day. Not just her but many of the towns' people believed also. The miracle of salvation. Chapter 4
3. Jesus healed the son of a Jewish official. Chapter 4
4. Jesus healed the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda. Chapter 5
5. Jesus feeds 5000 men and walks on water. Chapter 6
6. Jesus heals the man who was blind from birth. Chapter 9

Don't forget his teachings. We have seen up to this time four out of the seven "I AM" statements and we will be introduced to number 5 today. Jesus said:

- I Am the Bread of Life – Chapter 6***
- I Am the Light of the World – Chapter 8***
- I Am the Door – Chapter 10***
- I Am the Good Shepherd – Chapter 10***

For what purpose? For God the Father and that God the Son, the Son of God, to be glorified! All Jesus did was to show his glory and to glorify God the Father, to bring people to repentance of their sin and believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Do you believe?

Sometimes the glory of Jesus that will be revealed does not always work within our timeline. It is through the pain, and the struggles, that Jesus gets the most glory and when we give Jesus the most glory. In those times it does not diminish the amount of love Jesus has for us, in fact it shows how deep the father's love is for us!

God's love is revealed as he reveals his glory and his purpose according to his sovereignty and his divine time schedule. As we look more of our verses, we are going to see there is a lot mentioned about time and how God's sovereignty is shown in the timeline of all eternity. Let's read verses 5 to 16 of John Chapter 11.

John 11:5-16

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when he heard that Lazarus 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 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." ¹¹ After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." ¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

We see at the beginning of this portion of Scripture the depths of Jesus' relationship with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. In verse 5 it says Jesus loved them. The Greek word for love being used there is: ***Agapao***. Agapao is the verb-form of the Greek word for love. You may be more familiar with the Greek word for love, ***Agape***, which is the noun-form of love in the Greek.

Agape – Is an unconditional love. It is not based on feelings, emotions but is an act of the will. Agape is the love of and from God because love is the very nature, the very character of God. This type of love does not come naturally to a sinful people. We can only express agape love if the very one who embodies the true nature of agape love lives within us. Then we can agape love God with all our heart, mind, and soul. Then we can agape love our neighbors as ourselves. Then we can agape love our enemies who persecute us.

You may say, "Now, wait a minute!" If Jesus loved Lazarus, Martha, and Mary so much, why did he wait two days before he went to their home?" I alluded to it earlier, we all are living off of a divine timeline. It is Jesus' sovereign knowledge of knowing Lazarus' condition and his sovereign timeline of when to reveal his glory in all situations.

Two days pass and he turns to his disciples and said, "Okay guys, let's go to Judea!" Once again, we see a reference to time and timing as we see the disciple's response and Jesus' answer. Look at verse 8.

John 11:8

⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

Are you kidding me Jesus? Do you not remember what the Jews were going to do to you the last time we were there? Remember two weeks ago, Jesus had just said that he and the father were one and the Jews picked up stones and they were ready to stone Jesus. Jesus said, what good work are you going to stone me for? They said

it is not a good work but blasphemy, you a man are making yourself God. Jesus said, how can I be blaspheming if I am doing all these miracles. Who but God can do these miracles? Then they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from them.

How did Jesus escape the Jews? They had Jesus! There was nowhere for him to go. It wasn't his time. We saw this before back in Chapter 8 when Jesus said "Before Abraham was, I AM! Saying he is God. Verse 59 read as such, ***So, they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*** It wasn't his time! Jesus alludes to this again with his response to his disciples about their concern of him going back to Judea.

John 11:9-10

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."

We see this theme of time continuing. The Jews broke the days up in 12-hour increments. In those 12 hours they were to get their work done. Jesus is telling the disciples, just as you know there is an allotted time during the day to get your work done, so it is with me. Jesus is on a divine timetable that cannot be stopped or changed until God the Father says so. Guys, I am being obedient to the Father and I am not going to worry about man.

There is coming a time, this is the night that Jesus is talking about, there is coming a time when his ministry will be done.

Every one of us are on a divine timetable. Our days are numbered. We are not going to live one day longer or one day less than what has been determined for us on this earth.

I want to talk to the believer for a moment. The true followers of Jesus Christ! You are in the daytime right now! Are you working? Now that may look different for every person because of different circumstances and age. But are you working for the kingdom? Are you giving, are you going, are you proclaiming the Gospel to the lost?

Ephesians 5:15-17

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

How are you making the use of your time? Young person, elementary student, middle schooler, high schooler, college student, who professes Jesus Christ as your Lord. I get it, you have schoolwork, sports, jobs. Those are your places of ministry.

Are you being a light of the Gospel or are you in fear of man and you are allowing the black wave of the darkness of progressive liberal agenda drown you and you can articulate the leftist mantras better than you can quote Scripture. That goes for all of us as professing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lost person! You are on a divine timetable also. Your days are numbered as well. If you do not repent and profess Jesus as Lord, you will spend your eternity in Hell.

Jesus continues his response to his disciples, and he tells them that Lazarus is asleep, and I go to awaken him. The disciples respond, well if he is asleep Jesus, then he is resting, and he will get better. Jesus finally tells them, Lazarus is dead. Look at verses 15 and 16 again.

