

## That You May Continue to Believe...



### AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## The Resurrection and the Life John 10:40-11:57

They had chased Jesus out of the Temple and back across the Jordan the second time. In a matter of three months they had attempted to stone Him twice. Now, I want you to think about the irony of that. They had attempted to stone the incarnate Son of God, the Rock that had followed their fathers around in the wilderness. They had attempted to stone Him who had taken on human flesh and tabernacled among them. Both times they had accused Him of blasphemy. Both times they had attempted to stone Him in the actual confines of the temple. Think of that. They had attempted to stone Him there in the holy place where they had hoped to meet their God. They failed to see, of course, that in driving Him out they were driving away the very God they had come to meet.

Still, they could not endure His words and because of His words they had tried to kill Him. But He had slipped out of their hands because His appointed time had not yet come. This last time, however, he had left Judea behind and had returned to Galilee and the respite it offered against their hatred. Of course, by

now there was no respite from the crowds. The crowds followed Him everywhere.

is why John ends chapter 10 with a reminder that our Lord went out to the remote place where John the Baptist had preached and baptized so many. It was probably the little town known as Bethany beyond the Jordan. Of course, John doesn't call it Bethany here and the principal reason for that that it would have been confusing. You see, there were two towns named Bethany. He is about to talk about one of them in the story of Lazarus. So he didn't mention the other, lesser-known one, up in Galilee. The better-known Bethany, which figures prominently in our story this morning, was just a little less than two miles from Jerusalem.

Having said all that, let's pick up the narrative in John 10:40.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 10:40**...He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. <sup>41</sup> And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." <sup>42</sup> And many believed in him there.

Jesus returned to Galilee, to the very place where He had first interacted with the Baptist and even though the Baptist had long since been murdered and buried still his testimony concerning Jesus rang out clear and true. The cumulative weight of John's words, Jesus' words and Jesus miracles were having their proper effect. Many believed in Him. It is impossible to know, of course, from the text whether their belief was real or only superficial. Still John tells us that many had seen the signs and believed.

Now I want to take a minute and reflect again on the fact that John only records seven miracles of Jesus in his gospel. I mentioned that fact early on in our study of John. I pointed out, way back then, that John selected specific miracles or signs to demonstrate the truth of Jesus origin and mission and each miracle accomplished or “signed” something in particular. He picked out the miracles that He did because he was trying to encourage those first century Jewish fence-straddlers to come out for Jesus. He was trying to encourage them to choose Jesus over the synagogue and all that was connected with unbelieving Judaism.

Now, as I said there are seven miracles in John. So far, we have seen six of them.

Those six are:

Water into Wine (John 2)	Ceremonial law
Healing of the Nobleman’s Son (John 4)	Kingly rulers
Healing of the Paralytic at Bethesda (John 5)	The Sabbath
Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6)	The Bread of Heaven
Walking on the Water at Galilee (John 6)	Moses
Healing of the Man Born Blind (John 9)	Light of the World

Now each of those previous six miracles speaks to a particular sign of who Jesus was or what Jesus was accomplishing. This morning we are going to look at the seventh and final miracle of Jesus (excluding the resurrection) recorded in John’s Gospel and the principal point behind it is that Jesus in the resurrection and the life. Still, the story starts out simply enough.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:1**...Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

The first thing that you ought to notice is how the character Lazarus is introduced.

There was a **certain** man...

His name was Lazarus...

He was sick...

He was from the village of Mary and Martha...

Now look at verse 2...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:2**...It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.

Now one of the most interesting things about this particular reference to Mary is that it refers to an event that had not yet occurred in the story. Now, I want you to think about how strange that is. She has not yet anointed his feet with perfume or wiped his feet with her hair. That does not happen until the next chapter. In fact, she has not yet even been mentioned in the book of John but John refers to her here and identifies her from a story he has not yet told. What does that tell you about the story of Mary and her anointing of Jesus' feet?<sup>1</sup>

I think it tells you that the story of Mary and what she did preceded her even in this account. It may tell us that this book was not written for unbelievers but for believers. It seems to me that such a reference to Mary seems to be taking into account the fact that most people will already know about her and her faithfulness. F.F. Bruce writes this:

*Mary's act* was such an extraordinary thing to do that those who heard of it were never likely to forget it. The Evangelist, who records the incident later (John 12:3), had presumably told the story already (no doubt with other stories to be written down eventually in his Gospel) in the companies of Christians among whom he moved. So, on mentioning Lazarus for the first time, he says, in effect, 'You will know whom I mean if I tell you that he was the brother of that Mary who anointed the Lord.'<sup>2</sup>

I think it also tells you that the book is written chiastically. I won't go into this morning but you can see how the reference to her actions here will be mirrored in chapter 12 and form perfect bookends to each other.

