

John Lesson 11

John Chapter 11

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Memory verse for this week: *Psa 37:30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment..*

Introduction: Last week we saw Jesus teaching on His Deity and found the Jews so upset that they took up rocks to stone him. Jesus asked them for what good work did they stone him (because no one could deny all of His good works). They said it was not for the good works, but for the blasphemy of claiming to be equal with God. But He was telling them the truth. *John 10:30 I and my Father are one. John 10:38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

I. The Raising of Lazarus

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Chapter 11 is sort of a transitional period in the Lord's ministry. His public ministry seems to begin a transition into a private ministry. I mean by this that he seems to now direct Himself to individuals rather than reaching towards the whole nation. The one big issue and question that really needed to be answered was: "Can Jesus raise the dead?" He had healed all sorts of sickness, fed multitudes with just a handful of food. He had taught with authority, preached the Gospel, but could he raise the dead? Death is a great mystery, and many do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. But this morning, I have hope in life after death. Because I believe Jesus Christ, and know that he did die and rose again.

Bethany was a village at the eastside of the Mount of Olives about two miles down the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was the home of a man named Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. They three had become close friends with Jesus.

We see that Jesus was always concerned for those about him. We are going to find something unique about this story. I never remember Jesus having to check his appointment calendar to decide whether He had time to go and help those that beckoned. He always came, and he came right then. That is the difference in this story. We find in verse 6 that after He was told that Lazarus was sick, that he abode where he was for two additional days before He came to help. Did Jesus not care for Lazarus? He really cared for both he and his

sisters, Mary and Martha. He many times came and stayed with them when he traveled through Bethany. So why did Jesus delay coming when they begged Him to come? It was to accomplish a great miracle to make many come to know that Jesus was the Christ. We may not always understand what is happening or why we are suffering, but God has reasons for all things. We need greater faith to never doubt our Omniscient Lord.

We know Jesus had taught earlier that those who are sick need a physician.

Mat 9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

And if we need a physical doctor for these things that befall us in the flesh, how much more do we need Jesus to heal our spiritual sickness. Until we know Jesus as Savior, we will always be under the bondage of sin. But Jesus is the Great Physician, who can heal all of our sin debt.

John 11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Do you remember the story about Mary who had wiped Jesus' feet with her hair after anointing him with the ointment. Mary loved the Lord very much, and I know Jesus had a special love for all of this family.

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

Mark 14:4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

Mark 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

Mark 14:6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

Mark 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

Mark 14:8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Mark 14:9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

We claim and say we love the Lord, but I doubt we ever would had He not loved us first. We were Christ's enemies, and yet He died in our stead.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

John, writing years later, notes that *this* Mary was the one in John 12:3 “which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair.” Some have sought to assume that incident is the same as recorded in Luke 7:37-38. However, apart from the similarity of the incidents, there is no connection between the two. The sinful woman of Luke 7 is not the Mary described here. Likewise, there is no evidence that this Mary is Mary Magdalene described elsewhere. In any event, her brother, Lazarus, was sick and as the context will reveal, critically so.

John 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

John 11:4 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.

John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

John 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Both Mary and Martha, no doubt, were well aware that Jesus had healed numerous others in His ministry. They sent word to Jesus, hoping He would come to Bethany and heal their brother. Yet, Jesus had even greater things in mind.

Though Jesus knew what was about to happen to Lazarus (his death), He also knew it would not be permanent. In His own mysterious way, Jesus said this whole matter (Lazarus' sickness and death) rather would bring glory to God. Moreover, it was “that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

The word translated as that (in *hina*) introduces a purpose clause. This whole matter ultimately was intended to glorify Jesus. Of course, this would be as He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Mary and Martha sent word that “he whom thou lovest is sick.” It says in verse 5 that Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. And if you are a child of the King, He loves you. And if you are here and don't know Jesus as Savior, He loves you too. Jesus came and died that all men and women might go free from the curse of sin. The law never gave us the ability to be saved, it just showed us how sinful we are and how short we come to the glory of God. But Jesus came to give us life, and like we read last week, to give us life more abundantly.

