

Sunday Night Meditations 57 Message and Song - 1950's

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in the Son of God and the way of salvation, where Christ gives life to those who are dead in sins.

Duration: 30:22

Scripture: John 11:1-6, John 11:20-27, John 11:32-33, John 11:35, John 11:38-39, John 11:41, John 11:43-44

Topics: "Gospel Message", "Christian Liberty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of proclaiming the gospel of God's grace and the wonderful love that God has for sinners. He mentions various stories from the Bible, such as the little monsters in the bulrush, David and Goliath, Joseph's dreams, and Jonah and the whale. The preacher highlights the need for believers to be set free from any bondage or traditions that hinder their service to the Lord. He quotes Galatians 5:1, urging listeners to stand fast in the liberty that Christ has given them. The sermon also discusses the twofold effect of Christ's miracles, emphasizing the power of the gospel to bring salvation to both young and old. The preacher shares his own testimony of being saved at the age of fourteen and encourages others not to delay in accepting Christ. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the message in John 5:24, that those who hear and believe in Jesus have everlasting life.

Transcript

To our radio friends, we're very happy to have the privilege of proclaiming the gospel of God's grace, and we trust that you'll be able to listen to the entire program, as we seek to tell you of God's wonderful love to guilty sinners. I trust you'll be blessed as you take time out to listen to this gospel broadcast. For our scripture reading, I am turning to John's Gospel, Chapter 11.

Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

As we briefly meditate on this portion of God's word, it is with a view that we shall learn some practical lessons that may be of profit to us, if and when we shall be found in the hour of need. We are visiting a Christian home in Bethany, a home where the Lord Jesus felt at home and where he was always welcome. Two sisters and a brother who, because of the grace of God, lived happily for the Lord.

The Christian home is not immune to sickness nor sorrow. Some of God's choicest saints have glorified God through years of suffering, and spiritual qualities that were never known were produced under the pressure of a faithful God of love. When the day of trouble strikes the Christian home, they immediately find strength and repose on the Savior's breath, knowing that if he knows, nothing can go wrong, all will be well.

The very first recorded thought that came to the mind of the sisters in Bethany was, send word to Jesus. The message was, Lord behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. To faith, that was sufficient.

Perhaps you do not have a Christian home. Perhaps the importance of being saved has never been given much thought. You may try your best to be the happy-go-lucky, carefree kind, but you surely do know that your home shall eventually be visited by sickness and perchance even by death.

An unsaved home in the day of trouble is an unpleasant sight. Some will call upon the Lord having very little confidence that he will hear. Others will consider it cowardly to reject him in days of prosperity and only call on him in need.

Unsaved friends come to wish good luck. Others are speechless. The entire sight is pitiful.

No refuge, no source of comfort. Just grit your teeth and take it. God never intended anyone to feel so alone, and I trust such will never be your case.

When Mary and Martha sent the message to Jesus, they did not say, Come at once. It seemed sufficient that he knows. Oftentimes we are at a loss to make a request of him, but there is a wonderful peace in being assured that he knows all about the case.

No doubt the Burden sisters were expecting him to come, but while waiting the patient grows worse, and finally life leaves the body. Lazarus is dead. Funeral arrangements are made at once, and soon the sorrowful procession wends its way to the cemetery where the remains of the dear one is laid in a cave and a stone placed against it.

Sympathizing friends do their best to console the bereaved who have been robbed by sickness and death. How strange that Jesus did not come, nor send a message, nor did he come the next day, nor the next. He was at Bethabara, near to what is now called Allenby's Bridge, about a two-day's journey from Bethany.

Strange as it may seem, when the message of sickness reached him, he answered calmly, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God. It is hard for me to understand anyone who believes that all sickness is of the devil, when our Lord Jesus definitely says it is for the glory of God. Jesus knows that in this case death was not going to keep this man, but God was going to be glorified in some wondrous way, so that there was no hurry on the part of Jesus.

