

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*) = Different Lazarus than the one in last week's parable

- What family did we meet in our lesson a few weeks ago? = Don't know when Jesus first met them
Luke 10:38-39 = Jesus stayed with Martha and Mary while wandering through Judea
- What lesson did Jesus teach in that story?
Luke 10:40-42 = Jesus warned of life's details and worries that keep us from hearing God
- Was the story telling us to worship God instead of serving?
Luke 4:8 = No, we are to do both - Worship and serve the Lord your God
- Where did this family live?
John 11:1, 18 = In Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem (2 miles ESE) across Mt of Olives
- How close did Jesus become with this family?
Matthew 21:17 = He apparently stayed with them when He was in Jerusalem

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 = Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication) in December before Jesus' death in Spring
- How had Jesus gotten into trouble with the church leaders at that time?
John 10:24-25, 30-33 = He revealed that He was God, Jews wanted to stone Him
- How did Jesus avoid being killed before His time? = Many people came to Him
John 10:37-42 = He went across the Jordan where John had been baptizing
- Where was this *place where John had been baptizing in the early days*? = 20 mi from Judea Bethany
John 1:28 = Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, Greek - Bethabara

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

- What crisis arose in the home of Jesus' friends in Bethany?
John 11:1-2 = His friend Lazarus became sick
- Knowing that Jesus healed the sick, did the sisters send word asking Jesus to heal Lazarus?
John 11:3 = No, they told Jesus he was sick, knowing He'd take care of His friend
- Was Jesus upset by this news?
John 11:4 = Apparently not, He knew about it, how it would turn out and its purpose
- Did this indicate that Jesus wasn't concerned about Lazarus?
John 11:5 = No, He loved Lazarus and his sisters

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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 = No, He purposely stayed where he was for two more days

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

John 11:7-8 = No, they found it strange when He did decide to go, despite the danger

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

John 15:13 = *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*

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

John 11:9-10 = There was still time for Jesus, the light of God, to shine on the world

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 = He told them He was going to wake up Lazarus

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

John 11:12-13 = No, they thought He meant Lazarus was resting off his illness

Was Jesus using cryptic language by saying Lazarus was asleep?

Daniel 12:2 = No, death was commonly referred to as sleeping

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 = He plainly told them that Lazarus was dead

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

John 11:15 = He was glad that what He would do would help mature them spiritually

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

John 11:16 = No, they worried about being killed, overlooked what Jesus was doing

Note: *Thomas* is Hebrew and *Didymus* is Greek for *twin* = Convicted, but weak, faith

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

Had Jesus spent the extra time to wait for Lazarus to die? = Trip was a long day's journey

John 11:17 = No, he died the day Jesus was told (1-told, 2&3-waited, 4-went)

Had Mary and Martha spent the time mourning by themselves? = Mary & Martha were very hospitable

John 11:18-19 = No, they had many friends who came and mourned with them

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 = Martha went into action and went out to meet Jesus, Mary sat still
What did Martha say to Jesus that showed both her disappointment and faith in Jesus?
John 11:21-22 = Upset Jesus let Lazarus die, but knew He'd somehow make things better
Did Jesus have to go to Bethany to heal Lazarus?
John 4:46-47, 49-51 = No, He had healed the official's son in Capernaum from Cana

How did Jesus tell Martha He would make things better and did she understand Him?
John 11:23-24 = She thought He said Lazarus would receive eternal life
What did Martha and most Jews believe the promised Messiah would bring?
Isaiah 26:19 = The resurrection of the dead
How did Jesus point out to Martha that this Messiah has now brought this gift?
John 11:25-26 = He said, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" - I am the Messiah
Did Martha understand what He was saying?
John 11:27 = Yes, she revealed her faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah

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 = *Those who belong to Him and die will be raised imperishable*
What did Jesus mean when He said, "*Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die*"?
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 = The living will be taken to heaven alive when He returns

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 = She went back, took Mary aside and told her Jesus wanted her
Did this work to let Mary privately meet with Jesus?
John 11:29-31 = No, they thought she was going back to the tomb so they followed
Did the worshipful Mary have a better understanding of things than her analytical sister?
John 11:32 = No, she showed the same frustration - the same words as Martha

Did it bother Jesus that His friends and others were so upset?
John 11:33-34 = Yes, He was deeply moved and asked to go directly to Lazarus
How moved was He as they went to the tomb? = Shortest verse in the Bible
John 11:35 = He was moved to tears - shows humanity of Jesus
How was this misunderstood by some of the crowd?
John 11:36-37 = They thought He didn't have power to even save a loved friend

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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 = No, He was still deeply moved - nothing wrong with human emotions

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 = She thought He wanted to see His friend's body; now well decomposed

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 = Have faith! This is happening so you will see the glory of God!

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

John 11:41-42 = No, but He prayed to the Father to make sure they knew His source

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

John 11:43-44 = None, He just called to Lazarus and he came out alive

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

John 5:28-29 = We will rise when we hear the voice of Jesus

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

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

John 11:45 = Many put their faith in Him

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

John 11:46-48, 53 (45-57) = They decided to find a way to kill Him to stop Him

John 12:9-11 (17-19) = Also made plans to kill Lazarus to eliminate the proof

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*)