

Lazarus, Come Forth!”

John 11:1-54; 12:9-11, 17, 18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Only the Gospel of John records this great miracle.
 - 1. John’s account is filled with pain, pathos, perplexity, purpose, power, plotting, and persecution.
 - 2. The duo nature of Jesus is dramatically recorded here . . . Son of God & Man.
 - a. As man He weeps.
 - b. As the Son God He raises Lazarus from the dead.
- B. The hope of our own resurrections are in the One who raised Lazarus.
 - 1. We take our Loved ones to be interred in the cemetery in hope of the resurrection.
 - 2. Without a resurrection death would be the victor and hopeless would reign in our hearts as long as we live knowing that would be all the life we would ever have.

LAZARUS IS DEAD. JOHN 11:1-16

Read: **John 11:1-16**

- A. **John 11:-1-2** - “Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany. The town of Mary and her sister Martha It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, shoes brother was sick.”
 - 1. We are told of the underlying problem . . . sickness
 - a. We can all identify will having experienced sickness.
 - 1. The commonness of it is emphasized by the fact that five times in the first six verses of our text, the word "sick" or "sickness" is found.
 - 2. But though a common experience, it resulted in a very uncommon experience here in our text.
 - 3. Observation: Common illnesses can sometimes lead to uncommon blessings.
 - 4. The illness in John 1:1 proved fatal to the patient
 - 2. Our text tells us the name of the person (**Lazarus**), the town of the person (**Bethany**), the sisters of the person (**Mary & Martha**), and the affection for the person (**whom you love**) in the case before us.
 - a. The **person** was Lazarus.
 - 1. Two men named Lazarus in the New Testament. Both were righteous men and both were sick.
 - a. The Lazarus of Luke 16. Poor, crippled, hungry, full of sores, a beggar living in poor conditions.
 - b. The Lazarus of John 11 lived in far more comfortable conditions.

2. Both Lazaruses would receive God’s attention, care, and blessings.
 - b. The **town** was Bethany.
 1. Small town located some two miles east/southeast of Jerusalem on the hillside of Mount Olivet (Mount of Olives)
 2. Bethany touched the life of Christ and Christ touched Bethany.
 - a. Visited & Lodged in the home of Lazarus, Mary & Martha. Luke 10:38-42
 - b. Will raise Lazarus from the dead there. John 11:43-44
 - c. Would be anointed there by Mary. John 12:3-8
 - d. Would lodge there rather than in Jerusalem while teaching in the area.

Matthew 21:17
Ascended from there. **Luke 24:50-51** – “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blesses them, He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven.”
 3. In Jerusalem Jesus received hostility . . . In Bethany He received wonderful hospitality.
 - c. The sister of the patient, Mary and Martha.
 1. No parents are mentioned in connection with the Biblical record.
 2. Would have been dependent upon their brother.
 3. Twice (3, 5) Jesus’ love for this family is expressed.
 - a. 11:3 – “phileo”
 - b. 11:5 – “agape”
 - c. The verb "loved" in 11:5 is in the imperfect tense denoting that this love was continuous
 - d. His disciples like Lazarus. 11:11 – “Our friend.”
- B. **John 11:3** – “Therefore the sisters sent to Him[Jesus], saying, ‘Lord, behold the one whom you love is sick.’”
1. The sisters pleading to Christ on behalf of their brother Lazarus is a most heart-touching plea, and it gives us some good lessons on prayer.
 - a. Prayer does seem to be an alternative to many people in time of trouble.
 1. **James 5:13** – “Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.”
 2. Most of us grumble, complain, and tell a host of others about our troubles
before we pray and tell God about our troubles.
 3. There are other things you may need to do in time of trouble, but the one thing you must do above all other things is pray.
 - b. “The sisters sent to Jesus.” Put forth effort to bring the matter to His attention.