Jesus told those around him that the sickness of Lazarus was not unto death, but unto the glory of God.

J. Vernon McGee said “Sometimes God lets things happen to us for His honor. We need to learn that we are not the center of the universe—nor

is our home, our church, our town. The headquarters of everything are in heaven, and everything is running for His glory. Nothing will come into our lives without His permission, and if He permits it, it is going to be for His glory.”

Some have died to pave the way for you and I to have the freedom to come and study the bible. We can proclaim the Gospel today because men and women were willing to die for what they believed. Perhaps the day will come when we may be faced with that decision. Christians are looked down on in society today. But are we willing to live for Jesus? To live a consecrated life is difficult. But we need to be willing to crucify the flesh every day and live to Christ’s honor.

In verse 5, insight into the personal relationships between Jesus and this family is given. Jesus loved all of them. What is implied is that they had become the dearest of friends.

*John 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.
John 11:8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?*

What may have seemed strange to all involved is that Jesus was in no hurry to get to Bethany or Lazarus. He remained where He was for two more days. Finally, He announced to His disciples, “Let us go into Judaea again.” Judaea was the region near and around Jerusalem in distinction to where He presently was at, along the Jordan River, north of the Dead Sea.

Without question, the most virulent hatred of Jesus and His ministry was in Jerusalem and vicinity (i.e., Judea). On several previous visits, including His most recent one, the Jews there had sought to stone Him to death.

His disciples in bewilderment asked why He wanted to go back *there*? “The Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” Their tone must have been of astonishment.

The last time Christ and the disciples had been in Judea, they had been forced to leave. The Jews had threatened to stone Jesus. The disciples fear for their lives, and question if this is a good idea. Has God ever led you to go do something that made no sense whatsoever. And deep down you know that is isn’t going to work out right. But if we step out on faith, God blesses and things turn out right when we are in the Will of God.

*John 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.
John 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*

Jesus answered with another parabolic reply. He noted that in the Jewish day, there were officially twelve hours of daylight. (He spoke generically, not noting the variation in daylight between summer and winter.) His point was simple. Light of day is when activity or travel must be accomplished. It was difficult then to travel at night with no artificial light readily available.

His point presumably was that He needed to be busy while there was still time. He knew His hour was fast approaching. In fact, it was the spring season prior to His death. The delay in leaving Bethabara was on purpose, allowing Lazarus to die. Now, however, it was time to get going. His days were numbered and He knew it.

Jesus was about to do the Father's work, and nothing would stop Him. When you and I have a work to do for the Lord, and the power is coming from the Son, and we are reaching out to others like the branches from the true vine, not even Satan himself can stay us. Like Jesus said, there are 12 hours in a day, and we need to be about working while it is light. He says a man walking at night will stumble. I believe there is a spiritual conation to this also. Unless we really know the Savior, and are walking in His light, we will forever stumble through this life. But get your feet on the solid rock, Jesus Christ, and you have a foundation that no man can shake. Life may have its storms, but we will stand the test when we have the solid foundation of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1 Cor 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1 Cor 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

II. Lazarus Dies

John 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

John 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

John 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

John 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

John 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Jesus whereupon announced to His disciples how, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” Here, Lazarus is noted as a friend which is translated from the word (filov) *philos*. As soon shall be evident, Jesus’ use of the word commonly translated as sleepeth (koimaw *koimao*) was a euphemism for death.

We are not told how Jesus knew that. It may have been His omniscience or perhaps it was revealed by the Spirit of God to Him. Jesus told His disciples in effect, ‘Let’s go that I may wake him up.’ They thought that wasn’t a good idea. They thought he was in fact sleeping. And, if he was able to sleep well, “he shall do well.” The thought literally is that Lazarus therefore would ‘get well.’ The disciples, of course, still did not grasp Lazarus’ condition.

