

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

11:1-37

- CURRENT STUDY: We're back in the Gospel of John
- TWO WEEKS AGO: **John 10**
  - o Jesus talked about being the Good Shepherd...
    - ...and the gate by which His sheep must pass through
  - o While He came to bring life...
    - ...there will always be thieves who want to steal, kill, & destroy us.
  - o Jesus on the other hand was willing to lay down His life for His own.
- TODAY...we're going to see Jesus' 7<sup>th</sup> and final sign in John...
  - o ...and it's a doozy
  - o ...BUT remember why it was recorded...
    - ...it was not so we could be impressed...although it is impressive...
    - ...it was not so we can own other religious figures...
      - ...with how cool our religious figure is...
      - ...although Jesus does stand in a category all of His own.

## **John 20:30-31**

<sup>30</sup> Many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name.

- May this final sign continue to build our trust in the Son of God.

## **PRAY**

Jesus' friend, **Lazarus**, had died, and Jesus was willing to face the danger of **death** to go to him and his sisters.

## **John 11:1-16**

<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick: Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

- Facts:
  - o 3 adult siblings: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

- Lazarus is VERY sick man...deathly ill
- INTERESTING: Mary is identified as the one who anointed Jesus with ointment.
  - John hasn't even recorded this event (ch. 12)
  - BUT He assumes that his readers would have known this story well.
    - This is how big of deal Mary anointing Jesus in the way that she did was.
- This is also the Mary and Martha who hosted Jesus in Luke 10:38-42.

### **Luke 10:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who was also seated at the Lord's feet, and was listening to His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do the serving by myself? Then tell her to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup> but *only* one thing is necessary; for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

<sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "This sickness is not meant for death, but *is* for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." <sup>5</sup> (Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.) <sup>6</sup> So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days *longer* in the place where He was.

- 2 Bethanys ([map](#)): Jesus is likely at Bethany beyond the Jordan
  - Jesus had a personal relationship and love for these siblings.
- Bad news: Lazarus is sick.
- Good news: He's not going to die from this sickness.
  - God wants to use this sickness for His glory.
    - ...and to glorify Jesus.
- We've seen this pattern 6 times previously...
  - water to wine = glorified God and Jesus
  - healing of the disabled guy at Bethesda = glorified God and Jesus
  - feeding of thousands = glorified God and Jesus
  - walking on water = glorified God and Jesus
  - healing a man with congenital blindness =
    - he wasn't born blind because of sin
    - he was born blind to bring glory to God and Jesus
  - healing of the officials son from miles away = glorified God and Jesus
    - This was probably going to be very similar to that.
      - You've got a really sick guy.
      - Jesus and the disciples are miles away.
      - Jesus and God will be glorified through it.
      - Distance healing to the rescue.
    - WHY? Because if Jesus was going to heal a guy on his deathbed...

- EITHER do it from a distance
- OR go now! ...but He stays for two more days
  - ...knowing that it was about a two-day walk.
    - 1-2 days to get the message
    - 1-2 days to walk back
  - i.e. Me getting a call in the middle of work day...
    - "Melissa was in a car accident and is really hurt."
    - "Okay...no problem...I'm just going to finish up some stuff I got to do here...I'll make it over there in few hours."
    - THAT'S NOT LOVE!!
      - "Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus."

<sup>7</sup> Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let's go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and yet You are going there again?"

- Don't go back to Judea! They want to kill you.
- Don't you remember what just happened a few days ago!

### **John 10:25-31**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. <sup>26</sup> But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one." <sup>31</sup> The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

- You really want to walk back into that!
- If this is about Lazarus...heal him from a distance!!
- BTW...in hindsight...they had real reason to be concerned...because Jesus will not be coming back from this trip.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But if anyone walks during the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

- This figure of light and darkness is all over Jesus' teaching.
- This is another quick parable...
  - If you take a hike when it's daylight...you should be good.
  - If you try to hike when it is pitch black outside...tripping and falling and hurting yourself is going to be the norm.
- As long as Jesus was doing what the Father was asking Him to do...He had nothing to fear.
- Lesson for us:
  - If we walk in the darkness...we will be stumbling and falling around in this life.