1. Failure to be earnest in prayer betrays a lack of sincerity in prayer. And a prayer that lacks sincerity is a prayer doomed to futility from the very start.
2. If we do not mean business when we pray, we will not get much attention from God about our need.
- c. The sisters knew their humble place before Jesus . . . The message called Him “Lord.”
 1. Jesus was Lord to them during their good times . . . He would be their Lord during times of trial as well.
 2. Example: when Abraham pleaded with God about sparing Sodom, Abraham said he was but “dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27). Always keep a humble posture before God when praying.
 3. Prayer places the matter into God’s hands. Here they simply told Christ that Lazarus was sick and then let Christ decide what to do. The message told Jesus of the problem and left it to His discretion.
2. Brethren and friend:
 - a. Don’t keep from God what you do not want kept in your heart.
 - b. Prayer that cannot be trusted is prayer that should not be prayed.
 - c. When you turn something over to God in prayer, it God’s turn to address it.
- C. **John 11:4** – “When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”
 1. Jesus knew the whole story and its intended purpose . . . The illness was not for removing Lazarus from Bethany but for glorifying God and bringing great faith to Judea.
 2. This passage contains both a negative and a positive.
 - a. “The sickness is not unto death.” This is not a contradiction to what happened. It is true that Lazarus died, but that was not the end result.
 1. We sometimes say an injury will not be crippling although at the time it is crippling. What we mean is that it will not permanently cripple.
 2. That is what Christ meant here. Death was not the final outcome of this sickness though it was part of the affliction.
 - b. The positive was that God would be glorified through these events. Christ gives a good lesson here on the proper perspective of one's trials.
 1. While our trials at the moment seem to be destroying us, they ultimately are for our good and will build us up, not destroy us.

Romans 8:28 – “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

2. The devil never wants us to have such a good perspective of our troubles. He wants us to think only negatively and to conclude that the misery of the moment will endure for eternity . . . Then he tries to get us to blame God for mistreating us.
3. The glory of God certainly cannot be beat as a purpose for our trials. Of course, not many folk are interested in the glory of God; and they forget that Scripture teaches that the great purpose for which mankind is created is the glory of God. But whatever we do, we need to make the glory of God foremost in our lives.

D. **John 11:6** – “So, even after He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.”

1. The delay was, in fact, a result of love. Christ in love wanted to give them greater help for their faith than just healing the sick. His delay made that possible. There are times when only prolonged suffering can give us the best blessings.
2. Delay is hard on the flesh, but it is good for our faith.
 - a. It is harder waiting **for** the Lord than **on** the Lord, but it shows our faith better. Do not give up on God just because He does not move according to your desired time schedule.
 - b. Even this delay for their good, they ultimately received their bother back . . . And in the meantime thing about what a blessing Christ must have been to the people in and around the place He had stayed for the additional two days.. Jesus had little time to work on this earth, and He was not going to waste any of it.

E. **John 11:7-8** – “Then after this He said to the disciples, “let us go to Judea again.”

1. “To Judea again.” Bethany was in Judea. The disciples said to Him, ‘Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again.’”
 - a. The word Judea had become an ominous word to the disciples, for in Judea, particularly Jerusalem, Christ had experienced much hostility
 - b. Observation: Fear of peril will keep us out of mission fields.
 - c. The disciples experienced a test here which all of God's people will experience sooner or later. It is the test of obeying even though the command seems unwise to human thinking. But to do our duty, we must obey even if the command does not make sense to us. We must trust the wisdom of God to be greater than our wisdom. When the command is plain, as it was here, do what it says even though it may not make sense to you at the time. Later you will see God's superior wisdom in it all as the disciples surely did when Lazarus was raised from the dead.

