

John 11:1-46 – 28 June 2026

“Growing Through The Impossible”

Introduction

*Chap 11-12a takes place mostly in Bethany Judea between Jan–Apr 32 AD

*The Greek Aristotle was the 1st to organize all of creation into categories

*When Jesus does a work, He does it completely

*Jesus showed authority over *all 10 categories*

*Aristotle’s Ten Categories

Substance (What?) – Turned water to wine

Quantity (How much?) – Fed 5,000

Quality (What kind?) – Blind man receives sight

Place (Where?) – Healed from a distance

Time (When?) – Healed a lame man of 38 years

Position (On what?) – Walked on water

Action (What it does?) – His willing death

Passion (What is done to it?) – His resurrection

State (What it has?) – Caught an abundance of fish

Relation (To what?) – Raised Lazarus to the living

*Raising Lazarus is the greatest example of power over relation – to move a relation from dead to living

*Have you seen Jesus working thru the impossible

Today's account of raising Lazarus from the dead will give us 3 ways to experience the glory of God in the midst of incredibly difficult circumstances

#1 – Let love for God & others propel us to keep going (Vs 1-16)

Read 11:1-3 [Death of Lazarus]

1. Notice the sisters don't bring their solution or their will to Jesus; they simply bring the situation
 - a. This is how we should pray

Read 11:4-6

1. Jesus' response clearly indicates that He has the foreknowledge to know how this will all go
 - a. Lazarus won't end up dead from this
 - b. Jesus ends up getting worship for His deed

2. Why are we told a 2nd time Jesus loved them?
 - a. B/c He waits another 2 days before acting
 - b. Trials of our faith isn't a removal of God's love for us
3. We'll go thru hard things, that require faith, in order to glorify God in the unknown

Read 11:7-10

1. *"Are there not 12 hours a day?"* Says 2 things
 - a. #1 - We must use the daytime to do the work, don't wait until it's too late
 - i. It's possible to wait until it's too late and then it won't work
 - b. #2 - We must use ***all*** 12 hours we're given
 - i. It's also possible to not use all the time we're given to serve God
2. Jesus is going into this threat ***for His friend***
 - a. Love of God and others compels us to have the nerve to serve

Read 11:11-15

1. Why does Jesus speak spiritually here (he's sleeping) instead of directly (he's dead)?

- a. He wants *them* to think spiritually
 - b. Speaking spiritually is more *accurate* than speaking earthly
 - c. Speaking spiritually causes to *understand* things from God's *right* perspective
2. Jesus wants to give the disciples a reason to go into this dangerous situation
 - a. We go to love a friend, *and* it will help the disciple's faith grow as well
3. Applying the truth to difficult things, that only God can fix, causes our faith to grow
 - a. Read Rom 10:17 – As we do the truth written in the Word, we'll see Jesus take action

Read 11:16

1. Words *Thomas* and *Didymus* both mean twin
2. This is the 1st of 3 times we hear from Thomas to learn of his personality
 - a. We can learn from this that Thomas was pessimistic, affectionate, and loyal

#2 – Don't limit God's power & personal purpose (Vs 17-32)

Read 11:17-21 [Martha & Mary]

1. Jesus has allowed a situation in which it seems impossible to heal or fix it; he's dead 4 days
 - a. Jews had a tradition that a spirit hovered at a body for 3 days until it sees decomposition
2. *"If you would've been here, he wouldn't..."*
 - a. True, but God had bigger plans
 - b. It's a plan that would glorify Himself & instill faith in them to believe for bigger things
3. Have you ever watched a dream & ministry die & thought, Lord why would you let that die
 - a. It's never too late for God to raise up big things
 - b. It's never too late for God to resurrect new purpose for what we thought was dead & gone

Read 11:22

1. This verse doesn't insinuate she believes Jesus can raise the dead
2. It insinuates she still believes Him & His power

