

Signs: The Gospel of John, John 11:28-44

v.v.28-32: As is John's practice, he keeps his readers keyed in on the context of the situation—the backdrop of the "sign." Martha calls her to her sister "privately" most likely to keep Jesus' presence hidden from the Jews. Mary gets up quickly and runs to Jesus. Jesus is still just outside of the town and their residence, not wanting to antagonize the Jews. Seeing Mary run out the Jews follow after her assuming she's heading back to the tomb to mourn. Mary's words to Jesus are almost identical to Martha's.

v.v. 33-35: When Jesus sees Mary and the Jews who are crying out in their mourning over the death of Lazarus he is "deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled." This phrase in the Greek is a strong very that indicates anger and indignance, not just concern or worry. The word translated to "greatly troubled" in the Greek literally means "snorting like a horse." His anger here isn't for a lack of faith, but at the situation itself—death and the sin that leads to it. Death wasn't part of his creation it was brought in by an intruder—Jesus was angry at death. Not only do we see his righteous anger, we get a glimpse into his compassion—Jesus wept. This isn't a sign of despair, but compassion. He knew what was going to happen, but in the moment we see the humanity of Jesus.

v.v.36-44: For a third time Jesus' motives are questioned, this time by the crowd. "See how he loved him—he opened the eyes of a blindman, couldn't he have saved the life of his friend?" There's a bigger plan at work—one that will reveal, once again the authority of Jesus and glorify the Father. Deeply moved again, He calls out to Mary to have the stone removed—she protests, Lazarus is dead—has been dead for four days, "he stinks!" The impossibility of what is about to happen is reiterated for the reader. Jesus reminds her of his promise (v. 4, 25-26,) and then he prays. Jesus' prayer is one of confidence: "Father, we have already had this conversation—and I already know that this is a fixed thing, but I ask so that they would see and that they would believe." He calls out to

Lazarus, not a whisper, or an invitation, but a command: “Lazarus, come out.” Then, it happens, “the man who had died came out...”

The Humanity of Jesus

The story of Lazarus encapsulates the entire glory of Jesus, his divinity, and his humanity.

When the Son of God took on human nature in the incarnation, he took on everything that makes us human, including our emotions.

He was, as the prophet Isaiah would note, “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*,” entering into our world of suffering—**he is able to sympathize with us in every aspect of our lives.**

Hebrews 4:15

“The Son of God, having clothed himself with our flesh, of his own accord clothed himself also with human feelings, so he did not differ at all from his brethren, sin only excepted.” John Calvin

Although we often sin in the expression of our emotions, the same isn’t true of Jesus. His emotions were adjusted and regulated by His obedience to God—they were free from sin.

In his humanity Jesus sets the example for how we are to live—an example for what it is to have righteous anger, righteous sorrow, righteous joy. We look to Jesus to see what it is to live out God’s call on our lives to “be holy as he is holy.”

The Gospel

The story of Lazarus not only reveals to us the humanity of Jesus, but it’s also a good illustration of our own situation and what happens to a sinner who trusts in Jesus.

Like Lazarus, we are dead and decaying and without hope, in our sin. Jesus calls us out—out of the tomb of our sin, he releases the bondages of sin and makes us alive. Ephesians 2:1-10

He calls out today—calls out to us, individually, calls us out of our sin, out of our graves, **out of the darkness and into his marvelous light.** 1 Peter 2:9-10