- d. The disciples' opposition to Christ's command reminds us that opposition to doing the will of God often comes from our best friends. Christ knew His duty and stated it. But immediately opposition to doing that duty came from His disciples—the men who were the most loyal and devoted to Him of anyone and who were most concerned about His welfare.
2. “Let us go to Judea again.” Jesus would be traveling with them . . . He will travel with us as well.
- F. **John 11:9-10** – “Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in Him.”
1. It will help us to better understand these words if we look back to **John 9:4** where Jesus said, "I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; the night is coming, when no man can work."
 2. Christ is speaking of the stewardship of duty here.
 - a. If you in delinquency put off doing your duty, the time will come when you will not be able to do your duty.
 - b. Work while it is daylight, for you cannot work in the dark (in those days they did not have electricity as we do, and so they had to cease work at night).
 - c. It was time to go to Judea, and the disciples and Christ must go now while the time was right . . . Delinquency would increase their problems.
- G. **John 11:11-14** - “ These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."
 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."
 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.
 Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’ ”
1. Christ compared the death of Lazarus to sleeping . . . He was not teaching soul sleep, for the soul was active after death, but He referred to the body which in a figure was said to be asleep in death.
 - a. It is a beautiful and comforting picture of death which encourages the saints.
 - b. Sleep is again used at other times in the Bible to describe death
 1. **Acts 7:60** – Concerning Stephen, “He fell asleep.”
 2. **1 Corinthians 15:20,51**- “But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”
 3. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–15 – The role/place/involvement of “those who have fallen asleep” will have in Christ’s second coming.

- c. And it is also used today to describe death . . . In fact, the root word for "sleepeth" in our text is the word from which we get our English word cemetery.
- d. So the comparison of death to sleep is not unusual. For the believer the comparison is especially comforting. We note four ways it comforts:
 1. Sleep is harmless. So death is harmless for the believer.
 2. Sleep is rest and relief for man. So death brings rest and relief for the believer in the matter of pain, labor, and evil.
 3. Sleep is temporary. So death is not the end for the believer, but it is an interlude in which the spirit and body are separated.
 4. Sleep is but to rise again. So death is followed by the glorious resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:52
- 2. "I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." John 11:11
 - a. Christ is the great conqueror of death. Death will not conquer Him, but He will conquer it.
 - b. Later He told Martha this truth in different terms when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).
 1. Christ gives life. Sin and the devil give death.
 2. Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).
 4. Evil promises life, but it is all a fraud to deceive mankind.
- 3. Lazarus is dead" (John 11:14).
 - a. The disciples misunderstood Christ's use of the metaphor for death.
 1. They thought He was speaking of physical sleep and concluded that if Lazarus was now sleeping, the sickness was leaving, and he would be doing much better (and, hence, there was no need of their going into dangerous Judea again).
 2. This misunderstanding required Christ to clarify what He was saying about Lazarus' death. So without a metaphor, He told them "plainly" that Lazarus was dead.
 - b. The striking thing about this clarification statement of Christ is that it displayed Divine omniscience.
 1. No human could have told Christ that Lazarus was dead. The distance forbid it. But Christ knew about it because He was God.
 2. However, the disciples missed this truth. They never challenged His statement because they did not realize what it meant regarding Christ's Deity.
 2. The disciples, like us oftentimes, were not paying very close attention to what Christ was saying.
- H. **John 11:15** – "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

1. Christ speaks about improving the disciples' faith here. The death of Lazarus (which would not have happened had Christ been present when Lazarus was alive, for no one died in the presence of Christ) provided an opportunity for the disciples to see a great resurrection miracle and thus grow in faith ("believe").
 2. Soon the disciples were going to be asked to believe that Christ rose from the dead. This miracle would help prepare them for that occasion. This affliction of Lazarus was said to be for the glory of God the Father and God the Son. It was also going to benefit the faith of some of the followers of Christ.
- I. **John 11:16** – ‘Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”’
- A. "Die with him." This statement not only showed despondency, but it also showed some excellent devotion. T
1. his statement indicated that Thomas was so devoted to Christ that he would die with Christ if necessary.
 2. He would follow Christ anywhere even if it meant his death.
 3. That is great devotion to Christ! And we see very little of that today.
- B. That is not a statement of convenience . . . It is a statement of conviction.
1. Without conviction we will not obey.
 2. Without conviction we will not serve.
 3. Without conviction we will not teach.
 4. Without conviction we will not go.