- i.e. “I don’t know why my life is in such shambles.”
  - blame game
- “Are you willing to do it God’s way?” No, I’m good.
- If we follow Jesus...
  - ...walk in His life-giving ways
  - life will NOT BE perfect... “in this world we will always have trouble”
  - ...but life WILL BE good...and full of life.

<sup>11</sup> This He said, and after this He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going so that I may awaken him from sleep.” <sup>12</sup> The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will come out of it.” <sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about actual sleep. <sup>14</sup> So Jesus then said to them plainly, “Lazarus died, <sup>15</sup> and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let’s go to him.”

- Funny little banter...
  - Jesus: Lazarus fell asleep
    - = euphemism for dying, but also for when people actually took a nap
  - Disciples: No need to put yourself in danger because he’s taking a nap!
    - He’ll wake up whether you’re there or not.
  - Jesus: Guys...he’s dead! ...but that will end up being a good thing for your faith.
- Notice what this says about the nature of FAITH...
  - Had the disciples entrusted their lives to Jesus?
  - What was going to happen with Lazarus was meant to deepen that trust.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore Thomas, who was called Didymus, said to *his* fellow disciples, “Let’s also go, so that we may die with Him!”

- I love Thomas...
- Okay...let’s go die guys!
- I can see John smirking a bit as he’s writing this...
  - Thomas didn’t actually die until 72 A.D...
  - ...John is writing about 20 years later.

Jesus’ friend, **Lazarus**, had died, and Jesus was willing to face the danger of **death** to go to him and his sisters.

**What contrasts can you draw from your own life between when you are walking in the light versus choosing to walk in the darkness?**

Martha and Mary both had the combination of **deep faith** in but **real questions** for Jesus.

### **John 11:17-37**

<sup>17</sup> So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away (two miles); <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them about *their* brother.

- This statement is meant to communicate a few things:
  - o 1) Lazarus was REALLY dead.
    - Jewish believe = on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the spirit left the body
    - this was past the point of no return
  - o 2) Because of Bethany's proximity to Jerusalem...some of the religious leaders were there to mourn with them.
- Mary and Martha had been through it.
  - o We don't know the sickness...
  - o ....but we do know that...
    - it was days of deterioration...watching their brother slowly fade
    - praying for him...saying their goodbyes
    - sitting there while his breathing became labored...and then no more

<sup>20</sup> So then Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

- Listen to the deep faith of Martha...
  - o If you were here...he would not be dead right now.
    - = absolute confidence in Jesus ability to heal
  - o Even though that didn't happen...
    - ...even though my brother is dead...
    - ...I still know this:
      - You ask God anything...God will do that thing.
      - Those are just the facts.
  - o Some see a request in this statement...
    - ...I think she is just expressing her faith in who Jesus was.
- BUT even with her deep faith...
  - o ALSO a question: Why didn't you come.
    - I asked you to.
    - I pleaded with you.
    - AND you didn't show up.
      - not only late...but WAY late
  - o WHY?

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise *from the dead*." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the

resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have come to believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, and He who comes into the world."

- Yes...your brother is dead...BUT that's not the end of the story.
  - o Martha agrees...the depth of her faith put on display again.
  - o YES...I have hope in his future resurrection from the dead.
- WHY?
  - o Because of who Jesus was...
  - o ...AND who Lazarus had entrusted His life to.
- NOT "I can resurrect"
  - o NOT even "I will resurrect"
  - o "I AM the resurrection and the life."
  - o He has it in Himself.

### **John 1:4**

**<sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind.**

- The resurrection of the dead is absolutely possible IN JESUS.
- Eternal life had been secured for Lazarus IN JESUS.
- IN JESUS...
  - o all those who die will live again
  - o AND those who while living entrust their lives to Jesus will never experience the finality of death.
- "Do you trust Me when I say this?"
  - o Absolutely!
  - o Why?
    - ...because you are the Messiah that came into the world to save us.
    - AND you are the Son of God...
    - ...so when you speak...I listen...and believe every word you say!
- Do we believe Him when He speaks?
  - o Will we be resurrected from the dead?
  - o Is life only found in Him?
  - o If we die...will we live again?
  - o Do we have eternal life in Him?
  - o Is He the One God sent into the world to save us?
  - o Is He the Son of God who came into our world?

