

John 11

by Damian Kyle

Jesus's love and glory are demonstrated through his delay in responding to Lazarus's sickness and his willingness to surrender to God's plan.

Duration: 58:03

Topics: "John"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead by Jesus. He emphasizes the tension between the promises of God and the physical circumstances we face in life. The preacher highlights how Jesus' statement about Lazarus being dead for four days seemed contradictory to the situation, but ultimately God's promise prevailed. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of believing in God's promises before seeing the manifestation of those promises.

Transcript

Good evening to you. Please be seated. John chapter 11, John's gospel chapter 11.

John's gospel is built around seven miracles and the seven great I am statements of Jesus. John declares at the end of his gospel that if every miracle that Jesus did were recorded, that the world itself could not contain the record. And so John directed by the Holy Spirit has built this gospel around seven great miracles that Jesus did with the intent not of John supremely but of the Holy Spirit that anyone learning what these seven great miracles reveal about Jesus would come to trust in him as their savior and to recognize him to be the Messiah that has been promised by God to this world and indeed the son of God.

In chapter 11 we come to the final, the seventh miracle of Jesus in raising Lazarus from the dead. Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany. Now sickness is miserable most of the time.

I've never known it not to be so. I think it's always a pretty miserable experience. To have the sickness that he has, which is a sickness under death, that's a very difficult trial for one to find themselves in in life.

Lazarus we're told is of a city called Bethany which is located over the Mount of Olives just a couple of miles out of Jerusalem. The closest we've ever gotten to Bethany in trips that we've taken to Israel is from a lookout point. You can't go into Bethany, the bus wouldn't come out with any windows.

So it's under Arab control and they're not interested in Jewish bus drivers and Jewish guides bringing them in, us in, in order to make money off of that. But I always like to look at Bethany because of, when we

get a chance, because of the events that took place there and the family that was there. And Lazarus, we know from elsewhere in the scriptures, principally in verse one here, he was the brother of two sisters, one named Martha and one named Mary.

And so a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany. Bethany is then described as the town of Mary and her sister Martha. That's an interesting description for a town.

Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. When we think of a city today, city that we've maybe visited or something, city that's famous for its industry or its landmarks, its arch downtown. But when somebody talks about a city, you know, so often we'll say, yeah, isn't that the city that, you know, has this? And we'll think of some outstanding aspect of entertainment or culture or industry or this kind of thing.

When the Lord thinks of a city, none of that enters his mind. What is important to him concerning any city, supremely important, are his children that live in that city. That's the way it is with a father.

You come up to a father who has a child in Paris, you start to talk to him about Napoleon's tomb and the Louvre and you start to talk to him about, you know, the Eiffel Tower and the Ark of Triumph and all that kind of stuff. He will bite his tongue until you're through. And the first chance he gets as you draw in a breath to interrupt you, he will tell you about the most important thing to him in that city, and that is his child lives there.

That's how a parent sees a city. When a parent has a child in that city, that's the value of the city to a father. So when Jesus looked upon Bethany, he looked upon it as the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Now, I like this about John. I think he had a memory problem.

Don't write that in the margin of your Bible. This is nonsense from me. But, you know, keeping track of the Marys in the Bible is no easy thing.

There's five of them and they talk about this one. And was that the harlot that washed his feet and did or was that Mary of Bethany or the other Mary and Magdalene and all the whole thing? And keeping track of these Marys is no easy thing. And I have a suspicion that John had a little trouble himself.

He knew that I would. So he tells me it's this Mary. Now, remember when Mary washed Jesus's feet, anointed with oil, wiped his feet with her hair.

But Jesus said, as the disciples began to complain about the oil that could have been sold for a year's wages for a working man and the proceeds could have gone to the poor and all in Judas, out of his covetousness, he's the one that stirred this up in the hearts of the people, of the disciples. And they all began to complain and think. And Jesus turns to them and he said, let her alone.

Okay, okay, all right. He knows how to protect his people when they worship him. I have to be careful about making fun of people's worship of the Lord.

Then Jesus said everywhere that this woman is spoken of what she's done for me be spoken of too. And in fulfillment of the prophecy, John speaks of Mary and he mentions what she did. And the great characteristic of her life was that she was a worshiper of the Lord, a great sacrifice to herself, though she never thought of it in those terms.