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.” JOHN 11:17-27

Read: **John 11:17-27**

- A. **John 11:17** – “So when Jesus came, He found that he [Lazarus] had already been in the tomb four days.”
1. In those days the body of a dead person was buried shortly after death. Examples: Anaias & Sapphira (Acts 5:6, 10); Jesus.
 - a. Already dead . . . already buried . . . Tomb already sealed . . . Four days into the natural process of decomposition.
 - b. **In hopeless situations God can do His honest work.** How often Divine hopes and promises seem buried away in the tomb and dead at least four days—long enough to cause us to give up and think they are gone beyond recall. But Christ can change all of that
 2. With Lazarus being in the grave for four days.
 - a. Both a return of his spirit and a new body would be necessary!
 - b. A soul that was gone and a body in no condition to house it . . . The reality of what awaited Jesus in Bethany.

- B. About two miles from Jerusalem (John 11:18) we entering this gathering of sadness. **John 11:19** – “And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.”
1. Mary and Martha were not alone . . . Even less alone now than before, Jesus was there. “To comfort them concerning their brother.”
 2. When death comes to family members, the presence of family, brethren, and friends around us means so much.
 - a. James Atkins & Robert Lee . . . 1969
 - b. Abu Yad’s mother-in-law in Eilaboun.
 3. The greatest comfort which came to Martha and Mary during this time did not come from the Jews, but it came from Christ. After His arrival in the area, Christ began to comfort Martha and Mary to build up their faith.
- C. **John 11:20** – “Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming went and met him, but Mary was sitting in the house.”
1. Jesus is coming to us while we are coming to Him.
 2. Close the distance between you and Christ.
- D. **John 11:21** – “The Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.’”
1. Is that a statement of faith (Your power could have prevented it) or a statement of blame (You were not here so he died)? Under duress it is easy to say things we do not mean, and will later regret.
 2. It is easy to conclude that when things turn out badly God is at fault . . . If God is not at fault then we find someone else to blame.
 3. It is easy to complain about our perception God’s conduct in regards to our problems.
 4. What accusations are you making against Him . . . What have you injected into your relationship with Him that blames him for less than acceptable things in your life?
- E. **John 11:22** – “But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give you.”
- 1, Martha is a mixture of faith and doubt and of praise and protest.
 - a. She calls Jesus "Lord" but does not submit well to Him.
 - b. And here she praised Christ, but it was limited praise inasmuch as it demoted Christ from His equal with God the Father.
 1. This demotion is found in the Greek verb translated "ask" in "ask of God." This verb denotes an inferior asking a superior.
 2. Christ never used that verb in regards to His speaking with His Divine Father . . . The verb He used was one of equality.
 2. Martha was right, however, about God giving Christ what He asked for, and Christ always gave God honor and glory for giving it.

- F. **John 11:23-24** – “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”
1. What a great promise . . . Jesus was announcing the miracle in advance.
 2. Martha missed the point thinking it would be a future resurrection.
 3. Martha had faith for the past and faith for the future, but she did not have much faith for the present. It is easy to look back . . . It is easy to look ahead . . . But do not forget to look at the present.
- G. **John 11:25-26** – “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”
1. Jesus tells us Who Jesus is.
 - a. He is the great “I am” of Scripture.
 - b. This all goes back to Exodus 3 where Jehovah identified Himself to Moses by the great name of "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14) or the abbreviated form “I AM.”
 - b. Since Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament, and what is concealed in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament, we are not surprised to find the "I am" amplified in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John which emphasizes the Deity of Christ.
 - c. In John, the “I am” is used to amplify the person of Christ some 20 times, such as,
 1. **John 6:35, 48** - “I am the bread of life.”
 2. **John 8:12; 9:5** - “I am the light of the world.”
 3. **John 10:7, 9** - “I am the door.”
 4. **John 10:11, 14** - “I am the good shepherd.”
 5. **John 11:25** - “I am the resurrection and the life.”
 6. **John 14:6** - “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”
 7. **John 15:1-5** - “I am the vine.”
 2. Jesus was pointing to Him. “I am the resurrection and the life. In the previous verse (John 11:24), Martha was looking at an event—“the resurrection at the last day.” Christ changed her focus from an event to a person. The resurrection was in Him.
 3. Resurrection and life are great possessions we have in Christ now as well as great possessions yet to come.
 - a. Now . . . Died to our sins . . . raised from the watery-grave of our baptism . . . and enjoy a new life (new creation) in Christ). The resurrection is the beginning; life is what follows. Spiritually, the resurrection frees the sinner from the deadness of sin
 - b. Future . . . We will be raised to live forever in the very presences of God in Heaven.

