

## Resurrection & Eternal Life (John 11:1-46)

- Over the last 8 years of pastoring, maybe 2 out of 10 of the funerals I have officiated have been for people who passed at a ripe old age. Everyone else was a tragedy.
- When I share at funerals, I talk about the unnatural reality of death...
- As Steve told me years ago when I officiate my first funeral, "Death is certain. Death is cruel... but death is conquered."
- Tragedies tend to be exhumed around the holidays, but they don't have to haunt you
- We are not a people who are without hope. We worship a God who is totally, completely, and lovingly in control of how this story ends, and he is bringing light out of darkness

### JOHN 11:1-46

*[1] Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair (John 12:1-8), whose brother Lazarus was ill. [3] So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." [4] But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead [end in] to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

- A little background on the family of three...
  - Mary - sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him; later would wipe his feet w/ her hair;
  - Martha - While Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet, Martha was busy with house
  - Lazarus was their brother.
- Jesus loves this family from Bethany.
  - Being w/ them wasn't work or obligation, it was friendship and love
  - This is why their words are so important. Jesus hears, "Lord, he whom you love is ill" → term love for friendship so, "Your good friend, whom you love, is ill."
  - No request to come → more of an assumption
- **God can be glorified through all situations (v4).**
- **God knows how the story ends (v4).**

*[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.*

- Love here = agape, unconditional
- "So" is causal. Could be "therefore" → in other words "Because Jesus had unconditional love for them, when he heard Lazarus was ill, he stayed while Lazarus died."
- Does that make any sense? If he loved them, wouldn't he have left immediately?
- **When God delays with his children, it is because of unconditional love (vv5-6).**
- Why? V4 said b/c he wants to give us something better, something more glorious

*[7] Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." [8] The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" [9]*

*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. [10] But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." [11] After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." [12] The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." [13] Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. [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." [16] So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."*

- To explain himself, Jesus speaks in riddles to explain what he's doing.
  - "When you walk with me, these things will make sense. With my light's illumination, this path makes sense. Without my light, it won't."
  - It's all about viewing life through the light rather than in the darkness
- **As the Light of the World, Jesus illuminates the path on which we should walk.**
- **When we walk with Jesus, we can be confident in our steps. When we walk without him, we will stumble (vv9-10).**
- So Jesus decides to go back ... His disciples respond just like us don't they?
  - We *think* we understand the problem, the need, the solution. Certainly WE know what to do, right? We are staring at a diamond, only see one facet, and want to give God advice. We say, "Why, God, why?!"
- **God does the work that he does the way that he does it for his glory (v4) and the growth of our belief (v15).**
- They need to view this work through the Light of the World's illumination, rather than wrestling with the trial in the dark.

*[17] Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. [18] Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, [19] and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.*

- From a human perspective, this is a terrible situation.
  - 2 miles from people who want to kill you (many of them possibly around)
  - One friend dead, other friends think you let them down
- But Jesus sees the big picture, he is the Light of the World. He will work while it's day.

*[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." [24] Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes [trusts] in me, though he die, yet shall he live. [26] and everyone who lives and believes [trusts] in me shall never die. Do you believe [trust in] this?" [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."*

- Martha comes out and her response to him is filled with faith. She doesn't know why Jesus took longer than desired, but she doesn't attack him, she's the logical doer

- Jesus comforts her and his answer is the center of our story. A great I AM statement
- Jesus brings comfort out of chaos, glory out of death, beauty out of brokenness, light to the darkness. How and why?
- **In sad times, remember that our hope is future because Jesus is the resurrection and the life (vv21-22).**
  - We want the immediate, but Jesus shines his light on a different path. If we walk w/ him and trust him, we will see the hope he offers.

*[28] When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." [29] And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. [30] Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. [31] When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. [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. [36] So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" [37] But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"*

- How painful it must be for God when he sees us in our wounds, but knows that the best thing for us is to delay!
- He is moved... By his friend's pain... His pain... The pain of the Garden... The pain of lifetimes of hurt that he's experienced as the rejected Creator... The reality of sin and the consequence of death before his very eyes w/ a friend. Jesus weeps
- **Jesus delay in your life is not cruelty or disinterest. He weeps with you out of love.**

*[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." [40] Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed [trusted] 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. [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."*

- Try to picture the scene... "Oh Lord, leave him alone - he will stink. Why make it worse?"
- They listen to Jesus... The stone is moved... Jesus prays... The Father hears... The people gasp... They wait... The dead walk... What is going through their minds?
- They unbound him from the linens, but more importantly Jesus unbound him from the chains of death. Doesn't this envision the life of all who follow Christ?
- Lazarus steps out of the darkness of the tomb into the glorious light of life!

- **If you believe, you will see the glory of God too, because only Jesus can rescue you from the bonds of sin and death (vv40-44).**

*[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.*

## Summary and Conclusion

- Everyone is trying to figure out this thing called life.
- **If you walk by the light of your own torch, you will stumble.**
  - Your life will be purposeless; your trials will be meaningless; you will have no comfort in hard times; death will be final and tragic;
- **If you walk with the Light of the World, you will see the glory of God.**
  - One of the darkest Christmas of my life was when my roommate died on December 10, 2001.
  - Through Scott's death, rather than running, I trusted... and I saw the glory of God
- **If you walk with the Light of the World, you will see the expanse of his kingdom.**
  - Many came to faith, including Scott's mom and many others on our campus
- **If you walk with the Light of the World, you will grow in belief.**
  - I grew in belief, our fellowship grew in belief, we saw God move
  - Scotty was not revived to life then, but he will be resurrected in eternity

What should you do?

- **Repent and believe in Jesus.**
  - Jesus reveals to us our need for a savior.
  - We either respond to that need for resurrection with trust in the one who claims to be the Resurrection and the Life OR we reject him and prefer to stay dead
  - When we turn from death and trust in him (repent and believe), he transfers us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light;
- **Walk by His light.**
  - Lantern only illuminates so much. It won't light up everything at once, just enough to not trip over the next step, but you know the end - where you are going
  - God doesn't show you the whole thing at once. He wants you to trust him, not yourself, and walk in his light.
  - If he told you it all, you'd run ahead and trip. Instead, he wants you to stay right with the Good Shepherd as he walks. One step at a time, trusting him
  - This is what Jesus asks us to do in our trials and difficulties.
  - We stay close to Jesus when we surrender to his leadership.
  - We stay close to Jesus when we wait on him.
  - We stay close to Jesus when we seek him in the Word and in prayer.
  - Trust Jesus, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge his leadership and he will direct your path (not all at once), but one day it will make sense. You will see the glory of God despite your darkest hour.