And therefore the sisters, because of Lazarus's sickness, they sent to Jesus saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick. So they inform him of Lazarus's sickness. And it's interesting.

They are appealing to him to take action in light of his illness. But in appealing to him to take action, they appeal to his love. They don't come to him and demand Jesus, you better get over here and give us a miracle because we got faith in you, Buster.

And they just come in and they inform him of what it is that Lazarus is going through. They don't demand the healing or any of these kinds of things. And instead they simply inform Jesus of Lazarus's plight.

And then they rest in Jesus's love for Lazarus because they know that Jesus loves Lazarus. In essence, they're communicating to Jesus, Jesus, the one that you love is sick. Now do whatever your love would do in this situation.

It is in the same way that you and I can do in these situations in our life. And I pray this as it relates to people in the hospital or whatever it might be. There's a lot of people in the hospital right now.

And I don't try to work God up, God, you've got to, you know, and here's the promise and I'm holding you to it and all this kind of stuff. And I never appeal to him in that way. I say, father, you express the fullness of a father's heart in this life and in this situation, and we rest in that.

And you can rest in it because you're never going to get a greater expression in any situation of what is best than what comes from a heavenly father's heart in that situation. I am worn out by the so-called health and wealth doctrine of the last 10 to 15 years, and I didn't even teach it. It's pretty rough to be on the sidelines and be worn out by it.

But this constraint upon God, this pressure upon God, and then, you know, the pressure that then gets, you know, correspondingly is then placed upon the people with their faith and all of this. And it turns into this frenzy, like the person needed all of that on top of this. And I want you to notice there in verse three, it is unbelievable to some segments of people that God's love and sickness could be in the same verse.

It's in the same verse, my friends. And to be sick is not a reflection of his love or lack of love for me. He loves Lazarus.

Lazarus loves him and Lazarus is sick and Lazarus is going to die. That won't be the final word. It's not concerning any life of anyone that loves the Lord.

But there are some that would make it, you know, that it's not possible to be sick and loved by God. You know, they're mutually exclusive and yet there they are in the same verse. Now, the person not only has this tent breaking down on them, but now they begin to question their own faith.

Do they really love the Lord? They begin to question the love of the Lord for them. Now, it'd be better if we'd never said anything in a situation. I watch the guy that teaches the health and wealth doctrine.

The health and wealth doctrine is essentially that if you have enough faith, you can be wealthy. And if you have enough faith, you'll always be healthy. The problem is, is all you have to do is live long enough and read the newspaper.

You find out they go to the hospital just like you do. Maybe they go to better hospitals, but they get cancer. They get heart attacks.

They have surgeries. I remember watching one of these guys who I think is probably the most articulate of them for that position. He has a very natural way in dealing with people and talking with people.

And I just happened to be flipping through the television years ago and saw him returning back to his congregation for the first Sunday following being gone for a number of Sundays because of a couple surgeries. Well, how embarrassing. And he can't move his right shoulder, and he's got a foot ankle in a cast, and he's hobbling around that whole place, and he's trying to explain to these people that what they really did surgery on was not any kind of a problem, but it was a symptom of a problem.

And the whole thing, and they're paying in this crowd, and this crowd is, they love him, but they're not tracking with him. Not on this one. He's pushed them too far.

My favorite story concerning all of this. It's, it is so sad that we do this with God and that we do this with God's people concerning sickness. I heard Arthur Blissett, not in person, but on a tape.

Arthur Blissett's a guy that carried a cross all over the world. It was kind of a weird thing to do, but it opened up a lot of doors for him. And he said one night he was somewhere in Texas and he got up and he was a guest speaker and everything.

And he was preaching and teaching and doing all of that. And they had this whole revival meeting and healing lines and all this kind of stuff, apparently, and everything. And he said, as I was on my way to the airport and the pastor was driving him to the airport, he said, listen, pastor, I'm so sorry.

It's a busy night and everything. I, I didn't get to meet your wife. Did I, did I miss her? And the pastor turned his car off the side of the road.

