



THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

Jesus Ruins Funerals – Part 3

Message #1737

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Leading up to Easter, we've been looking at the resurrection miracles in the gospels. There is a progression in these miracles that seems quite intentional. In the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, she was raised from the dead shortly after she had died but was still in the home. The son of the widow of Nain experienced his miracle while his body was being carried to the cemetery for burial. Then in this week's message, Lazarus is raised from the dead after having been placed in the tomb and decay had already set in. Yet in each circumstance, Jesus demonstrates that no matter how advanced, death is no match for Him. Even more importantly, each miracle speaks powerfully as to what Christ will accomplish in His death and resurrection. Don't miss the next installment in Jesus Ruins Funerals.

43 times in the Old Testament the people of God are told to "Wait on the Lord."

We seem to always interpret God's delays as God's denials.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways. Isaiah 55.8

“Waiting on the Lord is a confident, disciplined, expectant, active, sometimes painful, clinging to God.” - John Ortberg

1. WHEN YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD IS DOING

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” John 11.1-7

...when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days... John 11.6

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. John 11.5-6

“...perhaps what we need more than either is to recover the biblical tradition of lament. Lament is what happens when people ask, ‘Why?’ and don’t get an answer.” – N.T. Wright

2. WHEN GOD FAILS TO DO WHAT YOU EXPECT HIM TO DO

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” John 11.17-21

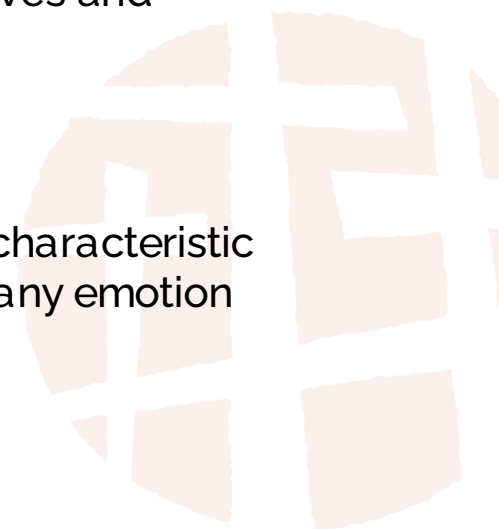
When God doesn’t do what we expect Him to do, we typically want one of two things from Him: an answer or an apology.

“...behind every such loss, there is a deep fear – a fear that we’ve been abandoned by the God who should have been there for us.” - Craig Barnes

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me... shall never die. John 11.25

Jesus wept. John 11.35

In the mind of the ancient Greeks, the primary characteristic of God was *apatheia*: the total inability to feel any emotion whatsoever.



3. WHEN A MIRACLE IS MORE THAN A MIRACLE

❑ The Jesus Parallels

Jesus...came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. 'But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 11.38-44

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. John 11.4

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. 1 Peter 3.18

❑ The Exodus Pattern

• The Exodus Imperative

Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

John 11.43



...on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. Exodus 16.1

...a people has come out of Egypt... Numbers 22.5

A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Numbers 22.11

The book of Job calls death “the king of terrors” (18.14 KJV)

- The Exodus Freedom

Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” John 11.44

This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: “Let my people go.” Exodus 5.1

“Death cannot kill a believer, it can only usher him into a freer form of life.” – Charles Spurgeon

Christ Jesus... who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
2 Timothy 1.10

Whoever lives and believes in me will never die.
John 11.26a

Do you believe this? John 11.26b

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

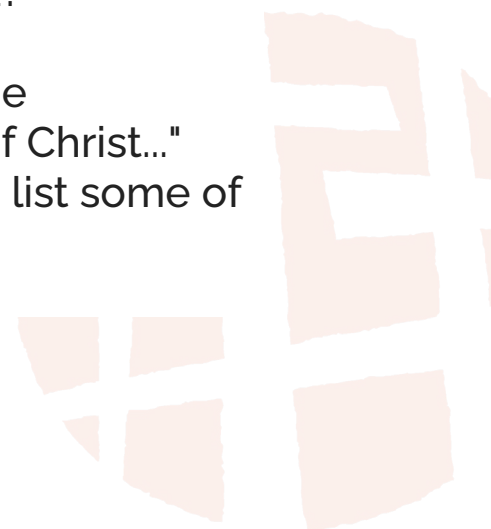
1. This message illustrated both the struggle with what Jesus failed to do in responding immediately to the crisis



and how compassionate He was in meeting both sisters where they were with exactly what they needed. Have you ever felt like God let you down? Did you expect that He would do something for you, and it failed to materialize? Describe what that was like. Since that time, have you had any new learnings, or understandings in retrospect? Have you ever had God meet you in a crisis with a word of assurance?

2. It doesn't matter if they just died (like with Jairus' daughter), or their body is being carried to the cemetery (like the widow of Nain's son) or they're already in the grave and the decay of death has already set in (like with Lazarus). There's a progression in these resurrection miracles we've been looking at. And it truly doesn't matter how long a person has been dead or the state of their body in death because Jesus IS the Resurrection. Even in the Old Testament, there is a vision of resurrection that involves the valley of dry bones that are made to come back to life (Ezekiel 37) – talk about an advanced state of death! God will one day breathe life into whatever remains of our body, and it will live again. How does our ultimate resurrection give you hope? Comfort? Why is it significant that our bodies will live again? Every miracle sends a message and is a down payment on a promise God makes. What message does this miracle send?

3. There are tremendous parallels between the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of Christ... "that will happen one week after this". Can you list some of the similarities? Can you think of any others?



4. There are also parallels between the Resurrection of Lazarus and the Exodus from Egypt. Can you list some of the similarities? Can you think of any others?

5. Jesus has taken the sting out of death. That's what Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15...

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

How has the experience of death changed for the believer? What does it mean for Christ to have taken the sting out of death? Share honestly with the group your own experiences, fears, or comforts around death. As a bonus, it might be helpful to read all of 1 Corinthians 15 (the Resurrection chapter Paul wrote) and discuss what other truths are meaningful, challenging, and helpful concerning death.