4. Twice in verse 26 the word “believes” appears. This shows the prominence of faith in the prerequisite to obtaining the resurrection and life in Christ.
 - a. Unbelief gains you nothing worthwhile. It leaves you empty handed.
 - b. Satan argues on behalf of unbelief, but unbelief will strip you of resurrection and life.
 5. “Though he were dead” ([John 11:25](#)). These words are better translated, “though he dies”; for they refer to an event not a condition.
 - a. It means that though a follower of Jesus Christ dies, he still has not lost the blessing of the resurrection and life; for the power of Christ will overcome death.
 - b. There is life to be lived there after life has been lived here.
 6. “Shall never die” ([John 11:26](#)). This refers to spiritual death—that second death which is separation from God in “the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” ([Revelation 21:8](#)).
 - a. The extent of the protection is found in the word translated “never.” It is the Greek double negative ou me.
 - b. A double negative in the English language cancels out the negative (and all English teachers will tell you it is most improper to use a double negative).
 - c. But the double negative in the Greek is most proper and emphasizes the permanency of the negative. In its usage here, it teaches the security of the believer.
- H. [John 11:27](#) – “She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is to come unto the world.’”
1. Christ forced Martha to deal with the truth.
 2. Truth has both **information** and **application**.
 3. Preachers and teachers need to dispense both information and application. People need to know how to deal with the truth that is taught.
 4. Three exceptional things about what Martha professed.
 1. It was exceptional because of its unpopularity. Not that many believed what she professed about Christ.
 2. It was exceptional because of the uncomfortable circumstances. Not many people will make a Christ-honoring statement when in such dire circumstances. “This is neither the time nor the place.”
 3. It was exceptional because of the undaunted courage involved. It took boldness to take such a stand for Christ at that time in Judea.
 - a. It could risk losing friends.
 - b. It could risk losing synagogue membership.
 - c. It could risk losing one’s income.
 - d. It could risk losing one’s very own life.

I. Attention is now turned to the other grieving sister. **John 11:28-32** – “And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, ‘The Teacher has come and is calling for you.’

As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.

Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, ‘She is going to the tomb to weep there.’

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’”

1. Mary needed the comfort that Martha had already received.
 2. Mary was called “secretly” (privately). Remember there was a great crowd of people mourning with them. As in the case of Jairus, the mourners can cause quite a commotion at times and be a more of a nuisance than a blessing.
 3. Mary got up and left all the guests that were at her house (they eventually followed her).
 - a. This arising quickly and ignoring the guests to go see Christ demonstrated that Christ, not her guests, came first. This reflects excellent devotion, too.
 - b. To translate into our day, if some unconverted friends or relatives came to visit her on a weekend, it would not, in contrast to many of us, keep her from church. Christ was first and foremost in her life. He should be likewise in our lives, too.
 4. “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”
 - a. Obviously, the two sisters had spoken among themselves of this fact of Christ's presence regarding Lazarus' death.
 - b. Both Mary and Martha evidence by their complaint that they made too much of the physical presence of Christ and too little of the Word of Christ.
- J. **John 11:33** – “Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in His and was troubled.”
1. The word translated “groaned” means to be moved deeply in spirit, to be very upset. The word can even involve strong indignation.
 - a. Here the indignation would be against sin which had caused death and the sorrow that followed.
 - b. When sin entered the world, it brought great troubles. Christ came to earth where sin worked death, and He was greatly upset and hurt by it all.