And he began to weep that night that pastor was casting out demons out of anything that moved. He was pronouncing healing on anything that moved and all. And the whole time he told Arthur Blissett, my wife is deathly ill at home.

They're all charade. And it's a tough thing to live up to. It'll kill you.

But Arthur Blissett, sweet man that he was and is, he put his arm around that pastor and he said, I just want you to know that when your theology fails, Jesus never fails. And we're talking about false theology. That's the truth of it.

Jesus never fails. And so Jesus's response to the news that Lazarus was sick, he said, when Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death. In other words, death won't have the last word here.

God's going to have the last word for, he says, but it's for the glory of God that the son of God may be glorified through it. And so Jesus said, listen, sickness is not going to, this isn't going to lead to death. Death isn't going to have the last word here.

Now that's an interesting thing to say because by the time he gets to Bethany, Lazarus is going to have been dead in that grave for four days. For four days, what Jesus said in verse four and the reality of things in the physical realm, they're going to butt heads. They're going to be mutually exclusive.

And for four days, it's going to look like Jesus has said something that isn't true about the circumstance. Yet when you know the rest of the story, you realize that he was right. And the circumstances were wrong.

That's part of living as a Christian, these periods of days and weeks, and sometimes months where the promises of God that Jesus has given related to our lives and the actual physical circumstance that is occurring there, that appear to contradict one another, but given enough time, God's promise always prevails in the situation. I think it is very important when G when Jesus says this sickness is not under death. And then this, but for the glory of God, that the son of God may be glorified through it.

I think one of the reasons we lose rest in these situations is because we're trying to do God's job for him, which is always going to leave you just slightly tuckered. But there is another reason that we lose rest in these situations, and that is when we forget that my life is given to him at the time of my conversion to be used for his glory. And he can do whatever he wants with my life.

And most of the time when peace is lacking in our life, it is because I am fighting against that surrender. I want my life to translate into this material thing, this physical thing, this relational thing, all of this kind of stuff. I want it all to be that kind of thing.

The glory of God is nowhere on the agenda at all. And then I have no peace. But it is a wonderful day in the life of a Christian when a Christian comes to God and says, my life is yours.

I surrender it to you. It is for your glory, whatever you want to do with it that brings you glory, go ahead and do it. And then there is a rest that comes upon my life because I can trust him to do that.

The Lord, who doesn't even waste five loaves and two fish or the remnants of that, he's never going to waste a human life. He can be trusted to bring glory out of all of that. So maybe tonight some of us, there's that need just to surrender to him your glory Lord.

That's the most important thing that you would be glorified through it. Now, Jesus verse five loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So again, his love for them expressed, even though there's sickness, even though there's trials that are going on, even though there's death, that's involved.

None of those things are an indication of whether the Lord loves me or not. God demonstrated his love toward us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly, the great place I can always look in life as the single great demonstration of his love for me is a cross of Calvary to see that spit covered that blood covered body up on that cross.

Absolutely pure and holy and sinless. And therefore me, that's the demonstration of his love. That's another place of rest.

Now, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was. Now that was not the response that Martha and Mary were expecting of Jesus. They thought that word would come to him and he'd immediately round up the gang and head to Bethany right away.

Maybe Mary didn't, but Martha did as we'll see in just a hour or two. So he waits here for two days before he moves. Now, John tells us in verse five, before he ever talks about the delay that Jesus makes, he reinforces the fact that Jesus loves them.

And sometimes it is love of God to delay in a situation. It's interesting that there in verse three, the word that's used there, the Lord behold, he whom you love is sick. The word love is phileo.

It's love on the emotional plane. Is it Lord, the person, the Lazarus that you love with this fondness and this friendliness, he's, he's sick. And then here, when you get in verse five, the word that's used for love is the word agape.

It is the anyway, love the love of God. It is the love that does what's best for the other person. And in this situation, when the glory of God is the most important thing in my life, then the greatest way for God to demonstrate his love is to delay.

I don't like delay. How many of you like delay? I hate delay. Let's get this thing over with and move on to the next thing.

And so here he is, he delays. Remember with Joseph in the old Testament, he gave Joseph all of these great visions and all of this stuff. And then he took his time fulfilling it, but he got the glory out of it.

