

THIS WEEKEND

at The Crossing



EASTER 2024
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This Easter weekend, we are looking at two events involving death and resurrection: one about Lazarus, the other about Jesus. The difference is that Lazarus died again, while we celebrate a Risen Savior.

SCRIPTURE¹

John 11:1, 3 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

John 11:11b-12 "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

John 11:17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

John 11:20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

John 11:33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

¹ All scripture is NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

John 11:37-40 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb... “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

John 11:43-44 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

John 11:25-26a “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.”

OBSERVATION

Mary and Martha were tending their brother, Lazarus’ grave. They were probably somewhat wealthy and owned a house in Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem, where Jesus and his disciples were always welcome. Martha was a very detailed person while her sister was more laid back. They had notified Jesus about their brother’s illness, and fearing that his death was imminent, wanted Him to hurry to them, but He waited four days to go and help them, saying that, because He loved them, He wanted God to be glorified when He arrived.

QUESTION: When has Jesus waited to answer your prayers so that God would be glorified?

Jesus led the people to Lazarus’ grave where He wept because of Mary and Martha’s pain. Now He enters into our painful moments as well. Even when He knows the outcome will be joyous, He suffers with us. This most wonderful, impactful miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead took place on Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem for Passover Week. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Priests observed this event and did not respond with joy – they hardened their hearts in preparation for killing Him.

QUESTION: Why do you think the religious leaders were unable to recognize their Messiah even after witnessing Lazarus’ resurrection?

QUESTION: Why do you think people today are missing Him?

APPLICATION

Mary was upset when Jesus didn’t arrive in time to save her brother. Our hearts express the same thing: “If only You had fixed our marriages, helped us get the job we needed, or healed us! Why didn’t You, God?” Jesus doesn’t scold us, but says He is the resurrection and the life – He is in control of all circumstances and there will be joy in the morning! We don’t have all the answers, but we can believe Him who tells us to wait on Him as He redefines death as simply a transition we can trust in.

QUESTION: What would help you to trust God more? What more could you do to help others trust Him?

Because we equate God’s love with our comfort when things are going well, we know God must love us, but John is reminding us that God’s love for us has nothing to do with our circumstances. We are loved even when it seems Jesus is late or absent or seems apathetic. He demonstrated His love for us on the cross. God can take the worst circumstances of our lives and bring purpose to that

pain. That is the power and promise of God. Being a follower of Jesus isn't just about the future, as marvelous as that will be, or salvation as awesome as that is, but about Jesus coming so we can have life today and have it to the full. We don't have to live in our regrets or shame or guilt any longer. What Jesus did for us by dying on the cross is greater than anything we've ever done.

QUESTION: What "anchors" from your past are you still carrying?

QUESTION: What value do your past sins bring to your search for peace with Jesus?

We don't get to make the rules: This new life comes from believing in Jesus and trusting in Him. We have to willingly surrender our lives to Jesus and follow Him. When we do that, we need to follow the New Testament believers in baptism where the symbolism of accepting Jesus becomes real and apparent to others. We have died, been buried and resurrected to new life in Jesus.² His Holy Spirit now lives within us, guiding and teaching and comforting us along our journey to everlasting life. We have access to His Kingdom today – so, don't put off finalizing our commitment to Jesus now. Have you been baptized as an adult? The time is also now – the opportunity is now – our inheritance as children of God is here now. **HALLELUJAH! HE IS RISEN!**

QUESTION: What would prevent you from being baptized this weekend?

"I wasn't made to be tending a grave, I was called by name. Born and raised back to life again I was made for more. So why would I make a bed in my shame when a fountain of grace is running my way. I know I am Yours and I was made for more."

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray that the hearts of those who have eyes to see and ears to hear will be open to Your calling this Easter weekend. You have done everything to provide all we could ever need and, yet, some of us still hold back. Please continue to reveal Yourself to us and call us into Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: When has Jesus waited to answer your prayers so that God would be glorified in the result?

QUESTION: Why do you think the religious leaders were unable to recognize their Messiah even after witnessing Lazarus' resurrection?

QUESTION: Why do you think people today are missing Him?

QUESTION: When has Jesus waited to answer your prayers so that God would be glorified?

QUESTION: What would help you to trust God more? What more could you do to help others trust Him?

QUESTION: What "anchors" from your past are you still carrying?

QUESTION: What value do these past sins bring to your search for peace with Jesus?

QUESTION: What would prevent you from being baptized this weekend?

² Weekend services at all locations are followed by opportunities for baptisms with t-shirts, shorts and towels provided.