

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus Raises Lazarus

John 11

Opening

Gathering: What different ways do people respond to death?

Today's Focus: Jesus allowed His friends to go through suffering in order to bring others to saving faith.

Key Verses: *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.* John 11:25-26

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Jesus wept. John 11:33, 35

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jesus Meets the Family (*Luke 10:38-42*)

What family did we meet in our lesson a few weeks ago?

Luke 10:38-39

What lesson did Jesus teach in that story?

Luke 10:40-42

Was the story telling us to worship God instead of serving?

Luke 4:8

Where did this family live?

John 11:1, 18

How close did Jesus become with this family?

Matthew 21:17

The Feast of Dedication - Hanukkah (*John 10:22-42*)

What specific date do we know that today's story comes after?

John 10:22-23

How had Jesus gotten into trouble with the church leaders at that time?

John 10:24-25, 30-33

How did Jesus avoid being killed before His time?

John 10:37-42

Where was this *place where John had been baptizing in the early days*?

John 1:28

A Sick Friend (*John 11:1-5*)

What crisis arose in the home of Jesus' friends in Bethany?

John 11:1-2

Knowing that Jesus healed the sick, did the sisters send word asking Jesus to heal Lazarus?

John 11:3

Was Jesus upset by this news?

John 11:4

Did this indicate that Jesus wasn't concerned about Lazarus?

John 11:5

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Back to Jerusalem? (*John 11:6-10*)

Having this love and concern for Lazarus, did Jesus leave immediately for Bethany?

John 11:6

Did the disciples find it strange that Jesus didn't go to Lazarus at once?

John 11:7-8

Was it foolish for Jesus to risk His life going to His sick friend?

John 15:13

How did Jesus explain that He knew His time for suffering and death had not yet come?

John 11:9-10

Note: Days were divided into twelve equal hours of daylight

The length of an hour varied according to the day and the season

The Plan Revealed (*John 11:11-16*)

How did Jesus explain His plan when the disciples couldn't understand His deeper statement?

John 11:11

Did the disciples at least understand this simple and clear statement?

John 11:12-13

Was Jesus using cryptic language by saying Lazarus was asleep?

Daniel 12:2

See also Matthew 9:24; Acts 7:59-60; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

How did Jesus even further clarify what He was trying to say to make sure they understood?

John 11:14

How did Jesus feel about His disciples still not understanding things this late in His ministry?

John 11:15

Had the disciples understood any of Jesus' explanation that they would be okay in Judea?

John 11:16

Note: *Thomas* is Hebrew and *Didymus* is Greek for *twin*

A Time for Mourning (*John 11:17-19*)

Had Jesus spent the extra time to wait for Lazarus to die?

John 11:17

Had Mary and Martha spent the time mourning by themselves?

John 11:18-19

While a body was in the house, no one ate meat, drank wine, wore phylacteries or studied

No food was prepared in the house or eaten in presence of the dead

After the body was removed, furniture was reversed and mourners sat on ground or low stools

Burial followed death as soon as possible because of warm climate

Wrapped in simple linen clothes - *traveling-dress*

Tradition had been to use finest spices and ointments, magnificent robes, valuables

Rabbi Gamaliel changed tradition with orders to be buried in the simplest linen robe

Separate linen wrapping for bodies, hands, feet and head

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A Time for Mourning *(continued)*

As many as possible joined the funeral procession, led by the mourning women
Memorial speeches were made at the tomb, principal mourners walked back between lines
As mourners left the tomb, they turned and said, "Depart in peace"
No idle or uninvited talk, mourners were left alone with their sorrow
After returning from the tomb, friends of the family served a meal of bread, eggs and lentils
Round hard-boiled eggs and lentils symbolized life always rolling to death
7 days of deep mourning (first 3 were days of weeping) were followed by 30 days of lighter mourning
Forbidden to anoint oneself, put on shoes, do any study or business, or even wash
Friends and relatives would visit the family during mourning to express sympathy
All joined in hysterical wailing - The more unrestrained, the more honor to the dead

Martha, Martha *(John 11:20-27)*

How did Martha and Mary play their parts when they heard that Jesus was on the way?
John 11:20
What did Martha say to Jesus that showed both her disappointment and faith in Jesus?
John 11:21-22
Did Jesus have to go to Bethany to heal Lazarus?
John 4:46-47, 49-51
How did Jesus tell Martha He would make things better and did she understand Him?
John 11:23-24
What did Martha and most Jews believe the promised Messiah would bring?
Isaiah 26:19
How did Jesus point out to Martha that this Messiah has now brought this gift?
John 11:25-26
Did Martha understand what He was saying?
John 11:27
What did Jesus mean when He said, "*He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies*"?
1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 51-52
What did Jesus mean when He said, "*Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die*"?
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Jesus Wept *(John 11:28-37)*

How did Martha get Mary to go to Jesus without letting the crowd know He was there?
John 11:28
Did this work to let Mary privately meet with Jesus?
John 11:29-31
Did the worshipful Mary have a better understanding of things than her analytical sister?
John 11:32
Did it bother Jesus that His friends and others were so upset?
John 11:33-34
How moved was He as they went to the tomb?
John 11:35
How was this misunderstood by some of the crowd?
John 11:36-37

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Past the Third Day (*John 11:38-39*)

Did Jesus get over His emotion by the time He reached the tomb?

John 11:38

Palestinian tombs - Wealthy family tombs were natural caves or hewn out of the rock

Body first laid in entrance chamber, then moved to back chamber (6'L x 9'W x 10'H)

Shelves cut into rock to hold bodies, bones moved to bone box (ossuary) to make space

No door, Large round stone rolled in groove in front of opening to seal the grave

How did Martha react when Jesus asked for the grave to be opened?

John 11:39

Mourners monitored grave for three days; believed spirit hung around body looking to get back in

Spirit left completely by fourth day since body would be too decomposed to recognize

Without medical confirmation, some dead could still be alive; after 3 days they were really dead

See the Glory of God! (*John 11:40-44*)

How did Jesus remind Martha what He had said to her messenger four days earlier?

John 11:40

Did Jesus then ask God for the power to raise His friend?

John 11:41-42

What ceremony did Jesus perform to bring Lazarus back to life?

John 11:43-44

How was Lazarus' resurrection similar to the one we will realize (if we die before He returns)?

John 5:28-29

The Response (*John 11:45-12:19*)

How did the people who witnessed this resurrection respond to what they saw?

John 11:45

How did the Jewish leaders react when they heard of this amazing miracle?

John 11:46-48, 53 (45-57)

John 12:9-11 (17-19)

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How do I support friends when they go through difficult times?
(*John 11:18-19, 31, 33; Romans 12:13-15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Philippians 2:1-5; Col. 3:12-14*)
2. When have I been upset with God for not responding to a situation in a time and way that I wanted?
(*John 11:21, 32; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Job 23:1-5; 24:1; Psalm 27:13-14; 40:1-2; 2 Peter 3:8-9*)
3. How certain am I that God will raise the faithful, including me?
(*John 11:22-26; 5:28-29; 14:1-6; Job 19:25-27; Daniel 12:2; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; Philippians 3:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Peter 3:3-5*)
4. Who do I say that Jesus is?
(*John 11:25-27; 1:41, 49; 7:40-43; 9:17, 28-32; 20:28; Matthew 16:13-20; 26:63-65; 27:11, 54*)
5. When and how have I experienced Jesus' love and compassion?
(*John 11:33-35; 19:26-27; Exodus 34:6-7; Deut. 5:9-10; Matthew 9:36; 14:13-14; 15:32; 20:29-34; Romans 9:14-16; James 5:10-11*)