So there's timing involved in all of this. And so he just waits the two days in the place where he was. And then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again.

Now by this time, Lazarus is already dead. Probably by the time the messenger has brought the message and has left them right in there, Lazarus has died, but only Jesus, not even the messenger knows that Lazarus is dead. Only Jesus knows that Lazarus is dead.

So there's no need to race over there or anything. Let's have that body lie in that tomb for four days. Let's see what the religious leaders do with it for four days.

With all their miters and the grand pube robes and all of this kind of stuff and their great everything, let's let religion, let's let friends, let family, let's let man take his best shot at death. Let's give him four days to do it before I get there and mess the whole thing up with a resurrection. So he takes his time.

It's going to take just as much a miracle to raise them in two days or four days or four days and two days. And then he says to the disciples, let us, all of us go to Judea again. Judea, he is now up in the area of probably Jericho.

So to go back into Judea is to go back into the area of Jerusalem, where you remember just last week in chapter 10, the last time he was in Jerusalem, they came to him and said, now listen, level with us. Are you the Messiah or not? Be clear. And he revealed to them, yes, I am the Messiah.

And by the way, I'm going to throw in some bonus points. I am the son of God. I'm equal with God.

The father and I are one. They picked up stones to stone him. So he's talking about going back into the area of Judea, where they were just the last time they were there.

They were, there was the, they picked up the stones to stone them. And the problem is, is that when these religious leaders picked up stones to stone Jesus and the 12 disciples are with Jesus, there is the recognition in their life that if they stone Jesus, we are the next on the menu. They're not going to stop with them.

They're going to go on and they're going to stone us. So when he talks about Judea mentions Judea, all of a sudden, all kinds of things go off in their mind and they recognize that's a place where someone like us could get killed. So it's a dangerous place in their mind.

Jesus says, let's go there. But he doesn't say, listen, I want you to go to Judea. He promises to go with them, but his presence with them doesn't mean much at this particular point in time, they're growing.

It's like us. And the disciples said to Jesus, Rabbi, lately, the Jews sought to stone you. Remember that? And are you going there again? Now Jesus said, let us go.

And they say, are you going there again? We're going to have a vote. It doesn't seem like you ought to go there and don't count us in yet. And Jesus answered, are there not 12 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. Now the Jews divided the day into a 12 hour block from six in the morning to six at night. They called that the day.

It was always six in the morning till six at night. Didn't matter whether it was summer. Didn't matter whether it was spring.

Didn't matter whether it was winter was always those hours. In other words, the length of a day was set in the Jewish mind and no man could shorten the length of a day. And a day was synonymous with a time in which work could be done.

And so Jesus is declaring that his life would not be cut short. Any more than a day can be cut short until his ministry is over. And that that's his response to the disciples who look at a situation and they say, listen, this is dangerous.

So what does Jesus say to them as they look at a dangerous situation? He said, nobody's going to cut your life short. As you walk in the day, obey me, walk in my word, my purposes for your life. No man can cut a day short and no man can cut my life short.

And no man can cut your life short is what Jesus is saying here. These things he said to them after that. He said these things he said, and after that, he said to them, our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.

And so Jesus tells them that Lazarus is asleep. He's going to go and wake him up. The disciples said, Lord, if he sleeps, he's going to get well.

Well, you know, when somebody's terribly sick, sleep is a good sign. It's a sign that they're going to be getting better. However, Jesus, John tells us to clarify what's going on.

Jesus is using the term sleep concerning Lazarus. He's using the term sleep of him, meaning death. However, Jesus spoke of Lazarus's death, but they thought that he was speaking about taking rest and sleep.

And then Jesus said to them, plainly Lazarus is dead. So what does Jesus do? He realizes, all right, with these 12, I can't deal in nuances or poetic speech. I'm going to have to be blunt with them guys.

Lazarus is dead. You got it. What don't you understand about D E A D. And then Jesus said, I'm glad for your sakes that I was not there that you may believe nevertheless, let us go to him.

In other words, he recognized that their faith was imperfect. Here they are. They're balking at the fact of going with the very son of God into a region because they think that they could end up dying and following

the Lord in that.