Jesus tries to diplomatically tell the disciples that Lazarus has died, but they take it that he is just taking a nap. Verse 12 shows that they thought the sleep would do him well since he was sick. And that makes sense since we normally do rest more when we are sick. But Jesus speaks it straight on to them in verse 14 that Lazarus has died. And we see Jesus not sorrowing, but telling them that this was done for a reason.. so that they might truly believe Jesus was who He claimed to be.

John Calvin had this comment about “For your sakes that I was not there.” By this Christ means that it was good for them that he was not there since his power would have been less obvious if he had helped Lazarus at once. The closer God’s deeds approximate to the normal course of nature, the more they are despised and their glory is diminished. We experience this daily.

If God stretches out his hand at once, we are not conscious that he is helping us. So if the disciples are to acknowledge the resurrection of Lazarus as a truly divine work, it had to be delayed, so that it might be very different from a human remedy. God’s fatherly kindness is reflected to us. When God allows us to be overwhelmed with distress and to collapse under this for a long time, we should recall that through all of this God is concerned about our salvation. During those times we naturally groan in anxiety and sadness, but he Lord rejoices for our good. He shows us a double kindness in not only pardoning our sins, but joyfully devising ways of correcting them. “ I would also add that after we are saved, these trials all have meanings and may be bringing us to a greater level of service.

In verse 14, Jesus told the disciples directly, “Lazarus is dead.” He then added that He was glad *for their sakes* that He was not there prior to death. Jesus had a far greater miracle to perform. He knew that this miracle would strengthen their faith even more. His purpose was not only to further glorify the Father and thence Himself, but also to strengthen their faith.

III. Jesus’ True Character is Revealed

John 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

This comment by Thomas is not clear, whether this is a comment of despair about going down to die with Lazarus for seemingly no reason. Perhaps it was a statement of faith making known that they were willing to go with Christ even if it meant their own death. We should not be so concerned about this earthly tabernacle that we fail to get involved in God's work. We should realize like Abraham that this truly is not our home, and be ever mindful to be about God's tasks in our day to day life.

The disciple named Thomas called Didymus is of interest. The name *Thomas* is an Aramaic name which literally means 'twin.' *Didymus* is the Greek word which also essentially means a 'twin.' The latter may have been his nickname. What probably may be inferred is that Thomas was in fact a twin. His take on the whole situation was less than optimistic (making him known as "doubting Thomas"). He knew what kind of reception Jesus would receive in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Therefore, he gloomily said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Thomas figured this time, the Jews would get the job done in killing Jesus. He suggested they go and suffer the same fate with Him.

John Gill in his commentary said this about verse 16.

"let us also go, that we may die with him;" either with Lazarus, as some think, or rather with Christ; for he, and the rest of the disciples, imagined that Christ, by returning to Judea, would be in great danger of losing his life; yea, by this expression they seem to be positive in it, that it was a matter out of question with them, that he would die, should be venture there again: and therefore Thomas stirs up his fellow disciples to go along with him, and die altogether; signifying, that they should have but little comfort when he was taken from them: but both Thomas, and the rest, were differently minded, when Christ was apprehended, for they all forsook him and fled, and provided for their own safety, and left him to die alone, [Mat 26:56](#).

IV. Christ Arrives at Bethany

John 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

John 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

John 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

We see that Bethany and Jerusalem were in close proximity to one another. The distance between the two cities was less than 2 miles, so many of the friends of the family had come down from Jerusalem to comfort the sisters. Because Jesus delayed his coming, Lazarus had now been dead and in the grave for four days.

Apart from the two-day delay which Jesus purposely did, we are not otherwise told of the time line. It may be that the messenger who brought news of Lazarus sickness had taken a day to journey from Bethany to where Jesus was. It likewise was at probably a day's journey for Jesus and the disciples to travel back. They tarried two days at Bethabara. It likely is, after the messenger departed, Lazarus died. The distance between Bethany and Jerusalem is noted as "about fifteen furlongs." Bethany was not a part of Jerusalem, but it was nearby and certainly a part of Judaea.