Anyway, the two sisters are concerned about their brother.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:3**...So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it he said, "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." <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Now we don't know how long Lazarus had been sick or even the nature of the sickness but we do know that it was long enough and serious enough that the two sisters were worried about their brother. As a result, they sent word to Jesus letting Him know not just that Lazarus was sick but rather that Lazarus, the one He loved was sick. The word used for "love" here is the word φιλέω. Now, it seems to me that the hope, even the expectation, of the two sisters was that Jesus would come to heal their brother quickly. But instead Jesus delayed. But not only does He delay, He even makes remarks about the ultimate end of Lazarus'

sickness. His comment is that **“this sickness will not end in death, but rather in God’s glory.”** Now what does that remind you of? It reminds me of the conversation Jesus had with His disciples when they first came upon the man born blind. You will remember what they asked Jesus, **“Who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?”**

Jesus had answered them, **“Neither. This happened that God might be glorified.”**

To me this sounds just like that. Still, Jesus doesn’t leave. He stays right where He is at for another two days and there is a part of me as a reader that wants to say, **“Get up. Why are you waiting? Don’t you care?”** I am almost certain that that is the reason why John included verse 5. There he says, **“Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.”** John uses the word ἀγαπάω which is generally thought to indicate a higher, nobler spiritual love. I think in John, however, that there is no distinction between the two. We’ll talk more about that in chapter 21.

Listen to what Calvin writes about this...

These two things appear to be inconsistent with each other, that *is that* Christ remained two days beyond Jordan, as if he did not care about the life of Lazarus, and still the Evangelist says, that Christ loved him and his sisters; ... *Now there is a lesson to be learned here. Since Christ is the only mirror of the grace of God, we are taught by this delay on his part that we ought not to judge the love of God by the condition, which we see before our eyes. When we have prayed to him, he often delays his assistance, either to encourage our ardor in prayer, or to the end that he may teach us patience. At the same time, He gets us used to obedience. Let believers then pray for the assistance of God, but let them also learn to patiently*

*wait for Him to stretch out his hand remembering that whatever the reason for his delay, he never sleeps, and never forgets his people.*<sup>3</sup>

I don't know about you but those are words that I need to hear. They describe what has been my own experience with regard to sickness and death almost exactly. It seems to me that during such times, I have never been able to get in sync with God's timing. When I first learned that my dad had terminal cancer I prayed endlessly for God to heal him. I prayed believing God would heal him. I wept and prayed and fasted but in the few months of treatment that my dad received, it became obvious to me that God was not going to heal him. When that happened, I prayed for God to take him. It seemed for the longest time that God did not seem to hear that prayer either and it seemed to me that the whole process was not going to do much more than produce in me the basest sort of spiritual numbness. Because of that, I love what J.C. Ryle says:

When we are sick, it is because he knows it to be for our good; when he delays coming to help us, it is for some wise reason. The hand that was nailed to the cross is too wise and loving to smite without a needs-be or to keep us waiting for relief without a cause.<sup>4</sup>

That was true, of course, in this story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It seems crystal clear that that Jesus intended to use the sickness of Lazarus to magnify Himself.<sup>5</sup> You the story is only secondarily about Lazarus. It was written to show that Jesus came into the world to give life to those that were dead but that doing that would lead to His own death. Of course, Jesus understood what He was doing and the statement he made was exactly right. This sickness of Lazarus was not to going to result in death at least not for Lazarus. Instead, it was going to

result in Jesus death.<sup>6</sup> I think even His disciples feared that. In verse 7 and 8, they remind Him of how the Jews had last responded to Him.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:7...** Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."<sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