And so Jesus realized, listen, you guys, you need your faith to be beefed up a little bit. I'm glad that he did die so that when you come and see me, raise him from the dead, it'll bolster your faith. And then Thomas, ah, yes, known as the devoted doubter who is called the twins said to his fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with him.

Ha ha life of the party. A little perky guy. Isn't he? You know, what is the comic? Is it Snoopy or whatever? They got that little cloud over, you know, that kind of thing.

That's the way that he is. He just doubted. I mean, just doubted everything.

And it's not commendable. It's commendable in that he's willing to go and die, but, but he can have kind of a negative influence on the other group when Jesus doesn't intend that they die. So, and he makes it even worse there.

When, when he declares that we may die with him, like Jesus is going to die at the hands of these, these other people. And so not much faith in Thomas is something that he struggled with. And so when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days, which means he had been dead for four days of the Jews in those days.

And to this day, for the most part in the middle East, they bury on the same day. So do the Arabs. There's no formaldehyde and there's no embalming.

There's no process like we go through. And so what, or what the Egyptians did or, and that kind of thing, when someone died, they'd be buried on that day. So the fact that he's been in the tomb for four days, he's been dead for four days.

Now, Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women, uh, around Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brothers. So Martha and Mary are grieving over the death of their brother.

Uh, four days now, friends and family have gathered around them and in all to comfort them in that grief. And then Martha, as soon as she heard that's Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now, Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

And the idea is Lord, where were you? You could have prevented this. That's not the last time the Lord has heard this, even from his people. So she says, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Where have you been? That's Martha. And then she says in verse 22, but even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you. All right.

You blew the first chance, but you got another chance here to do something good out of this situation. So she has faith in the situation, but, but she doesn't recognize that it's as easy for Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead as it was to heal him on his, on his sick bed. And so she's, she is Martha all the way in the situation.

I don't, you know, look down on her in any way. I have a bit of Martha inside of me, maybe more than a bit of that. And they're necessary in the body of Christ, but she comes in and she's wondering where Jesus has been.

And Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. That's what he comforts her with. And Martha said to him, I know that's Martha again.

I know that he will rise again. And the resurrection of the last day is going to like, tell me what I don't already know. I'm sorry.

It's right there in the Bible. Don't leave me alone. Now the Jews believe universally based upon the old Testament scriptures, that there would be a resurrection in the last day of the just and the unjust.

She knew that her brother was just that he would be raised in that resurrection and, and go on with God's plan for man's history. So she said, I know that he's going to rise again at the last day, but I had in mind a little closer resurrection for him. And Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

I love it. I love the verse. It's right up there with Moses at that burning bush.

And Moses says, listen, Lord, I'm going to go to the children of Israel and I'm going to tell them the things that you've told me to tell them. Who should I say sent me? And the Lord says, I am that I am tell them that I am sent you the self-existent one. The one who always has been is always will be tell him he sent you.

Yeah. I love it. You know, God isn't off in Colorado trying to find out who he is.

He knows who he is. And I like it when God stands up and bees who he is and he does all the way through the book. And Jesus comes along and she's talking about resurrection on a day in the future.

And Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life it is found in me. And the translation of that is I have authority over death and life. It's found in me.

It is not in some future event. I didn't come to teach you the way to resurrection and life. It is in me.

I am that I am the only victory over life and death that there is beautiful. I am statement of Jesus there as he speaks to her. And he said, he who believes in me, trusts in me for salvation, though he may die, he shall live.

Who's he speaking of their Lazarus? Who's believed, but died. Yet Shelley live. I'm convinced that when he lived was when Jesus following his burial, Luke chapter 16, Jesus went down into Abraham's bosom or into Hades.

And it's divided into two you know, areas. One is a very hot side. One is Abraham's bosom, a very comforted side.

And there was the story of Lazarus and the rich man and the rich man had all of these great things in life. And he ends up in the hot side. And then there is Lazarus and Abraham's bosom.

And we know from the gospels that when Jesus was resurrected from the dead, that the great patriarchs were seen on the street of Jerusalem. And Paul wrote of it in Ephesians, where he talked about Jesus leading the captives from their captivity. And so doubtless Lazarus or anyone that had believed in Jesus

and then died prior to that great event, though he may die, he shall live.

