

Good morning everyone!

My name is Caleb Farrow and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Grace Auburn. It is my joy to share with you from John 11 as we continue in our year long series through the Gospel of John, entitled "Life in His Name". And this is the heartbeat of this gospel, as well as the lens in which we see and read it. This comes directly from John 20:31 which says, "these were written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Last week, Executive Pastor Lee Cadden walked us through the resurrection of Lazarus. He was dead for four days, heard the voice of his savior calling/commanding him to come back to life, and Lazarus walked out of the tomb that moments before housed his lifeless body...

We see the power over death, the sovereignty, the perfect timing of God. He does not misstep. He does not make a mistake. Everything is done for the purpose of His glory and our good in His timing. And this is all true as we will see in today's text! We will also see the impact the miracle of resurrection has on people.

So let's begin in vs. 45...

Read vs 45-57

Pray

Despite the best efforts of the religious leaders, and the best efforts of our own sin and rebellion it truly is the infinite wisdom of God, that makes a way for the love of God to satisfy the wrath of God and make us His sons and daughters! What a merciful God that we serve! That He would make a way for our redemption, let alone accomplish our saving through such a sacrifice of Himself in Jesus on the cross....

John Piper "There was only one hope for me- that the infinite wisdom of God might make a way for the love of God to satisfy the wrath of God so that I might become a son of God!"

This is the glory of God we see in today's text on every line. He loves us enough to not leave our saving and uniting to Himself up to our own volition, but takes our sin upon Himself on the cross for His glory and our salvation!

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

After Jesus tells Lazarus to awaken from his four day nap, some believed in him. Of course! A man they knew to be dead comes out of the tomb and this man, Jesus of Nazareth confirmed the rumors. He has power and authority even over death! At just His word, life is breathed back into what was once dead. And there is in some of these people a belief, not just that Jesus did this, but that Jesus is the resurrection! Belief that it is in Jesus alone we find life! As he confirms this back in verse 25. "I am the resurrection and the life".

But here in vs 46 we also see the power of sin to blind us to the truth. Some of those who see the very same miracle went to the Pharisees.... John doesn't tell us if the people went to the Pharisees out of anger or with sincere questions to their religious teachers. But what John does tell us here is that they know Jesus did something and wanted their religious leaders to know it. Possibly out of curiosity. "What did I just witness?!" Possibly out of fear. Possibly out of anger and fear as we see is the response of the religious leaders. The emphasis for John is not the people that went to Pharisees, but the Pharisees themselves.

The powerful miracle of Christ's resurrecting Lazarus, elicits two different responses. Belief and rebellion.

The resurrection of Jesus, elicits this same response in our own souls. Belief or rebellion. The message of the Gospel is one of hope and mercy and kindness of God. Yet the response of people to the gospel is belief or rebellion. And here we see the response of the Pharisees as they hear about the resurrection of Lazarus.

⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

The Pharisees, Sadducees, gathered with the Sanhedrin, this is "the council". The Sanhedrin held political and religious power, yet still submitted to Roman rule. So while the Sanhedrin was particularly powerful and maintained spiritual as well as political authority, they still were under the thumb of Roman governing. The fear of the council was that the authority and power they had would be taken away from them by Rome. They had forgotten, it was God who gave them that authority, not Rome.

They knew that Jesus had power and that He was performing these miracles. They were not denying this anymore. They tried that already in John chapter 9. Remember Jesus heals the blind man and they try to trap Jesus in sin, and cause His ministry and

mission to fail. Their plans were foiled when the man who used to be blind responded to the inquisitions about Jesus with statements like, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" and "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes".

Basically he was saying, "you learned and educated religious teachers don't know?! So you mean that Jesus opened my eyes to see for the first time, but you don't know this man?" Obviously they were embarrassed during this exchange because they kicked the man out of their presence. They are no longer attempting that approach, but it seems they are now out of moves.

It was no longer about whether or not Jesus did what he said he did or even was who he said he was. The leaders were so blinded by their fleshly desire for power and authority, this was now about not losing their control and positions of influence. Nothing to do with the truth. The concern of the council was focused on the impact Jesus would have on the comforts of their everyday life.

In so many ways the Gospel enters our lives like this, messes up our daily routines and the regular comforts we used to indulge, but now feel the need to give of our time, resources and energy for the glory of God. And God in his mercy is patient and kind to continue to sanctify our hearts that we would give back to Him what he graciously gave. Jesus graciously invades our space, strips us of our authority and power over our own lives that has kept us in the land of dead and we learn to see that the life we have yearned for is a merciful gift from the Lord in the person and work of Jesus. We who are Christians now belong to Jesus. We forfeit our control by confessing his death on the cross is in place of our eternal death and gives life to all. Also known as the atoning work of Jesus!

