



COME OUT
JOHN 11:17-44

Turn to John 11. Intro: Buried alive stunt went poorly. Emerging from the grave.

“Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.” If you’re familiar with the Bible you’ve probably heard of Lazarus’s sisters Mary and Martha—in a story about service and washing Jesus’ feet. Sort of his family in Bethany who hosts him and the disciples multiple times. So, he knows them very well and loves he both them and their brother Lazarus who’s really sick. Vs. 3 tells us the sisters sent to Jesus saying, “Lord he whom you love is ill.” They want Jesus to come heal him but when he finally shows up in Bethany, Lazarus is dead and he’s been dead for 4 days. So, we’ve got the death of a loved one, we have grieving family members, and we have a Jesus who’s about to demonstrate that He Reigns over death.

If you take a step back you’ll see that from chapters 1-10 of John’s Gospel Jesus has been engaged in public ministry. And in particular, he’s been performing “signs” - miracles that point to something else; that reveal who He is. And today we’re looking at his seventh and final sign which really serves as the climax of his miracle working ministry because unlike healing or turning water into wine, he’s about to demonstrate that He reigns over death itself. And not only is this the climax of his public ministry, it’s his final act of ministry before he rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to be crucified the following Friday. And while it would take three sermons to expound every detail in this chapter, I want us to see three things as we look at Christ’s reign over death itself: (1) His Revelation of God’s glory (2) His care for the hurting. (3) His power over death. **Pray.**

His Revelation of God’s Glory

“Jesus loves me”—beyond the cross, we have a lot harder time understanding what that love looks like—usually about us. But Jesus is about to turn that around and say my love for you isn’t primarily seen in me recognizing how wonderful you are, but in allowing you to behold how wonderful I am. Put ourselves in his shoes: If you heard someone you really cared about was sick, what would you do? One of the most counterintuitive moves in all of the NT. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was” He loves Martha, so he stayed. He loved Mary, so he didn’t come! He loved Lazarus—so he let him die. What kind of love is that? “Jesus love me this I know because he intentionally let me die?” What kind of love? The kind that you and I need more than anything. And to understand that you have to look back one verse. “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” God is going to get glory. In fact, vs. 14 says 14 “Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” He loves his disciples, he loves Mary and Martha and because he loves them, he is going to stay put so that they can all behold the glory of God. It could very well read, “Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and so he arranged for them to experience a magnificent display of his glory and resurrection power.” God loves you *by* revealing his glory to you.

This is a completely different understanding of God’s love than what we’re used to. We’re used to thinking of a love that makes much of us. God’s love for us allows us to see his glory and make much of him. God’s love for me just is his allowing me by sheer grace to see and experience and enjoy his majesty. It’s his willingness to let me revel in God’s cosmic self-exaltation.

And if he keeps that from me—I'll keep my glory to myself and give you a smooth life instead—he doesn't love me. He's just giving me a cushion. He's not giving me the only thing that will satisfy my soul—himself and his glory—which will often be seen in this life against the backdrop of sin and brokenness.

And if you're an unbeliever in the room the sadness and death Jesus is allowing here might be your holdup to coming to Jesus in the first place, why would a loving God allow something so horrible to happen? I think answer Jesus gives letting Lazarus die right here, is the answer for why evil exists in the world. Why would a loving Jesus fully capable of saving Lazarus allow him to die. A loving capable Jesus wouldn't do that—yes he would? Because in letting him die, we get to see the glory of Jesus that we wouldn't otherwise see. This is why I believe God allows evil in the world because it allows him to display his glory in ways that he wouldn't otherwise be able to. **King perfect.**

Rick Burgess knew that. 2008, Rick Burgess “The Bible says all of our days are numbered, every one of us...But He allowed him to be taken so that He could be glorified — and no other reason, not to punish us, not to bring us heartache and pain. He did it so that the Kingdom would be glorified.” If God asked me to give up a son so that some of you will live in eternity, it is well.” 3 people had already come to Christ. 8 year anniversary, “And then the angels looked at God and God said, ‘Let it happen. I'll be glorified.’ So when I look at what we're supposed to do, I want to be able to look at him and say, ‘You know what? You were right... And You have been glorified by it.’”

His Care for the Hurting

Two conversations—both instructive. **20** So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” **23** Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Now Carson calls this a masterpiece in planned ambiguity. It could refer to the general resurrection that all Jews believed in which is how Martha takes it, **24** Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” But as those who know the end of this story, Jesus is referring to a more immediate rising from the dead. And as important as you might think it would be to clarify *that* he does something that he feels is more important. In fact, what he does here might seem sort of strange to us **25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. **Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?**” Now in the church this sound normal but think about it. To a grieving sister, he talks about himself and he points her to himself. Imagine showing up at someone's funeral getting up to say a word and talking about yourself. But it's not selfish for Jesus. He is the only human for whom it is not selfish to be self-exalting—and this statement reveals why that is.