And then verse 26 and whoever that's a wonderful word lives and believes in me shall never die. How many of you in this room are alive tonight? Quick show of hands. All right.

Good to see it. The criteria. If I'm alive tonight and I've believed in him for my salvation, I'll never see death.

I'll never cease to exist. And one instant in time, we will lay down this tent. If the rapture of the church doesn't occur first, lay this tent down.

And in one nanosecond, we will be clothed with a new body made for heaven. This corruption will put on incorruption. This mortal would put on immortality.

If the Lord takes me home before the rapture, don't spend five minutes of your time feeling sorry for me. I will have gone from this trash heap called planet earth into heaven's glory where my heart and mind is fully set. Feel sorry for yourselves.

I'll see you up there if I beat you up there. But I will never die. I'll move from a stinking, rotten tent into a new body that God has prepared for me and all who love him.

Whoever believe lives and believes in him shall never die. And then he said, do you believe this? And she said, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God, who has come into the world. 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.

And as soon as she heard that she rose quickly and she came to Jesus. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met him. And then the Jews who were with her in the house and comforting her when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, they followed her saying she is going to the tomb to weep there.

And then when Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she did what was characteristic of her. Everywhere you find her in the Bible, she fell down at his feet. Everywhere you see Mary Bethany in the scriptures with Jesus, she's at his feet.

It's a beautiful thing to be known for, isn't it? And she said to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And we don't know the tone of that. It's identical to what Martha said, but I think they communicated two entirely different things.

I think that Mary came to Jesus and said, oh, Jesus, if you'd only been here, I know you would have made everything better. You say, well, Martha says the same thing, and you're giving her a black eye and this whole thing. Martha went on in verse 22, you know, and gave Jesus another shot.

She's just a little upset at his tardiness and all this. That's OK. You don't have to agree with me.

I don't always agree with me. So stick with the scriptures and you'll be fine. So she said, Lord, and so she, you know, she knows that if Jesus had been here, you would have made everything OK.

And therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, the reaction, she's she's weeping, they're weeping. The reaction inside of him internally was that he groaned in the

spirit and he was troubled. Then he said to them, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come see.

And then it's recorded that Jesus swept shortest verse in the English Bible. It's the verse that you remember when you're growing up in Sunday school and they would have you go around the room and everyone share a verse. They knew that was one of the first three, wasn't it, that somebody used? I know, I know, I know.

John chapter 11. Jesus wept, you know, then it went to John 3, 16 and so forth. The word for wept is an interesting one.

It's only recorded in the scriptures that Jesus swept twice. That's as much as is recorded. We don't know how many times he did.

He wept over the city of Jerusalem when he went in in triumphal entry and they were not ready for the day that God had made to acknowledge him as the Messiah. And the word that's used for his weeping there is to sob convulsively because he saw the destruction that was going to come upon the city. The word that's used here is a different one, and it means just for tears to just run down your face.

It is to weep silently. And what he is looking at here, this entire scene, produces a tremendous emotional response within him and a physical response. He begins to weep in here.

And then the Jews that were with Martha, they begin to try and interpret this tears of Jesus and they said, see how he loved Lazarus. So they think Jesus is weeping over Lazarus's condition the way that everybody else is weeping. But that's not what Jesus was weeping for there.

Jesus knows he's going to raise Lazarus inside of 10 minutes. What he's weeping over is the existence of death and the human condition at all. And I address it very often at funerals.

Why does death exist? Why is it a part of the human condition? And you and I, it's all we know. Everyone so far, except for a couple and Elijah that's been born into this world, they die. Death is batten about a thousand as it relates to mankind.

And so it's all we know. We're all in this pot. We're in the water that's the proverbial water that's being boiled in the frog that dies in the thing because it doesn't, it gets used to it and it never gets out.

So our context in terms of death and this world and what it is and all is just what it is. But Jesus looks at this scene where these people are weeping over death and he knows what they don't know. And that is from the garden itself, what God had intended this world to be like for man.

And he knows that God never intended that death would ever enter into the human condition. And he looks at the terrible, terrible price that mankind is paying for that sin from the garden of Eden. The terrible grief that people go through worldwide all over this world because of the fact that there is death.

