

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead John 11:1-57

by David Servant

Jesus' purpose in delaying Lazarus' healing was to perform a miracle that would convince everyone that He is the Son of God and to show that He is the one who will be in charge of the promised future resurrection.

Scripture: John 5:19, John 11:4, John 11:9, John 11:25, John 11:50

Topics: "Divine Power", "Eternal Life"

Description

David Servant preaches on the story of Lazarus, highlighting how Jesus was glorified not by Lazarus's sickness but by his resurrection, emphasizing that God's power is displayed in healing and restoration. Jesus intentionally delayed going to Bethany to perform a miracle that would reveal His divinity and power to those with open hearts. Through Lazarus's resurrection, Jesus demonstrated His authority over death and foreshadowed the eternal life given to believers. Jesus' statement about being the resurrection and the life signifies the hope and promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him, showcasing His divine power and authority.

Transcript

When Jesus heard that His friend, Lazarus, was sick, He stated that Lazarus's sickness would not end in death, but that He would receive glory from it. Jesus, of course, was talking about how He would be glorified when Lazarus was raised from the dead.

Some people, misapplying what Jesus said, talk about how God is glorified by their sickness, thinking that God wants them to remain sick so that He can be continually glorified. But Jesus wasn't claiming to be glorified by Lazarus's sickness! He was claiming that He would be glorified by Lazarus's resurrection. Jesus isn't glorified by our being sick, but by our being healed by His power!

Following the leading of the Holy Spirit, Jesus delayed journeying to Bethany where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. God wanted Jesus to perform a miracle that would convince everyone whose heart wasn't hopelessly hardened that Jesus was the Son of God. When Jesus finally did arrive in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Thus, no one would be able to intelligently claim that Lazarus had only been unconscious and had simply been revived!

Both Mary and Martha believed that Jesus could and would have healed Lazarus if He had been near when Lazarus was still alive. They didn't realize that Jesus had purposely stayed away so that He could heal and resurrect Lazarus, rather than just heal him! Even when Jesus promised Martha that her brother would rise again, she initially assumed He was referring to the general resurrection of many people foretold in the Old Testament. Then Jesus made another wonderful claim: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish" (John 11:25-26). Lazarus's resurrection would serve as a proof that Jesus was the one who would be in charge of the promised future resurrection, and it would serve as a foreshadowing of what Jesus would do for everyone who believes in Him.

Notice that even though Jesus supernaturally knew that Lazarus had died, He didn't know exactly where Lazarus's tomb was and asked about the location. This is further proof that, although Jesus was the Son of God, He stripped Himself of omniscience when He became a man. In His ministry, He operated as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit, empowered with gifts of the Holy Spirit that operated as the Spirit willed. Jesus said that He could do nothing by Himself, but only what He saw His Father doing (see John 5:19). What God didn't tell Him by the Holy Spirit, He had to learn like anyone else.

Amazingly, although the leading priests and Pharisees knew of Jesus' many miracles, they refused to believe in Him. Moreover, they were fearful that the whole nation might believe in Him, resulting in political turmoil, an invasion by the Roman army, and the deaths of many people. But Caiaphas, the high priest, rebuked them, saying that the solution was simple. They didn't need to fear that many people would die--if Jesus died instead. Caiaphas unknowingly prophesied when he said it this way: "Let this one man die for the people" (John 11:50). That is exactly what happened, and what God had planned from eternity past!

Q. Why do you think Jesus at first told His disciples that Lazarus was asleep and that He was going to wake him up?

A. In the Bible, Christian death is sometimes described using the word "sleep". The reason is because death is always temporary, like sleep, for those who believe in Jesus. They know their bodies will one day be resurrected, whereas unbelievers view death as a permanent state. Additionally, for God, raising Lazarus from the dead was no more difficult than awakening someone from sleep!

Q. Jesus' disciples were fearful of Jesus' plans to journey back to Judea where the Jewish leaders were waiting to kill Him. Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. As long as it is light, people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. Only at night is there danger of stumbling because there is no light" (John 11:9-10). Jesus' words have a natural and a spiritual meaning. What are they and how can you apply them to your life?

A. The natural meaning is plain. When there is light, people are safer, because evil deeds are usually done in darkness. That is when evil people normally get drunk, steal and murder, because they have a better chance of not getting caught. You can increase your chances of not being a victim of someone's crime by staying away from dark places and being extra cautious at night. For example, most people who are killed by drunk drivers are killed at night, so if you must drive after dark, you should be extra cautious. The later it is at night, the more cautious you should be. Jesus knew that He was safe in a dangerous city as long as His enemies knew where He was only during the day. It was Judas who ultimately told the Jewish leaders where Jesus was at night, and that is when He was arrested and tried before the Jewish

council.

The spiritual meaning behind Jesus' words is this: When people walk in the light of Jesus and the truth of His word, they are spiritually safe, because Satan and his evil spirits can only work in spiritual darkness. When people don't follow Jesus, the spiritual light of the world, they are walking in darkness, not knowing where they are going and destined to be deceived by Satan, stumble over sin and fall into hell.

Application: In one sense, all of us who believe in Jesus are like Lazarus. With the exception of those who will be alive when Jesus returns, all of us will one day die and Jesus will be glorified as He resurrects our bodies all at the same time! So when you get to heaven, you'll have something to talk about with Lazarus when you see him!

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