

**Lighthouse Bible Church**

**November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**John 11: 1 – 16**      *Scripture reading: Luke 8: 49 - 56*

**‘A Sickness not unto Death but for the glory of God’**

**Stand – Read – Pray**

You remember that Jesus had just finished being confronted by the Jews in the temple during the Feast of Dedication and He told them that they were not of His sheep and don't hear His voice and do not have eternal life.

He told them that His sheep hear His voice and He gives them eternal life and they follow Him and they will never perish because they are in the hands of Christ who is in the hands of God because God and Christ are one.

Well, the Jews wanted to kill Him so He ends up leaving Jerusalem and going beyond the Jordan where many people came to Him and believed in Him. And it is at this point that Jesus public ministry is over and He begins a private ministry with His disciples as He heads ever closer to the cross, which is just days away now. *Chapters 11 & 12 transition before passion week.*

We pick it up in Chapter 11 with Jesus performing one of the most amazing miracles recorded in John and that is the raising of someone from the dead. And we are even told why this miracle will take place. In **John 11: 4** it says **‘this sickness is not unto death but (what) for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’**

In **Verse 15** He says **that you may believe**. In **Verse 40** He says that if you believe that I can raise Him from the dead **you would see the glory of God**. And He says in **Verse 42** **that they may believe that You sent Me**. This miracle is, once again, going to prove that Jesus is God the Son and that God the Father has sent Him. It is not so much the miracle as it is pointing to the miracle worker.

This isn't the first time that Jesus has raised someone from the dead. In **Mark 5: 35 – 43** He raised **Jairus's daughter** from the dead. In **Luke 7: 11 – 16** Jesus raised the son of a widow from Nain back to life. The difference between those and this one here in John is that Lazarus has been dead for 4 days and was decomposing as Verse 39 says, and he was already put into a burial tomb, which makes this miracle all the more amazing.

But, as with all miracles, they are done for the glory of God and the Son as Verse 4 tells us and the desired conclusion is the same as that of **Luke 7: 16** where the conclusion of the miracle of the widows son being raised was **God has visited His people.**

Because only God can give life and Jesus is God in human form and only He can bring someone back from the dead to life and to eternal life. Jesus as the bread of life fed 20,000 people with bread. Jesus as the light of the world gave sight to a blind man in darkness from birth and now Jesus, as the resurrection and the life, will give life to this man who has died, because He is God. So let's see how it unfolds starting in Verse 1.

**Verses 1 – 2: now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.**

This chapter is about **a certain man named Lazarus who was sick** and who would eventually die and in his sickness and death **God and Jesus will be glorified** in the raising of this man back to life from the grave. So this isn't the story of Lazarus, it is the story of the resurrection power of Jesus. Lazarus just happened to be **the certain man** mentioned here.

By the way, even the name **Lazarus** implies that it is God and Christ who get the glory in this miracle because Lazarus means ‘God has helped me’ and He helped Him in a most profound way.

This Lazarus was from Bethany, the problem is there were two Bethany’s, one beyond the Jordan where Jesus was and the other was, according to **Verse 18**, about 2 miles from Jerusalem. So which one was it? Well the end of Verse one and Verse 2 tells us **it was the town of Mary and her sister Martha.**

Well, there are a lot of Mary’s, which Mary was it? Well **it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair ... whose brother was sick.** We’ll read about that in the beginning of John Chapter 12 and her beautiful display of love and devotion to Jesus. So they would have known who it was and where this took place.

**Verse 3: therefore the sisters sent to Him saying, Lord behold, he whom You love is sick.**

Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick and the sickness was so severe that they were concerned that he would die. Notice what they say ‘**he whom You love** is sick. It doesn’t say he who loves you is sick, although I sure he did love Jesus, but they say ‘he, Lazarus, whom You love, is sick’.

There was a special love relationship between Lazarus and Jesus and they wanted Him there to heal him. As a matter of fact they both say to Jesus when He gets there **if You had only been here my brother would not have died.**

Notice that they appeal to Jesus for healing on behalf of His love for Lazarus and not Lazarus’ love for Him.

If Jesus operated in your life and my life on the basis of our love for Him, we would be in sad shape wouldn't we? Because our love for Him is inconsistent, selfish, self-centered, materialistic we don't deserve anything from Him.

But His love for us is unconditional and does not depend on us at all. He doesn't only love us when we are following Him and obeying Him, He loves us all the time regardless of where we are in our relationship with Him as a believer.

He gives us what we don't deserve; He blesses us when we don't deserve His blessing; He loves us when we are unlovable, He loves us enough to discipline us and chasten us as **Hebrews 12: 5 – 6** and I don't know about you but I praise God that He doesn't love Me on the basis of my love and the expression of my love for Him.