But Jesus knew that His time was approaching and He knew that what He had to accomplish had to be accomplished according to God's sovereign plan.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:9...** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.<sup>10</sup> But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."<sup>11</sup> After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."<sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."<sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died,<sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Now one of the advantages of reading Greek is that it makes you more sensitive to what verb tense are being used. Look back to verse 11. Jesus says, **"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep."** The verb is in the perfect tense in Greek, which is used to indicate completed action in the past. Here's the point. Jesus knew Lazarus had died and He made no movement to go to Lazarus until Lazarus had died. Of course, His disciples misunderstood that thinking that Lazarus was sleeping and in sleeping recovering from his illness. So Jesus told them plain out, **"He's dead and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."**



<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:16...** So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Now there is a part of me that loves the dogged resolution of Thomas even if it is pessimistic. He resolves to stick to Jesus and to do so even if it means death. At the end of John, he is the one that makes the extraordinary confession about Jesus. You ought to see that that is connected to what we have proposed as the purpose of the book. In John, a resolved faith in Jesus always ends in glory to Jesus. Anyway, Jesus finally arrived in verse 17 at Bethany some four days later.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:17...** Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

Now, there are two points made in verse 17 through 19. First, Lazarus was genuinely, truly dead. He had been dead and in the tomb for at least four days. John may have been making the point about the certainty of Lazarus' death because of how the Pharisees doubted the reality of the man's blindness that Jesus had healed in chapter nine. In addition, it seems that there was a belief, either during the days of Jesus or perhaps shortly after the soul of a dead person stayed and hovered around that person's body for the first three days after their death. The idea was that the soul desired to re-enter the body until it saw that decomposition had set in.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the text makes it clear that there were many Jews from Jerusalem at the house of Mary and Martha. Since Bethany was so close to Jerusalem, many Jews from Jerusalem had come out to mourn with the two sisters. That may be the

reason that Martha gets up and goes out to meet Jesus. She may have been trying to see Jesus before He approached Jerusalem either to warn Him away or to meet Him secretly so he would not be harmed.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:11...** So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Now there are two points of Martha's dialogue that are worth thinking through. First, it seems to me that she is chiding Him for not having come sooner. I don't see anyway around that conclusion in the story. We don't know, of course, whether she knew that he could have come sooner and purposely did not. Still, most commentators prefer to think that she is not chiding Him so much as expressing her regret since He could have done something had He been there. Such commentators argue that what she was saying was rather something like this, **"Oh Lord, I wish you had made it sooner because you and you alone could have done something about this."** I think the reason that they hold that view is because of Martha's next line, **"But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."**

Now, I don't know about you but that reminds me so much of the dialogue with His mother at Cana of Galilee where she told Him they were out of wine. Even the following dialogue reminds me of that. You see Jesus seemingly lets her

remark about God giving Him whatever He asks go right on by. His only response is...**"Your brother will rise again."**

To that remark Martha responded, **"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection?"** It may be that she inflected the answer to the extent that it came out, **"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection...but what about now?"**

Of course, we don't know that. But we do have Jesus' answer, an answer that forms the very basis for the hope that we here today possess.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:25**...Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Now here's the question, **"Does resurrection and life mean the same thing or do the two words mean two separate ideas?"**<sup>8</sup> Does it mean the **"resurrection"** which is the **"life"** or does it mean **"both the resurrection and the life?"**<sup>9</sup> Listen to how Bishop Westcott answers that question.

Jesus used *Resurrection and Life to present the two forms of the truth*. Some there were, like Lazarus, who had believed and died, some like Martha who yet lived and believed. Of the first it is said that the death of earth under which they had fallen is no real death: *He that believeth on me, though he were dead (even if he die), shall live—shall live still, live on even through that change, and not resume life at some later time. And of the second that the life of heaven shall never be broken off: Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, he that in that faith hath seized the true conception of life, shall never die.* To him who is in Christ death is not what it seems to be.<sup>10</sup>

What Jesus is reminding Martha is the same truth He had taught His disciples in John 5.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 5:25**... "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

I want to try to get across to you the import of what is being communicated here. The resurrection is not just a future hope; it is, ultimately, the sequel to the eternal life that we experience right now. You see when we put our trust in Him we have eternal life. We are not hoping to obtain eternal life. We have it right now. The **"hour is coming and now is."**

And Jesus finished off His dialogue with the most important question anyone can ever answer, **"Do you believe this?"**

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:27**... She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

Listen to how Herman Ridderbos explains Martha's answer.