This statement, “I am the resurrection and the life” is one of 7 “I am” statements Jesus makes in John (e.g., I am the light of the world, bread of life, way the truth and the life, good shepherd etc.) And Jesus is saying to Martha, what this miracle is about to demonstrate. Jesus raising Lazarus isn't primarily meant to highlight Jesus' ability—I can bring resurrection and life— but his identity—I *am* resurrection and life. I am the solution to the death and brokenness. I am the source—Acts 3:15—the Author of life. With all of these statements he's showing us who he is—You thirsty, I'm water. You hungry I'm bread. You lost I'm the way. You need love I'm the good shepherd. I am the sum total of everything you need—everything you want. And so if Jesus spoke at your funeral, you should hope that He would exalt himself. And the most loving thing God could do for you in your grief is to remind you of that; is to come to you and remind you over and over: “I am.” That's what Jesus does for Martha. **27** She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” He points Martha to himself.

Immediately after this, he has a very different conversation with Mary, which is equally as instructive for us. Martha calls for Mary who's back at the house, 32 "Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. We get such a powerful picture of Jesus's humanity here. That phrase "Deeply moved in Spirit and greatly troubled" communicates a mixture of sadness and anger—for Mary's heartache, for the death and decay that still marks his creation. He's deeply moved, and he weeps with Mary. Part of God the Son becoming a human is his willingness to be emotionally vulnerable. And please understand that while he's ascended, he is still fully human today. He still sees your pain as the God-man. Not some emotionally impenetrable deity who sees your suffering and just reminds you he as a plan. And if you don't remember we have a Jesus who weeps, you live like it's not true.

Now Jesus's interaction with Martha and Mary does two things for us. It shows us his love for sufferers but also gives us a counseling model. I want to suggest that between how Jesus responds to Mary and Martha is how we should comfort others in theirs. What are Jesus's two approaches to offering comfort in suffering: weeping and pointing them to Christ. Notice both say the same thing but Jesus takes a different approach with each person. Why? Because he's wise. The text doesn't say anything about Martha weeping. Jesus discerns she's in an emotional place to point her toward Gospel truths. Mary is weeping, she's not in a good head space to hear that, Jesus decides not to repeat himself, but simply to weep with her. And that's profound. Think about it. Wouldn't you tell her that you were going to raise Lazarus from the dead? He doesn't. Sometimes the best approach for someone who is emotionally wrung out is to enter into their obvious suffering rather than give them the most obvious solution. **Holton**—We have a God who hurts with us. He cares for the hurting...All this on the way to a demonstration of his power over death.

His Power Over Death

Vs 38. Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." KJV "He stinketh" 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. Presumably he's said a prayer silently 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." With one command, Jesus reverses death. He speaks and it happens. Augustine speculated that if had Jesus not specified "Lazarus" when he said "come out", all the dead of the earth would have come to life. But it's not time for that yet.

What we see here in the raising of Lazarus is an inbreaking of the future into the present. It's a preview of the resurrection life Christ is bringing for his people and that God designed for us to enjoy with him from the beginning before death intruded into God's creation. Jurgen Moltmann—We tend to think of Jesus miracles as a suspension or interruption to the natural order. But God made this world without disease, and death, and so when Jesus heals and gives life, he's not interrupting the natural order, he's reestablishing it. The sickness and death are the interruptions. And he's come to bring that not just for Lazarus but for us.

Problem is as amazing as this display of power is, we're going to need more than this. Why? Well, in all of our proper celebration for Lazarus coming back to life, we often forget a unpleasant truth: Lazarus has to die again—funeral, singers, everything. For whatever we can and should say about Jesus raising him from the dead, the fact is he's just as dead as any of God's people. Which means this—you and I need a better resurrection. In fact, most scholars are careful not to call this a resurrection, but a resuscitation, precisely because resurrection is reserved for being raised immortal of which Christ—not Lazarus—is the first fruits.

And in order to being that resurrection—in order for us to live forever—he'll have to die. And unsurprisingly this miracle speeds that up significantly. It may be an overstatement to say that this is the miracle that got Jesus killed but not by much. This was the last straw. 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. 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." This guy is a problem. He's a threat to the Jewish nation which was allowed unique freedom under Roman rule. And so the high priest a guy named Caiaphas stands up and offers what has to be one of the most ironic statements in the NT.

"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." Now he's speaking as a politician here—he's saying it's better for this guy to die instead of our nation—all of us—perishing. 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. In describing a political plot to save the nation, he describes Christ's substitutionary death that would save the world. Caiaphas plan to get rid of Jesus is precisely the means by which Jesus will achieve the resurrection. 53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death." Problem is that both their plan to kill Jesus and save the nation ultimately failed. You see in 70AD Rome conquers Jerusalem. And 3 days after his crucifixion, Jesus conquers death. Securing our resurrection—physical resurrection.

Isn't it important that we just go to heaven? Because if our bodies aren't raised, everything that death has taken hasn't been restored; we're left with an earth than has a bunch of dead bodies in it. The hope and vision of eternity we have as Christians isn't I'll fly away where I'm up there without a body. It's a new creation where we're reigning with Christ in a glorified body. It is a lie to say that Jesus just came to save your soul. Jesus didn't come as a man to save the spirit world. He entered the human community to save the human community. He became that which he intended to redeem.

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" You see how do we participate in this resurrection? We have to believe. Not believe he has power—the Pharisees did that. Entrust yourself to him.