- c. And not long after this incident, even greater would be Christ's suffering on Calvary for the sins of mankind.
2. Christ cares about the grief of the world. "For we do not have a high priest which cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." **Hebrews 4:15**
3. "And was troubled." The word translated "troubled" means Christ "troubled Himself." He willingly suffered on behalf of others in order to help them. This was the case in all His suffering.
 - a. He willingly experienced it. He chose to suffer that He might benefit others. And Calvary epitomizes this great willingness to suffer for the benefit of others.
 - b. There are times when in order to do the will of God we also must suffer. But for most people, suffering is too high a cost to pay in order to serve and obey God.
 - c. And so they refuse the place of service and lose the rewards of obedience because they are unwilling to suffer.
- K. **John 11:34** – "'Where have you laid him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see.'"
 1. In this seeking by Christ about the tomb of Lazarus, we note two important lessons. One concerns the desire of Christ; the other concerns the duty of man.
 - a. "Where have you laid them?" Asking where the grave was shows that Christ wants to know about our troubles. He wants to know where it hurts. It is true that Christ, being God, is omniscient and did not need to ask the question in order to know where Lazarus' tomb was; but He asked anyway that the people might know of His interest and compassion for them. Interest and compassion are involved in asking about the troubles of others. Oh yes, some ask because of curiosity or just to have more information for gossiping. But Christ was asking with a sincere interest and concern to help.
 2. "Lord, come and see." Duty required them to show Christ where the grave, the focus of their troubles, was. We are to tell God our troubles if we want Him to help us.
 - a. Hezekiah laid the letter out before God which Hezekiah had received from his enemy and showed God his troubles.
 - b. The disciples of John the Baptist buried John after he was murdered, then they "went and told Jesus" (Matthew 14:12) their troubles.
 - c. We can see repeatedly that many of Christ's miracles occurred after someone came to Christ and told Him about their troubles.
 - d. There is a great message along this line found in James Scriven's famous hymn, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. It says, "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we often bear, All because we do

not carry, Everything to God in prayer!" If we want real help . . . Tell Him!

L. **John 11:35** - "Jesus Wept."

1. The verb translated "wept" is found only here in the entire Bible. The root of this word means "tears."
2. "They were not tears of the professional mourner, nor those of the sentimentalist, but those of pure and holy sympathizing High priest! They proceeded from the most genuine love for man found in the entire universe" (Hendriksen).
3. The word translated "weeping" means to lament loudly, to wail. Christ did not wail like mankind, but He wept quietly with the tears flowing. The greatest and most genuine grief is not necessarily found in the loudest lamenting.
4. This verse is the shortest verse in the Bible, and unfortunately, most people know this verse only by that fact and not by the substance of the verse.
 - a. But the verse is most instructive, especially in the fact that the sobbing of Christ shows the pain of sin.
 - b. Today we laugh and joke about things which eventually causes even God Himself to weep. Lazarus was dead because sin had entered the world and brought death. Sin does not bring life; it always results in death. Jesus knew what sin brought . . . Death.

M. The sincerity of Christ was noticeable in **John 11:36** – "Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

1. The sobbing of Christ spoke of the sincerity of His love for Lazarus.
2. Often in the midst of our trials we are quick to accuse God of not loving us. It is one of mankind's favorite accusations.
 - a. Let great troubles come not only to our lives but to society in general and God gets blamed.
 - c. "How can a God of love let this happen" is a lamenting accusation heard repeatedly after some great disaster occurs.
 - d. But the love problem is never on God's part. It is always on man's part—it is man's lack of love for God.
3. This text reminds us that affliction does not mean God hates us.
 - a. Trial and loss do not come because of diminished love.
 - b. Even chastisement does not say God loves us less, but chastisement comes because He loves us (Revelation 3:19). God can prove His love to you in cloudy days as well as sunny days.

N. **John 11:37** – "And some of them said, 'Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?'"

1. Christ's conduct is scorned.
 - a. In verse 36 His conduct was praised . . . But in verse 37 it was scorned.
 - b. For every verse 36 in life, you will have a verse 37.