His delays are not always denials. We are often so impatient, and the time element seems so important to us. We must have our prayers answered immediately.

If not, we are so prone to think that our Heavenly Father is indifferent and does not care. Many times his delays are used to teach lessons that cannot be learned in any other way. On the fourth day, someone bursts in with the news that Jesus is on the outskirts of the town.

Martha immediately hastens to him. She expresses her perplexity and regret in the words, If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. She also expresses an unshaken confidence and a glimmering hope as she adds, But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

The world says, While there is life, there is hope. Martha's faith in the Son of God was far greater, for she seemed to have a flickering hope even after life had fled. Death in the presence of the Lord Jesus is only sleep.

With all the sorrow in that humble home in Bethany, there was a calm of confidence which is expressed in the words, I know that he shall rise again. If the way of salvation was not so clear and simple, we would understand why you continue to live without Christ. But since Christ has accomplished all the work by his death on Calvary's cross and simply waits for you to take refuge in his finished work, I say very kindly, it is a reflection upon your intelligence to remain unsaved.

The story of the raising of Lazarus presents a very unique picture of the way of salvation. First, Lazarus was dead, and believe it or not, every unsaved person is spiritually dead. To the Ephesian Christians, Paul writes, And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

A dead man is helpless, and so are you if unsaved. Any effort on your part to improve your condition is folly. Picture me standing beside a corpse and saying with a loud voice, Stretch out your hands, bend your knees, open your eyes, turn your head, you need exercise.

I'm sorry to say that some well-meaning religious workers make such ridiculous suggestions to dead sinners. Quit your meanness, turn over a new leaf, join a church, pass through the ceremonies, give a tenth of your income, be good to your family. Some of these suggestions may be proper in their proper place, but are less appropriate when addressed to a spiritually dead unsaved person than words of encouragement to a corpse.

What a dead man needs is life, and life is always a gift. No one can produce life. You must receive life as a gift.

1 John 5.11. This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Lazarus was a helpless dead man, and Christ did not come to Bethany to offer words of encouragement at the tomb, but rather to give life.

In like manner, he hath come into the world to give life to you. When he said, Lazarus, come forth, Lazarus responded and came forth. In John 5.24, we have the message and the response brought together.

He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life. You have heard his word, but you have not believed on him. The pride of a skilled undertaker is to make a dead person appear as near alive as possible.

And I am afraid there are many religious people who have only a religious veneer. They are trying to look as near alive as possible. They talk like Christians, they live like Christians, they act like Christians, but down deep in the heart there is a grave suspicion that there may be only a beautiful corpse lacking eternal

life.

If you are suspicious of this condition, come to the Savior, just as you are, and receive him, and receive eternal life from his hand. As Lazarus received life from Christ, you too may receive eternal life from the same Christ who is still offering salvation to whosoever will. Greetings to our radio listeners.

The sweetest story ever told is the story of God's redeeming love that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He is able and willing to save the up-and-out as well as the down-and-out, and that includes all who may claim to be in between. We ask you to relax and listen as we bring the claims of Jesus Christ to your attention.

This is Welcome Deathweiler speaking. As we turn to God's precious word, I want to continue the story of the raising of Lazarus, and I am reading from John's Gospel, chapter 11, verse 41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always.

But because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin.

Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Those who call in question the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures have the difficulty of explaining away or removing the miracles that Christ performed during his brief earthly ministry. If the miracle of Jesus can be classified, then from the natural viewpoint, the raising of Lazarus is the greatest. The Bible records three instances where Christ invades the territory of death and brings the dead to life, proving his mighty power and that he was the spotless Son of God.

In the first instance, we have the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum. The child had just died, and Jesus said to her so tenderly, Arise, and she arose, giving to us a picture of how he calls those who are young by the gospel. It is indeed a wonderful privilege to point the boys and girls, the teenagers, to Christ.