John 11:15-16

¹⁵ And for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

The term asleep is used in reference to a believer being dead in the Old and New Testament several times. Here is a question. Why is it good that Jesus was not there to heal Lazarus before he died?

1. It goes back to this divine timeline that Jesus is on. If Jesus was there earlier, it does not meet the timeline of when Jesus is to be arrested and crucified.
2. If Jesus had healed Lazarus, then it could be looked at as, Yawn! Another sick person healed. I’ve seen that before.
3. The glory that is going to be revealed by what is about to happen is going to increase the disciple’s faith and the people’s like never before.

Jesus has made it clear. They are going to Bethany! We see the disciples attitude change. We see their faith increasing already. Once concerned, now ready to go die with him. Jesus and his disciples head off to Bethany and are in close proximity to where Lazarus lived.

John 11:17-27

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

Well, guess what? We get into this theme of time again. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days. Let’s sift this out. It takes about a day travel to get from where Jesus was across the Jordan to Bethany. So, it took the messenger a day to get to Jesus to give him the message. That means Lazarus died the day that the messenger was going to get Jesus.

Jesus waited two days before he began his travels to Bethany. So, we are at day three. It is on the fourth day that Jesus and his disciples headed to Bethany and by the time they got there it was four full days that Lazarus had been dead.

The four days are very important. There was a Jewish belief that the soul stayed with the body for three days with an opportunity of resuscitation. But, on the fourth day if that had not happened, they are really dead and decomposition of the body has started.

That makes the miracle that we will talk about next week even more remarkable to the people that are going to experience the miracle.

In verse 18 we see the proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem, two miles, and this is why the disciples had a little concern of Jesus going. In verse 19 we get a good description of the people that are there, another reason of why the disciples may have had some concern as well. As was Jewish custom, when someone died, there was at least a weeklong time of mourning.

John 11:19

¹⁹ And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

That many of the Jews had come to console Martha and Mary shows that the family was very prominent and wealthy. Could it be there were some pharisees there as well that just a few months earlier were holding stones in their hands ready to stone Jesus? Could be!

As Jesus gets close to Bethany, Martha and Mary are made aware of Jesus' arrival and Martha goes to meet Jesus but Mary stayed in the house. As Martha met Jesus, she said these words. Look at verse 21 and 22 again.

John 11:21-22

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

Now this can be looked at as if Martha was rebuking Jesus for his delay. Maybe, maybe not! We do know at another time Jesus visited the family, Martha was running all over the place taking care of everyone and Mary was seated at Jesus' feet listening to him teach. Martha told Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help her!

So, maybe, maybe not! The message had been delivered too late for Jesus to be there in time. This is a sign of Martha's grief but also evidence of Martha's level of faith. If you were here, I believe you would have healed him and even now Jesus, whatever you ask, the Father will do it.

In a few moments Jesus really sees how strong Martha's faith is, and with the words we are about see, it also is a call for you to show faith and are you exhibiting faith in Jesus Christ.

After Martha said those previous words to Jesus, he answers her. Look at verse 23 and 24.

John 11:23-24

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."

Martha didn't fully understand what Jesus was saying. She may have not wanted to get her hopes up. We also see that resurrection of the body was taught in the Old Testament because she did understand the idea of a believer being resurrected at some time after death. The prophets Daniel and Isaiah speak to this.

Daniel 12:2

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Isaiah 26:19

¹⁹ Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

Jesus then gets to the crux of the matter; Jesus gets to the main point. The whole reason of why he was there in Bethany and why Jesus came to the earth. Look at verses 25 to 27.

John 11:25-27

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

Earlier Martha had said to Jesus, if you were here my brother would not have died, and even now whatever you ask of the Father, he will do for you. What was Jesus' answer? Your brother will rise again.

Here we see the fifth of the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus. I am the resurrection and the life Martha! Jesus is taking Martha from simplistic understanding or belief in the resurrection to saying that does not happen without me. I hold all authority; I hold all power of death and life. Do you understand the hope that comes with this truth?

I am the one who eternal life goes through and if you believe in me, Jesus Christ, though this old physical body dies, if you have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, you will live eternally in heaven.

Remember, Jesus is coming back. We are about to celebrate Christmas, to celebrate Jesus' first coming. Jesus promised to and will come again (*John Chapter 14*). But first he must die on the cross for our sins, be buried, and he will be resurrected. Without Jesus' resurrection, there is no resurrection to eternal life for us.

Jesus is returning, in what is called the Rapture. This is the second point of what Jesus said. If you are alive at that time, you won't walk through the shadow of death.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the Word of God tells us that first the dead shall arise and meet Jesus in the air, and the souls will be reunited with the body and will receive a glorified body. Then those true believers that are on this earth will follow afterwards and as well will receive a glorified body.

Jesus asked the most important question to Martha that can be asked to anyone. Do you believe this?

Again, this is the whole reason for this Last Miracle that Jesus is about to perform. It is the reason to show us that the Last Enemy we all face, death, has no power over the believer. Do you believe this? Is your answer like Martha's? Yes, Lord I believe!

If you say, "Yes, I believe, and you have repented of your sins!" Then live for him while you still have breath in your lungs. If you say, I believe but it has not gotten from a head knowledge to your heart and the Holy Spirit is drawing you today to repent. Then repent and tell Jesus, "Yes, Jesus, I believe! Save my soul!"