Martha's...unambiguously confirms the faith she has...*already shown* (vs. 22). And she does this in words that express the content of that faith more fully: **"Yes, Lord; I continue to believe (*perfect tense here*) that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."**<sup>11</sup>

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:28**... When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."<sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.<sup>31</sup> When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.<sup>32</sup> Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.<sup>34</sup> And he said,

"Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

The word here for deeply moved is understood two different ways by commentators. On the one hand, some commentators see it to mean something like "deep emotional distress." Others see it to mean "anger" and certainly that is the original root meaning of the word.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, the original word ἐμβριμάομαι was used to describe the "snorting of horse's in battle." (Liddell Scott quotes Aeschylus).

**Calvin puts it like this...**

**If Christ had not been excited to compassion by their tears, he would rather have kept his countenance unmoved, but when, of his own accord, he conforms to those mourners...he gives proof that he has sympathy. For the cause of this feeling is, in my opinion, expressed by the Evangelist, when he says that Christ saw Mary and the rest weeping. Yet I have no doubt that Christ contemplated something higher, namely, the general misery of the whole human race...<sup>13</sup>**

Do you get his point? Calvin is saying that the great benevolent Creator of all that is looked around this little arena of death and sadness and was filled with rage at what had happened to His creation. Leon Morris says this...

It is death that is the subject of His wrath, and behind death him who has the power of death, and whom he has come into the world to destroy. Tears of sympathy may fill his eyes, but his is incidental. His soul is held by rage and He advances to the tomb, in Calvin's words again, '**as a champion who prepares for conflict.**' The raising of Lazarus thus becomes an open symbol of Jesus' conquest of death and hell.<sup>14</sup>

I love that so much, I thought I would just go ahead and look up exactly how Calvin put his comments about this scene.

Christ does not approach the sepulcher as an idle spectator, but as a champion (wrestler) who prepares for a contest; and therefore we need not wonder that he again groans; for the violent tyranny of death, which he had to conquer, is placed before his eyes.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, Jesus did weep. He was God and He was human. Nevertheless, Morris makes the point that the word for His crying is different than that of the other mourners.<sup>16</sup> The word that is used for the other mourners indicates unrestrained weeping or wailing.<sup>17</sup> The word used to describe Jesus' weeping just means "tears fell". It is not that Jesus felt less but Jesus wept knowing full well what He was about to do.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:36**... So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

Verse 36 makes use of the imperfect tense, which stresses continuous action in the past. That means the Jews kept on saying, "See how much He was loving (φιλέω) him." Of course, they were basing that reaction upon His tears and upon the way He shuddered and those things did reflect how much He loved Lazarus. But the full extent of His love was not yet shown for that could never be shown until He was crucified.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 13:1**...Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Still, Jesus pressed on...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:38**...Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."

The verb κραυγάζω, which is used in verse 43 and is translated "cried out with a loud voice" literally means shouted. It is used only eight times in the whole Greek Bible and six of those times are in John. In chapters 17-19, it is used four times for the shouts of the crowd to crucify Jesus. Raymond Brown points out that a contrast might be drawn between the crowd's shout that brings death to Jesus and Jesus' shout that brings life to Lazarus.<sup>18</sup>

Listen to what John Chrysostom asks here...

Why didn't he say, "**In the name of My Father come forth**"? Or why didn't he say, "**Father, raise him up**"? Why did he omit such expressions, and after assuming the attitude of one praying, show by His actions His independent authority? Because this also was a part of His wisdom, to show condescension by words, but by His deeds, power. For since they had nothing else to charge Him with except that He was not of God, and since in this way they deceived many, He on this account most proved beyond a doubt He who was in the manner their infirmity required. So, He said, "**Lazarus, come forth.**"<sup>19</sup>