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she left and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard *this*, she got up quickly and came to Him.

- Why secretly? ...the religious leaders were there.

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still at the place where Martha met Him. <sup>31</sup> Then the Jews who were with her in the house and were consoling her,

when they saw that Mary had gotten up quickly and left, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

- Unfortunately the whispering did not have the desired effect...
- ...the religious leaders followed her.

**<sup>32</sup> So when Mary came to the place where Jesus was, she saw Him and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."**

- Mary's response: deep faith
  - o If you were here...he would not be dead right now.
    - = absolute confidence in Jesus ability to heal
- BUT even with her deep faith...
  - o ALSO a question: Why didn't you come.
    - We asked you to.
    - We pleaded with you.
    - AND you didn't show up.
  - o WHY?

**<sup>33</sup> Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled,**

- deeply moved (*ἐμβριμάομαι*) = extreme negative emotion
  - o seriously troubled, wrecked, devastated
- troubled (*ταράσσω ἑαυτοῦ*) = shaken

**<sup>34</sup> and He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.**

- Jesus falls apart...
  - o tears start streaming down His face.
- Most often asked...WHY?
  - o When He knows what's going to happen.
  - o STOP reading from the end of the story...
    - read as if for the 1<sup>st</sup> time
    - i.e. if my best friend from high school Mark died tomorrow...
      - ...and I wasn't devastated...shaken...weeping?
      - Didn't you love him?
- The human man Jesus is having a natural response to...
  - o ...losing His friend...
  - o ...and watching His friends suffering over the loss of their brother.
- The religious leaders have two responses to this moment:

**<sup>36</sup> So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!"**

- The obvious conclusion...

<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could this man, who opened the eyes of the man who was blind, not have also kept this man from dying?"

- He can't win with these guys.
  - o "We've seen Him do all of these miraculous things...
  - o ...it seem pretty unloving not to show up and save His friend."
- AND these two responses still exist today:
  - o 1) Look at Christ on the cross
    - what love God has lavished upon us
    - He didn't even spare His own son...but delivered Him over for us all.
  - o 2) Look at all of the pain and suffering in the world
    - no God of love would let that go on
    - what kind of a God would do nothing while the world burns
- When we experience personal tragedy...sickness, suffering, loss...
  - o 1) MANY will write God off...and point to that experience as the reason...
  - o 2) OTHERS will lean in deeper to the One who...
    - knows all things
    - holds all things
    - and loves us with a love beyond our understanding
- EACH response reveal more about our hearts...
  - o ...than they do about God's character.
    - His character is fixed.
    - Our affections are fickle.
- i.e. Bart Ehrman was is a famous theologian who studied at Wheaton College and Moody Bible Institute, before going to Princeton Theological Seminary.
  - o He was a high level scholar who became an outspoken atheist.
  - o A turning point = at 33 years old his father passed away from an agonizing battle with cancer.
  - o He watched that and decided an all-powerful, all-loving God can't exist with the realities of that kind of pain and suffering.
- i.e. D.A. Carson one of the preeminent Christian scholars in the world went through something similar when his dad (who was a pastor) passed away in 1992...but Carson had a totally different response:

"When he died, there were no crowds... he was an ordinary man. But as I sat by his bed, I realized that the Gospel he preached was not just for the pulpit; it was for the pillow. He did not die with a bang; he just stopped breathing. And in that silence, I saw that the Good Shepherd does not offer us 'pat answers' to the problem of pain; He offers us Himself. My father didn't die questioning God's goodness; he died proving it by the peace that held him when everything else fell away."

- These moments revealed Mary and Martha's deep faith...without sugarcoating their real pain, hurt, and confusion.

Martha and Mary both had the combination of **deep faith** in but **real questions** for Jesus.

**When has God not shown up the way that you wanted Him to?  
What questions do you still have as to ‘why’?**

Jesus brought Lazarus **back to life** demonstrating that He is the **life-giver** that He always claimed to be.

**John 11:38-46**

<sup>38</sup> So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb.

- He’s still a wreck (ἐμβριμάομαι).

Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

- Martha is trying to keep Him from making a terrible mistake.
  - o I know you loved him...
  - o ...I know you didn’t get a chance to see him...
  - o ...and this is all really hard for you...
  - o ...but this not the way.

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

- Just trust me

<sup>41</sup> So they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> But I knew that You always hear Me; nevertheless, because of the people standing around I said *it*, so that they may believe that You sent Me.” <sup>43</sup> And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

- Notice: Jesus had been talking to the Father.
  - o Remember Martha’s words:

**John 11:22**

<sup>22</sup> Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

- He’s having this conversation now out loud...to point to the source of what they were all about realize had already happened.
- WHY?
  - o So that they “believe” ...have faith in Jesus.
  - o That is why Jesus was doing this in front of the crowd.
    - That is why John recorded this for us!!
  - o So that we would entrust ourselves to the One who has power over life and death!!

<sup>44</sup> Out came the man who had died, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

- He’s alive!
- This dead man...in a grave for 4 days...is fully living!!
  - This does not happen.
  - No one just decides to bring a dead man back to life.
  - No mere human can do that...
    - ...no one except the God who can give life to the dead.
- This is definitive proof...
  - ...that Jesus is the life-giver.
  - ...of EVERY promise of life that Jesus has made...
    - ...they are now backed up with REAL EVIDENCE.

### **John 1:4**

<sup>4</sup> **In Him was life**, and the life was the Light of mankind.

### **John 3:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> so that **everyone who believes will have eternal life in Him**. <sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

### **John 3:36**

<sup>36</sup> The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **the one who does not obey the Son will not see life**, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

### **John 4:14b**

<sup>14b</sup> ...the **water that I will give him** will become in him a fountain of water **springing up to eternal life.**”

### **John 5:21**

<sup>21</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so **the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.**

### **John 5:24**

<sup>24</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, **the one who hears My word**, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

### **John 5:26**

<sup>26</sup> For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to **the Son also to have life in Himself.**

### **John 5:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> Do not be amazed at this; for a time is coming when **all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,** <sup>29</sup> **and will come out:** those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the bad *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

### **John 5:39-40**

<sup>39</sup> “You examine the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is those *very Scriptures* that testify about Me; <sup>40</sup> and *yet* you are unwilling to **come to Me so that you may have life.**”

### **John 6:27**

<sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which **the Son of Man will give you (eternal life),** for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”

### **John 6:33-35**

<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and **gives life to the world...** I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty.

### **John 6:40**

<sup>40</sup> For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**”

### **John 6:47-48**

<sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, **the one who believes has eternal life.** <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life.

### **John 6:51**

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if **anyone eats from this bread, he will live forever;** and the bread which I will give for the life of the world also is My flesh.”

### **John 10:10**

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that **they would have life, and have *it* abundantly.**

### **John 10:27-28**

<sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give them eternal life, and **they will never perish;** and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

### **John 11:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; **the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies,** <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.

#### **...Do you believe this?"**

- What additional evidence is needed the Jesus is the life-bringer?
- What more could He do to prove that...
  - o ... He is everything He has said...
  - o ...and He will do everything that He claims He can do?
- There is only one possible response...isn't there?

<sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. <sup>46</sup> But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.

- Some entrusted their lives to the giver of life...
- ...others went and tattled on him.

Jesus brought Lazarus **back to life** demonstrating that He is the **life-giver** that He always claimed to be.

### **How does Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus back to life show Him worthy of being the resurrection and the life for all mankind?**

John didn't record the death of Lazarus just so we could be impressed by a miracle, but so that we would recognize and trust the undeniable evidence of Jesus' divine authority. Arriving on the fourth day, past the point of no return, Jesus intentionally stripped away every human hope so that He would be identified as the sole life-giving hope for every one of us.

Martha and Mary both had deep faith, yet they struggled with the whys of their circumstances. This final sign reminds us that the life Jesus offers isn't just a future hope but a present reality that allows us to walk through the worst of times with our eyes on Him. Our responsibility is not just believing facts about this amazing historical event, but actively entrusting our lives to the One who raises the dead to life and is trustworthy even when we don't understand. Our trust is best demonstrated not in the

absence of tears but in whose voice we follow even when the tomb is still closed.