John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

John 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

In the days following Lazarus' death, Jews from the area came to console Mary and Martha over their loss. When word came that Jesus was on His way, Martha immediately ran to meet Him. However, Mary stayed in the house, perhaps because of the continual company and the anticipated arrival of more.

Upon meeting Jesus, Martha confronted Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." What is clearly implied is a spirit not only of disappointment, but also of concern. She knew Jesus could have healed her brother and she was upset He had not arrived in time.

We see that two days transpired before the Lord left to go down. This could speak of the 2,000 years that have passed since our Lord died there on Calvary. The four days of Lazarus being in the grave may speak of the 4,000 years before Jesus came to the earth. Six days altogether, from the beginning of time until the resurrection. Time is allocated for us, but God has perfect time for all things. We see Martha coming out of the city to meet Jesus.

Perhaps she was concerned for Him due to the threats from the Jews. Maybe she just wanted to talk to Him more privately. We see she first complains, which is what we so commonly do when things don't go the way we want them to go. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This is like a two way meaning. It is an acknowledgment of the great powers Jesus had in healing, but yet it was like pointing out that Jesus should have been there.

V. Christ's Great Compassion

John 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

John 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

John 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus, in allowing the setting for what was to come, simply replied, “Thy brother shall rise again.” As a devout Bible-believing Jew, she certainly believed in the coming resurrection. But did Jesus mean more? What Martha clearly hoped was that Jesus would affect Lazarus’ resurrection sooner rather than later.

What confidence that Martha has in Jesus. Would you and I show this much faith if Jesus stood here before us today. She says that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, He will give it to you. Do we have any promises of God answering prayer. Even we, humble servants of the Lord have great power with God when we pray.

Mat 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Jesus does not scold Martha, but in love, says “Thy brother shall rise again.” Jesus’ patience and ability to see past the human frailties is wonderful. Martha agrees that Lazarus will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

John 11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

Jesus spoke another of His profound similes prefaced with “I am.” He himself *is* the resurrection. What clearly is implied therein is that the resurrection is in Jesus. Those who have Jesus thereby have claim to the resurrection, for He is the resurrection. The blessed essence of eternal life is made poignantly clear for bereaved Martha. Not only was she a believer, Lazarus was as well. Jesus therefore said, “he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Not only in Jesus is the resurrection, in Him also is life—eternal life.

Death for the believer is a brief experience. Contrast that to the eternality of the second death for an unsaved person. Not only is there eternal life for those saved, there also is a glorious resurrection ahead. Jesus tests Martha’s faith concerning all of these implications. “Believest thou this?”

Her answer is in the perfect tense. Her confession of faith is clear. She knew with whom she dealt. He was none other than the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of God. It was more than a mere intellectual discovery. It was more than just the light going on in her understanding. She already knew who Jesus was and she trusted Him completely. Regardless of whether He raised her brother, He was

her Lord and Savior. Secondly, she no doubt hoped that Jesus would also raise her brother indeed. Upon so announcing her faith in Him, she turned, ran back to the house and secretly told her sister Mary that the Master had come and "callesth for thee."

No greater power has ever been demonstrated than for Jesus to die, go into the grave for three days and three nights, and resurrect and come up from the grave. All other religious leaders who have started great religions have died, and their bodies are still in the tomb. But not our Lord. He is risen, alive, and seated at the right hand of the Father today, ever living to make intercession for us. Read those powerful words again in verses 25 and 26. This is the crucial decision in every man and woman's life. Will you believe this? Mary believed, and it was counted unto her for righteousness. If you don't know Jesus as the Risen Savior, come to Him today. Like Martha and Mary, you too can know that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Jews from the region were coming and going offering their condolences. They were present even as she spoke. Mary understood the apparent danger for Jesus in the region and therefore endeavored to conceal His arrival. Mary therefore got up and went out to meet Jesus.