Now, I mentioned earlier that there was in ancient Judaism an idea that permeated their view of death. They believed that the soul of a person who had

died hovered around the body seeking to reunite with the body until it saw signs of corruption. The Dictionary of New Testament theology goes beyond even that a bit when it writes that ancient Jews also thought that the dead could hear their loved ones mourning until a stone was rolled over the grave. The idea was that excessive mourning comforted the person who had died but once they were buried they could no longer hear their loved ones grieving, hence burial signified a time to begin to end mourning. Of course, on the other hand, you could understand this passage to be saying that Jesus' words reached though the stone, extended beyond the grave and that neither time nor corruption could prevent Lazarus from coming out at His command.<sup>20</sup>

In verse 44, Lazarus comes out of the grave.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:44**... The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." <sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

The word used here for grave clothes is the same word used for bedcovering in Proverbs 7:16.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Proverbs 7:16**...I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt.

There it is used of the harlot who decorates her bed with colored cloth that really doubles as grave clothes. Presumably we are to think of a type of bandage or a winding sheet. There are those that want to ask how Lazarus got out of the tomb if his hands and feet were bound. They wonder did Lazarus just float out or did he shuffle out of the tomb. But that question seems fairly silly. The real question



is and always will be **“How did he get out of the grave if he was dead and in the process of decomposition.”**

Raymond Brown adds this concerning Lazarus' grave clothes. In chapter 20:6-7, we are told that Jesus' burial garments remained in the tomb, perhaps with the connotation that he would have no more use for them since he was never to die again. Brown points out that some scholars have suggested that it is because Lazarus will die again that he comes forth with his burial garments.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, all that is speculative which leads me to go back to the wisdom of Augustine. He wrote this:

Among all the miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Lazarus holds a *principal* place in preaching. And though the Lord Jesus did many such acts, yet all of them are not recorded; instead certain events were chosen which *were intended* to suffice for *our faith*. Now, you have just heard that the Lord Jesus raised a dead man to life; and that is sufficient to let you know that, were He so pleased, He could raise all the dead to life. And, indeed *that is something He himself will do* at the end of the world. For while you have heard that by a great miracle He raised one from the tomb who had been dead four days, “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves will hear *His* voice, and come out.” *It is true in raising Lazarus, He raised one who was putrid.* Still that putrid carcass *had form*; at the last day, *however*, He will by a word reconstitute ashes *and dust* into human flesh. So it was needful then *for Him* to do only some such deeds, that we, receiving them as tokens of His power, may put our trust in

Him, and *get prepared* for that resurrection which shall be to life and not to judgment.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, it was the report of the spectators to the Pharisees concerning what Jesus had done that drove them both to frustration and despair. Listen to their concern in verse 47.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:47**...So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

F.F. Bruce writes this:

It is plain that the members of the court were desperately afraid that Jesus' presence and activity ... would inevitably bring down the heavy hand of Rome and might lead to the abolition of the internal autonomy and temple-constitution of Judaea. '**Our place**' which, they feared, would be taken away was the temple ('this holy place' of Acts 6:13 f.; 21:28).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:49**...But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

Now, I want you to get the deep irony involved here. Caiaphas, who was the high priest and thus a Sadducee, responds to the Pharisees in a hateful, condescending manner accusing them of being aggressively ignorant. Of course, what he doesn't realize in his own aggressive ignorance is that he is speaking by

revelation. His comment, which he intended as a pragmatic solution to keep them clear of the Romans, was placed upon his lips by God as the spiritual explanation of what Christ's death would accomplish.<sup>24</sup>

Notice too, that John adds the part about the ingathering of the other sheep that Jesus had talked about in John 10.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 11:54**...Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples. <sup>55</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" <sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Now notice finally, two extraordinary points of irony here. First, the Jews went up to Jerusalem for ceremonial cleansing in preparation for Passover while at the plotting to kill Jesus.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, they were wondering whether He would come to the Passover Feast at all. They were wondering whether He would come when, in fact, all Creation had been moving toward that exact moment since He had spoken it into existence.

Now let me make just two principal applications (one upon which, I have already touched). First, God's timing is for God's purpose and to His glory and your good. How much of life could be smoothed out if we incorporated that notion into our hearts and souls.