And it breaks his heart because he knew what he and the father had intended and that this is so far away from what they had intended. And the tears, they just begin to fall down from his face. That's a powerful picture to me it is.

Then some of them, verse 37 said, could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind also have kept this man from dying? And so they begin their speculations on all of these things. And then Jesus again,

groaning inside of himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave.

The tomb is described as a cave with a stone rolled against it. And that's the way the Jews would bury. If you were rich, you would cut your own cave out or you would cut out your own tomb and then a stone would be rolled.

If you were a poor kind of person, you'd simply buy a cave and a hill and the body would be put in there. A stone would be fashioned to roll across it and it worked as good as anything. And so they brought him to that place, that cave, and the stone lay against it.

And then Jesus said, take away the stone, gives the command for the stone to be taken away. And Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, Lord, by this time he stinketh. It says in the old King James, which I like it stronger, there's a stench for he's been dead for four days.

Jesus, what are you doing? This is going to be terrible. He's been dead for four days and you're going to open this thing up. So she protests against it.

And Jesus said to her, did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God? He rebukes her lack of faith, Martha. I am the resurrection and the life. You believe and then you'll see.

And you notice in that verse, the believing is first and the seeing follows. We always want to see and then believe. But sometimes the greatest things occur when there is a believing first in the promise of God.

Not just believing and believing and believing because I believe it. That's nonsense. But believing what God has said, then we'll see the glory of God.

And then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and this spontaneous prayer. 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. He's praying out loud and he's communicating his relationship with the father, that he is the son of God. And he says, Lord, I pray this to you.

I could pray it quietly to you, but I pray it openly so that when you do what you're going to do, this miracle will translate into faith in this crowd, that they will believe that I am both the Messiah and the son of God. And when he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. I'd love a tape of that, but I think it's interesting that John tells us that he proclaimed it with a loud voice.

He didn't do one of these. Lazarus come forth. Let's see if it happens.

He didn't hedge. He got up there. I mean, he put all the chips.

Well, we better not go there. He, I mean, he just put everything right there. And he says, Lazarus come forth.

I mean, there's no mumbling. There's no anything. He just says the whole deal that is as well been noted concerning the passage.

He speaks to Lazarus as if he's alive because he is. He hasn't ceased to exist. Hasn't become a part of some gigantic universal spirit, this impersonal thing out there.

He is Lazarus on the other side of death. And when he cries out, Lazarus, come forth. It's a good thing that he said, Lazarus, come forth, because if he just said, come forth, he would have emptied Abraham's bosom.

Then who would he have had to preach to when he went there in a few weeks, Lazarus come forth. And he who died came out. Thankful.

But just like when he raised Tabitha from the dead, then what did he say to those of the household? Get her something to eat. She's hungry. He looks at Lazarus here and he says, doesn't get up, go up there and get him loosed from those grave clothes.

Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary and had seen the things that Jesus did, they believed on him. They said, all right, that's all we need to see. He's victory over death, authority over death.

We believe in him as the Messiah and the son of God. But some of them went away and they told the Pharisees and told them a way to the Pharisees and told them the things that Jesus did. And so they didn't believe in him at all, though they'd seen this great miracle.

And so often we think, you know, if a person could just see a miracle, then for sure they would believe. But you remember what Abraham said to the rich man there in Luke chapter 16, this great gulf that was between the hot side of Hades and Abraham's bosom. And the rich man said, listen, you know, send Lazarus back to tell my brothers about this terrible place, because if someone comes back from the dead, then surely they'll believe.

And Abraham said, they have Moses and the prophets. If they won't believe the word of God, then they won't believe a miracle. That's the truth about miracles.

They've got like a life of Chinese food. It just, it happens. And then you want another one.

And it just, it just produces an immaturity that my faith is going to be based upon that faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God, faith comes by hearing the word of God. That's the greatest source of faith is the word of God. And so they saw all of these things and they couldn't wait to go to the chief priests and the Pharisees and to tell them about the things that Jesus had done there.

And then the chief priests and the Pharisees verse 47, they gathered a council that is the Sanhedrin. And they said, what shall we do for this man works many signs. You notice that they're in private.