John 11:29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

John 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

John 11:31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

John 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

John 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

John 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

We know that Jesus was known as man of sorrow and grief. He came to do the Father's Will in His life, and the Jews simply could not believe that He was the Son of God. But Jesus was not only God's son, but he was the resurrection, the life, the anointed one. We see in verse 29 that Mary responded to Jesus' call. Many others come out with her, and the agony and weeping affected the Lord. It says that Jesus wept. No other ever cared like Jesus. I wondered if the tears shed were not also for some of the non-believing Jews.

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus was still beyond the outskirts of the village of Bethany. As Mary hastily rose and departed, those mourning with her assumed she had decided to go to the grave and cry there. Usually, those present with family after a death mean well. If Mary had gone out to cry, it would have been well to leave her alone. That was not her purpose. Nevertheless, those present followed her.

In verse 32, a poignant emotional scene shrouded in deep sorrow developed. When Mary found Jesus, she collapsed at His feet, sobbing and weeping. What is implied is a deep, abdominal shaking and sobbing of utter grief. Then she blurted out, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died."

This is the identical comment Martha had made a short time before. Mary did not know that, but Jesus did. Though Martha no doubt had been sorrowful, Mary was consumed with grief. Jesus had been accosted twice by dearest friends with the charge that if he had hurried, He could have prevented all of this. Moreover, in Mary's case, her distress was heart wrenching.

John 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

John 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

John 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus asked, "Where have ye laid him?" They replied, "Lord, come and see." Upon being brought to the tomb, Jesus wept. The Jews standing around watching noted, "Behold how he loved him." The word used for loved (*phileo*) though not as deep a love as *agapao* nevertheless implies deep friendship. Jesus no doubt possessed an *agapé*-level of love for Lazarus. However, the Jews present in commenting used the term *phileo*.

Then others of them asked, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Mary and Martha already had thought the same thing. What made their grief even more intense is that they had sent word for Jesus to come hopefully before he died. He had not.

The neighboring Jews, no doubt, also recalled that not long ago, Jesus had given sight to the blind man in Jerusalem nearby. (See John 9.) They were absolutely right in their contention that if He could give sight to the blind, He could have prevented Lazarus from dying.

The Jews read it that Jesus had loved Lazarus very much, which was true. What they failed to understand was how much He loved all of them also. Their

question's answer was yes, Jesus could have prevented his death. But as many things that happen in our lives that we don't understand, Jesus allowed Lazarus to die that many might know that He had the power over the grave.

John 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

John 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

Jesus commands that they remove the stone from the entrance to the grave. Martha, realizing how long Lazarus had been in the grave, warns that by now the body would have decayed and would stink. Jesus tells her to simply believe, and they would see the glory of God. Sometimes, when we need an answered prayer, we need to simply believe God. How much faith does it take to receive an answered prayer. Not a lot, but even a little faith for us is hard to muster.

Hearing what the onlookers were saying, Jesus once again groaned (i.e., deeply sighed) as He came to the actual grave. As noted earlier, the word translated as grave (*mnhmeion mnemeion*) denotes a grave marker or memorial stone.

Whether that was actually in place, we are not told. However, we are told that Lazarus had been laid in a cave (no doubt in the rocky out cropping so common to the area). A large *stone* (probably a large boulder hewn to fit the cave opening) "lay upon it." Such stones, no doubt similar to the one used shortly after at Jesus' grave, were used to essentially seal a tomb from the elements, wild animals, or grave robbers. Jesus ordered them to remove the stone.