The irony of this moment for the council and for us as we attempt to hold on to our old way of life is that it is perishing and will not last. For the council they are so fearful and adamant to retain the temple (their place) and nation, to the extent of murdering Jesus, yet it will be destroyed by Rome in 70 AD. And while Jesus is eventually killed, their evil intent is actually the accomplishment of Gods grand story that before creation began, Jesus would sacrifice himself to save us who are Gods children! And what a mysterious gift from God this is!

It is also true, that in our rebellious attempts to maintain authority over certain areas of our life, Jesus is patient, kind, and persistent to remind us that those areas belong to him and its time we give them over. He is a much better steward of our time, our energy, our money, our relationships, than we could ever be! Our best efforts to impact those around us for our own glory last but a short while, and then are forgotten. But when we

let God guide his time for us, guide who the friends we get to invest in are, guide how we spend his money, the impact becomes eternal...

The high priest at this time, missed this mystery completely but by Gods sovereign rule, Caiaphas unknowingly prophesy's that all of this will occur!

⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. ⁵⁴ Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

Caiaphas, the high priest, is calling for the murder of Jesus to save himself and the Jewish people from potentially facing the sword of Roman government if Jesus appears to be a threat to them or cause an uprising. He is certainly more fearful of the wrath of Rome than the wrath of God. The justification of his cold heart to call for Jesus' death is found in his fear. Fear of Rome and fear of losing control.

And his speech worked to justify their sins. Their political motivation was now been justified through the lens of their moral hypocrisy.

There were previous attempts to kill Jesus, but this was a formal vote of the Jewish authority to commit premeditated murder.

And Caiaphas, unbeknownst to himself, is not just proclaiming their hypocrisy, but is actually prophesying on behalf of God!

His thought process is that Jesus will die, the Jewish nation will not be threatened by the Romans and their authority will remain intact. But John so perfectly captures that God in His sovereignty uses even sin and that of the high priest to achieve His purposes. Primarily to glorify His name by saving and uniting His people!

I must say it is also unique that the high priest at this time was the one who entered the Holy of Holies, the inner most place of the temple to sacrifice on behalf of the Jews that they might be forgive of their sins. And this same high priest is ordering the execution of the only one who will take away the sins of the world and is now seated at the right of the Father, interceding on behalf of the children of God!

Isn't God incredible!

Matt Carter "God planned Caiaphas's words to serve His own purpose... Caiaphas's intention was evil, but God ordained the death of Jesus."

And this draws my mind to the account of Joseph being thrown into slavery by his brothers but years later God redeems that sin to save an entire nation from a famine! And when standing in front of his brothers who betrayed him, Joseph says this: **Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.**

Joseph accomplished on a much smaller scale what Jesus would accomplish. Jesus would not only save a nation, but would save people from all over the world, uniting them under the glorious mystery that is the cross!

Caiaphas and these other men are responsible before a Holy and Just God for their actions and it is God who used these evil men to accomplish His plan to unite His people through the death of His Son.

In so many ways we begin to see that while giving life to Lazarus, Jesus condemns himself to death, but would not come to completion outside of his perfect timing and in his perfect manner.

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

This moment ends our text today but marks the beginning of where we will be the rest of the time we study the Gospel of John taking place during Passover festival. The Passover was one of the yearly celebrations of the Jewish people. This was to commemorate the Spirit of God protecting the firstborn children of His people while executing justice on the Egyptian people for enslaving the Israelites. It is no accident that this is written on the heels of Caiaphas outlining that Jesus is the one who will be sacrificed that Gods children will be saved. Jesus is the spotless lamb, uniting all of Gods people from every tribe, nation, and tongue in and through the death of Gods Son!

So the trap for Jesus was set, but Jesus knew it was there. In fact he orchestrated the trap himself when he gave life back Lazarus. Not even the evil plans of man occur outside the reign and timing of God. It is in His mercy that even in the text today, the

meta-narrative of Gods saving grace, His immovable sovereignty and life in Jesus is brought to our hearts and attention today!

And this is the beauty and mystery of the Gospel. It is in the death and merciful resurrection of Lazarus that consecrated the death and atoning resurrection of Jesus, which brings us from our death into resurrection life with Jesus that one day soon, Jesus will return to make all things right!
No more sin, no more death, no more suffering, no more deception.

It is only in Jesus that all our hearts hope for and long for is satisfied!
Only in the name of Jesus will our dead hearts find life!
And by Gods grace, He will accomplish it all!