They seem to be so sincere and have a desire to be saved as soon as they discover their lost condition. I was saved when I was fourteen, and I thank God for it. I have had the privilege of leading many older ones to Christ, and it is so common to hear them say, My greatest regret is that I waited so long.

Had I known how wonderful and how easy it was to be saved, I might have been saved in my teens, and by so doing I could have been spared from many heartaches. Young people, take warning from these earnest testimonies and come to Christ in the days of youth. The second instance of Christ raising the dead is in the city of Nain.

A young man, the only son of a widow, is being carried to the cemetery. Jesus stops the procession and gives life to the dead son, which brought joy to the bereaved mother. This man was dead a little longer than the girl in Capernaum, and I like to think of him representing those who are between 20 and 40 years of age.

And here we have the same Christ who brings salvation to the youth, bringing life to those who have ignored his earlier offer of salvation, and as a direct result have found life rather empty and a disappointment. Many young men and women, dead in trespasses and in sins, are causing grief to godly fathers and mothers. The pain is as great as if they were following their casket toward a cemetery.

They are journeying for the day when Jesus Christ shall have the privilege of presenting to their sons and daughters eternal life. The third instance of our Lord raising the dead is that of our reading in John chapter 11. Here it is not a case of having just died, but he has been dead four days.

Already his body is resting in the earth and decay has begun and all hope is entirely gone. I like to think of Lazarus representing those who are past 40 years of age, who have never received God's offer of salvation. From the natural point of view, these are almost hopeless cases.

Statistics have many times proved that very, very few people are saved after they are 40 years of age. I want to speak very directly to any of my radio listeners who are not sure of being saved and you are past 40 years of age. Do you realize that your chance of ever being saved is very slim? As far as God is concerned, you have the same chance of being saved as anyone else.

But if during all these years you have turned down God's offer of salvation, there is not much reason to believe that you will ever change your mind and receive Christ who loved you and died for you. I put this before you as a challenge and I trust that it will awaken you and cause you to say, I am going to be an exception to that general rule. I'm going to receive Christ right now before another sunrise.

I know that God can save those who are past 40. My dear parents were both saved past 40 years of age. Although very religious and active in the work of the Lord, for many years they discovered that they were resting upon their own good works to merit heaven and had never received eternal life.

One of the greatest modern miracles is when God saves a religious person advanced in years. When Lazarus was raised, he received life, but that was not all. He also received liberty.

In verse 44 we read, And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. The grave clothes represent the old ideas or traditions that man has picked up, things that sound reasonable and which are supposed to be in the Bible and are not.

How sad it is to find some Christians bound by tradition still wearing their grave clothes. I remember a number of years ago attending a Bible conference in Seacliffe, New York, where we learned a little chorus and the words were, Yes, Jesus died upon the tree to set the captive sinner free, that all who will on him believe life and liberty shall receive. Lazarus received life and then he also received liberty.

Loose him and let him go. If you have a desire to serve the Lord and find that you are bound, it is displeasing to God so to remain. You cannot serve him acceptably unless it is in perfect liberty.

Listen to Galatians 5.1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again by the yoke of bondage. Grave clothes belong to dead people, and when you pass from death into life the grave clothes must be removed. The traditions that bind belong to people who do not want to be saved but like to be religious.

They do not belong to save people. John very carefully records the twofold effect of Christ's miracles. That's in verse 45.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did believed on him, but some of them went their way to the Pharisees. The history of Lazarus closes with leaving him sitting at the table in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ his Savior. The lesson that every unsaved person should learn is that Christ is able to give life to those who are dead in sins.

He offers eternal life, and when that offer is made it must be received or it must be rejected. If I have those in my radio audience who have never received eternal life, I want you to realize that just as he offered life to Lazarus many years ago, he offers life to you. He asked you to receive his son, and the moment you receive him as your Lord and Savior, believe that he died in your place, took your sins.

God will give you everlasting life, and there will follow a new life, new desires, and you will have a desire to serve and to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust you will start by trusting that Savior this very hour. you

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