2. All those who serve Christ will experience this. Some will praise you; others will scorn you.
 3. We note three specifics about the scorning of Christ here. The scorning libeled, limited, and labeled Christ.
 - a. "Could not this man . . . also have kept this man from dying?" **This** suggests that it was Christ's fault that Lazarus died.
 1. This is the third time (John 11:21,32,37) Christ has been blamed for Lazarus' death.
 - a. As we noted earlier, folk like to blame God for their troubles.
 - b. Christians blame other Christians.
 2. The scorning limited Christ to helping Lazarus only while Lazarus was alive. They limited our Lord's time span.
 - a. Martha and Mary likewise limited Christ. These scorers think that if Christ does not do it when they think He should, then He cannot do it.
 - b. The scorers think they know more than God. But their arrogance will soon be exposed when Lazarus is raised.
 3. The scorning labeled Christ. The scorers called Jesus Christ "this man." That was not a very respectful title, but scorers are not given to honorable names for those they scorn. Here they would put Christ into the same category as Lazarus, for they called both "this man."
 - a. Scorers lack facts and so resort to name calling.
 - b. This is generally the practice of those who lack substance in an argument. Unable to defeat their opponents fairly and squarely, they resort to character attacks by name calling.
- O. **John 11:38** – "Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it."
1. The word "therefore" is going to have some reference to the scorning which means it inspired some of the groaning (the deeply upset and agitated emotion).
 - a. But in spite of the scorning and disrespect, Christ still worked a marvelous miracle.
 - b. Though He was deeply upset, Christ still did His work. Not too many of us are in that category. If we get upset like Christ did here, we generally sit and sulk instead of serve. We have never learned to give our best regardless of circumstances.
 2. The grave was a cave . . . Probably dug out or hewn out.
 - a. A stone would cover the opening to keep humans and beasts from entering in and causing mischief.
 - b. This kind of tomb was for people of some importance.

- c. It would tell us that Lazarus and Mary and Martha were not poor people but people of means. But affliction does not skip people of means or of those who open their home to Christ as these folk did.

THE ACTUAL MIRACLE OF RAISING LAZARUS John 11:39-44

The actual miracle of raising Lazarus from the grave involved three important commands. These commands concerned the removing of the boulder, the raising of the body, and the relieving of the bonds. Commands played a major part in many of Christ's miracles. Commands are for our blessings not burdens. The miracles of Christ illustrate this truth in a most emphatic way.

Read [John 11:39-44](#)

A. THE REMOVING OF THE BOULDER

1. The first command given by Christ regarding this miracle was the command to remove the stone from before the tomb so the dead could come out of the tomb.
 - a. Yes, It will take a miracle to raise Lazarus from the dead; but men, not a miracle, can move the stone from the grave. God does not work His part until we work our part.
 - b. He does not work miracles in a way that will make us lazy
2. We must remove the rocks before Christ can work.
 - a. Congregations and individuals are often very reluctant to remove any rocks that stand in the way of the work of God.
 - b. No sooner had Jesus opened in mouth in preparation for the miracle, Martha protested. “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” ([11:39](#)) Faith needs to win out over reason.
 - c. Anytime God is going to do a great work there will be opposition stirred up to hinder the work.
 - d. Jesus rebuked her. “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ([11:40](#))
 1. When she was silenced, then the stone was removed as He had ordered.
 2. Spiritual forgetfulness is not a biological problem but a spiritual problem. Often times, we need to be reminded again of spiritual truths.
 3. Jesus prayed to His Father in [John 11:41-42](#) – “And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank you that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.’”

B. THE RAISING OF THE BODY

1. The second command involved in this miracle had to do with the actual bringing about of the miracle. “And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!” (John 11:43). This was the most dramatic and dynamic of all the commands.
 - a. This miracle was worked simply by the spoken word. Words of God have the power of God.
 - c. Can you picture the people gathering even closer around and looking toward the entrance of the tomb?
2. John 11:44 – “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”
 - a. He who was dead answered the resurrection call of Christ . . . And so will we.
 - b. He had to be unbound in order to properly breathe and move about.
 - c. Observation: Freedom of movement was involved in this work of Christ. This refutes the accusation of evil which says Christ binds and Christians are so restricted they cannot have any joy in life.
 - d. Notice the extent of the command . . . "Loose him" (John 11:44).
 1. The command did not say to take off the grave clothes but only to loose him. Why?
 2. The answer is obvious. Lazarus needed to go home and get some clothes to put on. Taking off the grave clothes would leave him naked.
 3. While our age does not seem to have any qualms about nakedness in public, Christ does! And Christ's miracles did not do away with modesty.