Martha immediately protested that it had been four days and he by now no doubt would smell. The Jews did not practice embalming. In the warm, middle-eastern climate, bodies quickly began to decompose with the incumbent stench of death. Martha was worried about that and perhaps embarrassed at the prospect of exposing her loved one to such indignity. Moreover, in her mind, she probably could not fathom why Jesus would want to open her brother's grave. (Though she had hinted and Jesus had broached the prospect of resurrection to her shortly before in 11:23-26, she may well have forgotten it in the emotion of the moment.)

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Mat 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

John 11:41 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.

John 11:42 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.

It says that Jesus lifted up his eyes towards heaven. Is it possible to pray looking up to the heavens? Absolutely. Jesus did. John Calvin mentioned in his commentary that by looking up to heaven, we do not limit God to being only there. He is present with us at all times. Unlike Satan, who can only be in one place at a time, God is omnipresent. He can be here with us this morning, and simultaneously be overseas in another service, perhaps a missionary service in Africa. He can be in all places at any time. This is an attribute that we find hard to understand but true. Jeremiah 23:24 says “Do I not fill heaven and earth?”

Scripture teaches that God’s throne is in Heaven. “Heaven is my Throne.” (Isaiah 66:1) I believe Christ was always teaching the disciples and those round about Him. Even in prayer, He teaches us to be thankful to the Lord. “I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” He says in verse 41. We need to be thankful for the answered prayers we have received, and always glorify God in our prayers. Jesus’ goal for those about was for them to understand that He was the one sent from above, the only Begotten Son of God.

When the stone was removed, Jesus lifted up his eyes, evidently toward heaven, and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” As translated, it implies Jesus had already asked God for Lazarus’ resurrection. However, the text does not actually bear that. Rather, he thanked His Father that He indeed *did* hear Him. Jesus went on to comment that God “hearest me always.” But then He went on to further comment that He was saying all of this quite audibly that those present might “believe that thou has sent me.” Jesus wanted all present to know by whom and how He would resurrect Lazarus by the power of God.

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

John 11:44 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.

Why did Jesus raise only one man? I think that God had a limited number of miracles that He wanted shown to the people. I’ve heard pastors say before that if Jesus had not specifically called for Lazarus, that all the dead in the Lord would have come forth.

Jesus commanded, “Lazarus, come forth.” The verb translated as come forth

(deuro *deuro*) is in the imperative mode. The fact Jesus used a loud voice perhaps was for all present to hear His command. He wanted no question as to the agent of Lazarus's resurrection. Immediately, "he that was dead came forth." The custom of Jewish burial was to wrap the body in cloth strips with perfumes to mask the odor of decomposition. Though he perhaps was not exactly a mummy, he was in similar fashion. Jesus therefore, ordered them to "loose him, and let him go." One can only imagine the state of mind of Lazarus having suffered the pains of death, having gone to paradise, and now being brought back to his family. We are not told any details of his later life. However, he without doubt later died again.

John Calvin said this about verses 43-44. " Christ's power is more clearly seen by the fact that he did not touch the body with his hand but only called out, using his voice. At the same time Christ commends to us the secret and wonderful efficacy of his Word. For how did Christ restore life to the dead but through his Word? So in the raising of Lazarus, Christ shows us a visible sign of His spiritual grace which we daily experience through the perception of faith, for Christ shows that his voice brings life. The evangelist takes pains in verse 44 to refer to the cloth around Lazarus' face and the strips of linen, to indicate to us that Lazarus came out of the tomb just as he had been laid in it. This way of burying the dead is still used by the Jews. They cover the body with linen and wrapped the head separately in a cloth. "

John 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

Praise the Lord that some believed after they saw this great miracle. It seems like it would be easy to believe if you saw the dead raised, or saw Jesus again after he had risen from the grave. Remember the story of Thomas who refused to believe the other disciples when they told him about seeing Christ after his resurrection.

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

John 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my

God.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

If you and I are to believe today, we will have to believe based upon the Word of God and the witnesses that have testified of the truth. Jesus is not going to come back and raise the dead for you and I. Those miracles and wonders were for a time, and today we have the complete and final, finished Word of God.