3. It's like saying, "I still trust that You're the Messiah, even though you didn't save my brother"

Read 11:23-27

1. Martha professed that Jesus could do whatever He wants to do – so what's the problem?
2. #1: she wasn't seeing Jesus' power as personal
 - a. She believed in the resurrection at the end, but didn't realize Jesus Himself is the resurrection
 - b. Christianity isn't to learn facts about God, but it's to know God Himself
3. #2: she was limiting Jesus' power to later
 - a. She believed God prepared a resurrection, didn't realize God has amazing things *for now*
 - b. Christianity isn't just a 'get out of hell free' card for later, but it's to live with Christ now
4. Now, the challenge from Jesus to us will always be, "Do we believe Him"
 - a. Belief is the way to eternal life (John 17:3)
 - b. Belief is the way to work the works of God (John 6:29)
 - c. It's not enough to hear the Word or to know the Word, but we must be 'Believing the Word'

Read 11:28-32

1. Martha probably told Mary about Jesus coming quietly, in order to give Mary a few quiet moments together before causing a stir
2. Martha called Jesus “The Teacher”
 - a. Rabbis wouldn’t teach women
 - b. Yet they knew He was their teacher
3. Mary says almost identical words (vs 32) as Martha had said in vs 21)
 - a. But I believe we know Mary’s tone of voice by the posture of her body (she fell at His feet)

#3 – Act rightly even when struggling to believe (Vs 33-46)

Read 11:33-38 [Lazarus Raised]

1. Notice the large feeling Jesus has
 - a. He has compassion for their pain/loss (vs 33)
 - b. He was saddened by their unbelief (vs 4, 11, 23-26)
 - c. He may also have been thinking of His pending death within the next 3 months

2. Just as Martha, these Jews believe death was a barrier that Jesus could not handle
 - a. Unbelief can prevent us from receiving miracles from God (Read Matt 13:58)
 - b. Now we must be believing in His will & not our own will (Luke 22:42)
3. What barrier do you believe Jesus can't handle
 - a. That He can't use you to speak for Him?
 - b. That He can't take you beyond a hard sin?
 - c. That He can't give you forgiveness for one?
4. Believing *wrong* will hinder us in acting *right*

Read 11:39-40

1. Jesus does this miracle in spite of their unbelief
 - a. In Acts 12 Peter was locked in jail & many gathered to pray for his release
 - b. When he's released, they didn't believe it!
 - c. It wasn't their faith that saved him, but God
2. Want a chance to experience God's glory?
 - a. It will probably involve something that looks difficult or impossible to go thru

Read 11:41-42

1. Notice they doubted in unbelief & yet they acted on what Jesus said to do
 - a. Luke 5 – Jesus tells Peter to go catch fish; Peter doubts but obeyed & was blessed
 - b. Naaman the Syrian doubts Jordan's waters could heal him, yet he obeyed & was blessed
 - c. Even in unbelief, just obey Jesus
2. Jesus is always careful to give the credit to God and not to human activity

Read 11:43-44

1. The directive was clear & unmistakable
 - a. It was for *Lazarus* to come forth
 - b. It was for all the people to know *why* He come out
 - c. Make no mistake, God gets the glory
2. Notice that Lazarus needed to be unbound
 - a. Shows that this isn't some cheap fake
 - b. Shows that this resurrection was by no power of Lazarus – but God's power

Read 11:45-46

1. Notice this doesn't show a difference in belief, but a difference in *what you do* about the belief
 - a. Even the demons believe in God, but their actions are in rebellion to God
2. We must apply this belief to our personal life
 - a. I believe Jesus died on the cross & rose again – not enough
 - b. I believe Jesus died on the cross & rose again *to forgive my sins & cleanse me* – right!

Conclusion

So, when faced with the impossible...

1. **Let love for God & others propel us to keep going** – no other motivation will work
2. **Don't limit God's power & personal purpose** – look beyond the pain to the goal
3. **Act rightly even when struggling to believe** – resurrection power is available for those who follow Jesus