They are not denying the fact that he is doing astonishing miracles. And if we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. And the Romans will come and they'll take away our place and our nation.

We'll lose our position. And we're making a lot of money in our position. And one of them, Caiaphas being the high priest that year said to them, you know, nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish.

And so Caiaphas, the high priest, he looks at this whole thing and he said, given this man's potential to threaten the stability of the whole nation, it's best that he should die rather than the whole nation die. That's what he's saying there. And this, he said, verse 51.

Now this, he did not say on his own authority, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, but not just for the nation of Israel, but that he would also gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. He looks and he says, and Caiaphas said in a purely physical sense, it's best that Jesus dies given who he is and what he's doing than a whole nation die. And John, the apostle John recognized the accuracy of what he was saying spiritually.

It's better that one man would die. This man, Jesus upon the cross for our sins in order that the nation of the Jews would not have to perish, nor would the Gentiles. And then from that day on the Sanhedrin, they plotted to put Jesus to death.

Why? Because now they had the endorsement of the high priest and therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews. But he went from there into the country near the wilderness to a city called Ephraim and there remained with his disciples. It would be some weeks before the next Passover and his time to be crucified.

So he separated himself from that place. And the Passover of the Jews was near. And many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.

And then they sought Jesus and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple. And they conjectured, what do you think that he will come to, will not come to the feast. Now, both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command that if anyone knew where he was, he should report it, that they might seize him.

And so now the word has gone out among all of Jerusalem that this guy is on the Sanhedrin's death list. Anybody sees him, he's to be reported, arrested in order that they might do what they had planned to do to him. And so now this end of John chapter 11, it takes us now to the Passover or near the Passover, the Passover that Jesus would be crucified during and fulfillment of the Passover feast, becoming the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Beautiful chapter, beautiful, beautiful chapter. The peace of God that is found in resting in his love, of being able to sit here in this place tonight and say, Lord, I know that you love me. Lord, you know the situation that's going on in my life right now.

I don't demand anything of you. I don't counsel you to do anything. Lord, do what a father's love would do in this situation.

And I'm going to rest in you. For that, the beautiful rest that comes with surrendering my life to God, I wish it happened once and for all in the Christian life. But there are times of additional surrender in the Christian life where I forget I take my life back over the long haul.

Maybe tonight is the time to stop once again and say, Lord, I got all these plans. You're not cooperating with them, and I'm all uptight about it because I am more concerned about those things than your glory. Lord, my life is yours once again.

Whatever brings you glory, do that in my life. I will rest in you for that. And there's a rest that's found there.

Bible talks about the fear of death is a bondage in the book of Hebrews, and it is. I thought about death quite a bit before I became a Christian. I saw that a lot of people died on planet Earth.

And I knew I'd be on the menu one day. I ate more bran than you could shake a stick at. I drank the milk with the most lactobacillus.

In fact, I got jars of it and took tablespoons of it with the bran. I thought about death. There wasn't gloomy.

It wasn't like I dragged into my friend's apartments and all, and they had to pep me up or something. I was, well, in my own way, the life of the party. At least I was lively to myself.

I'd be quiet, but I was having a good time. But I think about death. They came to Jesus one day, and they said, Show us a sign that you're the Messiah.

Jesus had shown them a million signs. We just talked about one of them tonight. He said, And even an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.

And as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of that great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And what he was communicating is as a verification of the fact that he was the Messiah and the Son of God, that the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and three days and three nights only. In other words, he controls death.

He has the keys to death and hell, and keys represent authority. And Jesus was telling them and telling us today, Don't trust in any philosophy. Don't trust in any human leader.

Don't trust in any religion. Don't trust in anything that does not have an answer for why death exists to begin with, and has not with that information provided you with a victory over death. And you can look high and low in the entire of humanity in terms of the addressing of those two things, and the only one that has addressed those two things in a victorious way, in a verifiable way, is the Lord Jesus.

If you're here tonight, and you don't know the Lord, and you're frightened of death, you ought to be frightened of death. I'm going to tell you, Oh, don't know this. It's nothing.

It ought to terrify you. But if you live, and you are alive in this room, and you believe in him tonight for salvation, the forgiveness of your sins, you will never die. He will share his victory with you.

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