1 Cor 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

John 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

John 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

John 11:49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

John 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

The professional religionists at Jerusalem had a crisis on their hands and they knew it. The phrase “gathered . . . a council” as such literally means they convened the Sanhedrin. They were in a dilemma. They could not dispute His miracles. And now He had performed the ultimate miracle—raising one from the dead. In their lust for power they figured that all of Israel would soon follow after Him. Though they refused to admit it, the unspoken assumption is that He would become the Deliverer of Israel. In fact, though they revolted at the admission thereof, they conceded, He would be the political Messiah. Whereupon, the Romans would come and “take away both our place and nation.”

Here their true colors finally show through. What they *really* were worried about was their potential loss of power personally. If Jesus came to power, or if the Romans reacted against a presumed insurrection, *they*, the Sanhedrin, the big shots of Israel, would lose *their place*. That is what they were really worried about all throughout Jesus’ ministry. Their purported concern for the nation was secondary.

The result of this great miracle was twofold. Some “believed on him.” Others,

quickly went back to Jerusalem to the Pharisees and disclosed what Jesus had done. There indeed had been enemies in the crowd of mourners. Though they could not deny the miracle they had witnessed, they obviously did not believe in Him personally. For their part, there was neither a willingness to turn to Him in repentance and trust Him as Savior. They probably would form part of the crowd who soon would cry "Crucify Him."

We find that some of the Jews went to the Pharisees, the leading religious group of the day, and they told them what Jesus had done. We see that rather than rejoice that the Messiah had come, they rather gather together and ask "What do we?" Without faith in God, they saw Jesus as a threat to their nation. And Caiaphas, the high priest, suggests that Jesus should be put to death so that the nation could be saved. What is one man's life for all the others? What he did not understand, was that through the One they sought to destroy, many thousands have been given life. Eternal life can only come from Jesus Christ. We read these verses two weeks ago in our lesson.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

John 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Little did Caiaphas realize how profound a prophecy he had uttered. In fact, in occupying the office of the high priest that year, God's Spirit evidently spoke through him in uttering what would be an accurate prophecy. Little did he realize to what degree "Jesus should die for that nation." John noted that Jesus would die "not for that nation only (i.e., Israel), but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." What he had in view clearly is more than just the Jews of the dispersion, but the entire body of Christ across the church age. John, in writing many years later, may have had in mind what Paul wrote in Ephesians Chapter 2 that both Jew and gentile would be one in Christ.

Eph 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh

made by hands;
Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

John 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

John 11:54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

John 11:55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

John 11:56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

John 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.

The Sanhedrin therefore determined that day “to put him to death.” Though Jesus may not have been informed of their decision, He certainly knew their hostility. He knew, in effect, a warrant for His arrest had been issued. He knew His hour was not quite ready. It was God’s plan for Him to die on the Passover which was not far off. Therefore, he “walked no more openly among the Jews.” Rather, He went out into the Judean desert northeast of Jerusalem to a sparsely populated place called *Ephraim*. There, He spent time with His disciples away from the maneuverings and apprehension of the Sanhedrin. He knew what shortly lay ahead. His disciples did not.

We see that Jesus could no longer walk openly among the Jews, because they now sought to put Christ to death. This was the beginning of the Jews open plot to put Jesus to death, which we know did ultimately happen on the Cross of Calvary. But while they wanted to put Jesus to death now and ask that any man who knew His location was to tell them, they could not take Jesus yet. It was not Christ’s time to go to the Cross. But on the appointed day and time, Jesus willingly laid down His life for you and I so that we might have eternal life.

The assembling throngs at Jerusalem began looking for Him. He generally came

to the major high holy days of the Temple. Meanwhile, the authorities had issued what amounted to a warrant for His arrest.

No devices of man can alter the purposes of God: and while hypocrites amuse themselves with appearances and disputes, and worldly men pursue their own plans, Jesus still orders all things for his own glory and the salvation of his people.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.