Secondly, the miracle with which God implanted into you faith is a miracle of the exact same caliber as when He raised Lazarus. It is not less; it is not inferior in any way. Because you have faith, you ought to cleave unto Jesus. Love Him with wholeness of heart trusting Him to care for you and protect you. Next week we are going to see the Pharisees express their intention to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus. Now why do you think that is? It is because Lazarus was such an extraordinary witness. We never find any mention that his faith wavered or that words failed him and the reason, I think that's true, is because the idea would be perfectly inconceivable. Brother's and sisters, it is exactly the same for us. We have been granted faith and we believe and there is just no way the miracle of our faith can be denied.

Long My imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose went forth and followed thee.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 36: John*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher) 1998. Murray writes: "The identification of Mary in v 2 as the woman who anointed Jesus is made prior to the account of the anointing (12:1-8), on the assumption that all Christians know of that event. The sentence is commonly viewed as an explanatory gloss by an editor (cf. 4:2; 6:22-23); it could be such, but there are other comments that interrupt the story and that come from the Evangelist (e.g., vv 5, 13, 18, 30), and this could be another."

<sup>2</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 239.

<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *The Gospel According to John* (Sage Digital Library) 8:30-38, 384-5.

<sup>4</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: John* (London: Evangelical Press, 1985), 137.

<sup>5</sup> Beasley-Murray. He writes: The Evangelist makes it plain in the course of the narrative that the end of the story of Lazarus is the death of Jesus himself. In the chapters that follow, the glory of God in Christ is bound up with the death and resurrection of Jesus. The statement, "This illness is

...for the sake of the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it," finds its ultimate meaning in the glorifying of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus and the glorifying of the Son through God's exalting him to his right hand.

<sup>6</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 368. It seems clear therefore that chapter 11 constitutes a single and complete episode. Its theme is resurrection. This theme is elaborated in the dialogue between Jesus and the sisters of the dead Lazarus, as well as in the significant narrative of the raising of the dead; and its essential setting is provided by the dialogue between Jesus and His disciples which declares His intention of going to death, and by the appended report of the Council-meeting, in which He is devoted to death. Thus the theme is not only resurrection, but *also* resurrection by virtue of Christ's self-sacrifice. More exactly, the theme is Christ Himself manifested as Resurrection and Life by virtue of His self-sacrifice.

<sup>7</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 411. Carson writes this: "From a slightly later date there are sources attesting the rabbinic belief that the soul hovers over the body of the deceased person for the first three days, 'intending to re-enter it, but as soon as it sees its appearance change', *i.e.* that decomposition has set in, it departs (*Leviticus Rabbah* [a rabbinical commentary] 18:1 [on Leviticus. 15:1]; for other references *cf.* SB 2.i. At that point, death is irreversible. Though Lagrange (p. 307) doubts that this belief stretches back to the time of Jesus, it seems to be presupposed here. Together with v. 39, this verse establishes the awesome character of the sign about to be performed." See also: Bruce, F.F. *The Gospel of John* (London: Pickering Paperbacks, 1983) p. 253.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* The second option is more credible (*cf.* Dodd, *IFG*, 364–366), and it appears that the two components, 'I am the resurrection' and 'I am the life', are successively elucidated in the two ensuing clauses. The plain reference of *resurrection* is to the final resurrection of believers at the last day, through Christ whose power effects it. This part of Jesus' claim is elucidated by the next clause: the one who believes in Jesus will 'come to life' *even though he dies*. These words ensure that it is the final resurrection that is in view. The elucidation of *I am ... the life* appears in the clause that: *whoever lives and believes in me will never die*. The verb *lives* cannot simply mean *is alive*, as the triteness would be unbearable; previously only those who are alive can believe! We have repeatedly noticed that the background for these verses is 5:21ff., and there the notion of *life* is invariably the life of God, saving life, eternal life, the life of the kingdom. So also here: we might paraphrase, 'whoever has eternal life and believes in me will never die. The two descriptions has 'eternal life' and 'believes in me' are not tautologies. The first stresses eternal change that must come about, wrought by the power of God (*viz.* he lives, he has eternal life); the second underlines what stance the individual must adopt (*viz.* he believes).