THE CONSEQUENCES FROM THE MIRACLE

The consequences of the miracles of Christ were always very pronounced. This miracle was no different. Many people were affected in very pronounced ways. We will see this fact as we note the consequences from the miracle especially in regards to Christ and to Lazarus. The consequences for Christ from the miracle involved a division of the people in their attitudes about Him. This was a common experience for Christ in both the miracles and messages of Christ. Here, as it was said on another occasion, “There was a division among the people because of him.” John 7:43

The Consequences for Christ

- A. John 11:45 – “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.”
 1. This was a real miracle.
 2. It produced faith in the hearts of a number of people.

B. **John 11:46-47** – “But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.”

1. Some wanted to stay on the good side of the bad side.”
2. Hearts hardened against Christ will pervert the best deeds of Christ into a cause for hatred of Him.
3. The report had the evil effect the reporters expected, and it drove the Jewish religious leaders to plot the murder of Christ.
4. Plotting to kill Christ after He worked such a wonderful miracle of raising one from the dead lacks sane rationale and justification. But the hostility of unbelief in Jesus Christ does not need sane rationale and justification to do evil. It does evil because it is evil. Good rationale is not part of evil.

C. **John 11:54** – “Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.”

1. It was not time for Christ to die, and so He removed Himself from this danger that the will of God not be hindered.
2. The place where Christ went was a small village estimated by some to be about 15 miles north of Jerusalem in a wilderness area.
3. This removal was Jerusalem's loss, for it meant that the Jerusalem area would be without the miracles and teaching of the wonderful Savior.
4. If we reject Divine blessings, as these religious leaders did, we will lose them.

The Consequences for Lazarus

A. The greatest consequence for Lazarus in this miracle was, of course, the restoration of his life.

B. There was interest in Lazarus.

1. **John 12:9** – “Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.”
 - a. The miracle, not surprisingly, made a celebrity of Lazarus. Crowds filled with curiosity would want to see this man that had been dead but was now alive.
 - b. The interest of the crowds was mere curiosity, and it would be unwanted attention for Lazarus. Anyone who has experienced popularity with the crowds, be it a superstar athlete or politician, knows that all this public attention gets old pretty quick. Those who live in obscurity day after day should not envy the famous.
2. **John 12:10-11** – “But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Observation: Jesus.” When one is truly saved, he will go away from the

apostate preachers, teachers, and churches. Those who claim to be saved yet stay put in apostate churches make their profession of faith suspect. One will leave a lot of things when Christ comes into the heart. And the things he leaves will be evil. He will not leave good things but will be attracted to good things.

- a. The unbelief came from religious leaders.
- b. Those who may be highly favored on earth may not be highly favored of Heaven.
- c. Those who are highly favored of heaven will not be the highly favored of earth. Those that heaven blesses are those that earth will buffet
- d. But the devil delights to promote his program from the high places of the world, especially from the high places of religion as he did here. Advertisers know the clout that their advertisements have when they get some celebrity to say a good word for their product. The devil knows this too, and has been doing it for millenniums. So it is the "chief priests" who are the leaders here in wanting to kill Lazarus.
- e. They could not see that Christ was not the greatest threat to society . . . They were.

CONCLUSION:

A. It is still true today . . . “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” **John 11:28**

1. Jesus is still calling for you. **Matthew 11:28-30** – “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
2. Have you answered that call?
 - a. Many have
 - b. Many have not
 - c. Many will at some point
 - d. Many plan to but will die before without obeying
 - e. Many have no intentions of obeying
 - d. Into which category do you fit?

B. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**