<sup>9</sup> W. Hall Harris, *The Gospel of John: Introduction and Commentary* ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 126). Harris summarizes the two major views of resurrection and life mean. He writes: Most likely, in light of John's consistent use of ζωή, it refers to spiritual life. Thus: 11:25 The one who believes, even if he dies physically, will live spiritually. 11:26 The one who believes, who is alive spiritually, will never die spiritually. This understanding interpretation is held by Bernard, Dodd, Brown, and

Carson. This seems to fit much better in the framework of Johannine thought. As such, it is a powerful statement of the believer's security (cf. 10:28).

<sup>10</sup> B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), 168-9.

<sup>11</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 399.

<sup>12</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John (Rvd.)* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 493. Morris quotes Barrett in confirmation of the meaning as "anger". See also TDNTT Vol. 3. p. 710. At John 11:33 *tarasso*, together with *embrimaomai* (be deeply moved), denotes the wave of anger, which came over Jesus when confronted with so much lack of faith and hope, although life itself, and the Lord over death, are present in His person.

<sup>13</sup> Calvin, 396-7.

<sup>14</sup> Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John (Rvd.)* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1995) p.493. Morris quotes B.B. Warfield from *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1950) pg. 117.

<sup>15</sup> Calvin, 399.

<sup>16</sup> Morris, 495. Morris writes: "In this, the shortest verse in the Bible, the noteworthy thing is that a different word is used for weeping than that used of Mary and the Jews. The word used of them means a loud, demonstrative form of mourning, a wailing. That used here (and here only in the New Testament) signifies rather a quiet weeping. Jesus did not wail loudly, but he was deeply grieved. As in verse 33 this will not be because of the death of his friend, for he was about to raise him. It will be because of the misconceptions of those around him. We are reminded of that other occasion when Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). There as here it was the wrong attitude of the Jews that aroused his deep emotion." I hasten to add that I don't think Jesus wept because the Jews had a wrong attitude. Still the lexicographical information is helpful. The word is probably an ingressive aorist meaning Jesus began to wept or burst into tears.

<sup>17</sup> E.F. Harrison, *Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. 104.14, April-June 1947, "The Son of God Among the Sons of Men Pt.10." Harrison writes: "The sight of Mary weeping at His feet and the Jews who had come from the house weeping also produced a profound impression on Jesus. We read that He groaned in spirit and troubled Himself (v. 33 {John 11:33}). The former expression is particularly difficult to analyze. We get little help from the ancient commentators. Origen does not have any extant comment on this verse {John 11:33}. Augustine suggests that Christ here teaches sinful man to be displeased with himself because of his wicked works, that he may be led to penitential sorrow. Chrysostom sees in the terminology a proof that Jesus put on our human nature, and explains that Jesus was here rebuking His feelings of grief, which were in danger of running away with Him. It is true that the thought of rebuke and even of stern anger belongs to other occurrences of this word *εμβριμάομαι* in the Gospels. Cf. Matthew 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5 {Mark 14:5}. In these references, however, other persons are the object of the feeling. Here and in v. 38

{John 11:38}, the term rendered “groaning” is used of Jesus’ subjective state, which leaves unexplained the reason for the use of the word. Some favor the idea that it simply means that Jesus was strongly moved, in which case grief is the sufficient explanation. Allen suggests that the word “may well express the physical effect of powerful emotion upon His voice. It represents the inarticulate sounds which escape men when they are physically overwhelmed by a great wave of emotion.” On the whole, this seems better than the supposition that Jesus was angry with the Jews for their hypocritical crying in contrast to the genuineness of Mary’s tears. If there is a contrast intended, there is nothing in the language employed, which would suggest it. Once again, it is only conjecture which asserts that Jesus was angry with sin and with death as the wages of sin.”

<sup>18</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John V29* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 427.

<sup>19</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John’s Gospel* (Sage Digital Library) 63. v.43, 537. (Freely edited.)

<sup>20</sup> Colin Brown, *The Dictionary of New Testament Theology V.2* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 418. See also Strack-Billerbeck II, 544ff.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, 427. Pretty good stuff for a Catholic.

<sup>22</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *Gospel of John* (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers V. 7, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 270. (Freely edited)

<sup>23</sup> Bruce, 250.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 251.

<sup>25</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: John* (London: Evangelical Press, 1985), 149-50.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Wesley, *And Can it Be*