And by the way, His **love** for Lazarus, verse 4 says is a brotherly kind of affectionate love for him. That is what the word love is *phileo* and it means a brotherly affectionate kind of love which shows the humanness side of Jesus. The sisters say 'Lord the one you have an affectionate brotherly love for is sick'. *Look at agape as opposed to phileo.*

We know that Jesus had a profound affectionate love for Lazarus by the way He responds in Verse 35 where it says 'Jesus wept'. Then Verse 36 says **see how He loved him.**

**Verse 4: when Jesus heard that, He said 'this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**

Since Jesus already knows what is going to happen and what He is going to do, He tells His followers and maybe even those brought the message to Him, that **this sickness is not unto death it is for the glory of God the Father and God the Son.**

Remember we saw back in John 9 where the man was born blind and the question was asked ‘who sinned this man or his parents’ and Jesus said ‘neither one, this happened that the works of God may be revealed; in other words for the glory of God. God and Christ will be glorified in the events that take place in chapter 11.

And by the way, God and Christ are glorified whether someone is healed or not, right. God can be glorified just as much in not healing someone as He is in healing someone. Just ask the apostle Paul. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12: 7 – 10 he pleaded with God 3 times to remove his thorn in the flesh and God didn’t do it. But Paul, as he goes on to say, was all the better for it. *I listened to Joni Erikson Tada share her testimony.*

We recognize many times that suffering in our lives makes us **stronger**, more **patient**, more **loving**, more **humble**, more **sensitive to others** and more desirous to serve and obey Him. Then look at Verse 5.

**Verse 5: Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.**

This love is *agape* love, the divine kind of love. They were loved by Jesus on both the human *phileo* and divine level and they were loved perfectly as only He could. So why does John put this in here? Well, because of what Jesus is about to do in Verse 6.

**Verse 6: So when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.**

The immediate assumption is; well, why didn’t He just speak a word and heal him long distance or why didn’t He leave right away to go be with Him ... if He really loved him.

Well, Jesus really did love Lazarus; on both the human and divine levels. But His love is never bound by circumstances or time or distance. Our human love would say ‘let’s go and get to Bethany before it is too late’. But His divine love and omniscience says ‘there’s no hurry, what is about to happen is going to happen for God’s glory’.

By not going right away, there will be a greater opportunity to glorify God and to increase the disciples faith in the raising of Lazarus from the dead and showing that Jesus truly is God in human form than going and healing Him before death.

The disciples may not have understood the reason why Jesus delayed His going to Bethany, but Jesus did, and it was for them and for Mary and Martha and for all of those who would be challenged and changed by what they were about to see.

What about us? How often do we pray and then expect something to happen right away, not knowing the greater picture of God’s sovereign plan and purpose in not answering right away. But we are always called to **wait on the Lord, trust in Him and He will bring it to pass** right. **Psalm 37: 5:** says **commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass**, in His timing, in His way and for His glory. Then look at Verses 7 – 8.

**Verses 7 – 8: then after this He said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to Him, Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are you going there again?**

So after the two days, Jesus says to His disciples ‘**lets go back to Judea again**’. The place He had left earlier because the Jews wanted to stone Him to death, He says lets go back, because that is where Lazarus was at. The disciples say ‘listen, if Lazarus isn’t sick unto death, then why go back and chance being killed by the Jews’. So Jesus gives them an illustration in Verses 9 – 10.

**Verses 9 – 10: 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 the world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**

He gives them this illustration because they are afraid that He is going to go back to Judea and be taken by the Jews and killed. So this illustration is about God’s perfect timing in the life and death of someone.

He says there are 12 hours in a day and, in essence, there are 12 hours in the night. Those 12 hours in the day cannot be stopped or changed or shortened because it is a 12 hour day with daylight.

What He is saying is this; God has prescribed My time to live and My time to die and that cannot be changed any more than you can change the 12 hours in the day. It can’t be lengthened by staying away from the Jews and it cannot be shortened by going to Judea where the Jews want to kill Me.

Jesus says God has fixed the calendar and He has fixed the calendar of our lives and nothing can change that and because of that, you have nothing to fear. The day represents the life that we have just like Jesus said in **John 9: 4 I must work the works of Him while it is day because the night is coming in which no one can work.** There He was talking about the day representing His life and ministry and the night representing His death. And it is the same for all of us **we walk in the day** we live and move and have our being, and when night comes, at death, that is the end.

We only have our lifetime and God has set the boundary of that, hasn’t He. Isn’t that what **Psalms 139: 16** says **all the days fashioned for us were all written in His book before their were any of them.**

**Ecclesiastes 3: 2** says **there is a time to be born and a time to die**, and you nor anyone else can lengthen it and you or anyone else can shorten it because God has prescribed the time we will take our last breath. That is why Jesus always said ‘My time has not yet come’, and yours hasn’t either until He is ready.

I don’t know about you but that gives me a great sense of hope in that fact that I don’t have to fear death and neither do you because you will not die one second before God allows it because He has already set the bounds of your life.

Might I say this to you if you are an unbeliever here this morning? The boundaries of your life have been set as well and nothing can change that. That is why the Bible says today is the day of salvation because you don’t know if you have a tomorrow. After He tells them why they don’t need to fear going back to Judea He says to them in Verse 11.

**Verses 11 -14:** **these things He said and after that He said to them ‘our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up. Then His disciples said ‘Lord if he sleeps he will get well. However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead’.**

So after He tells them that His ministry isn’t over yet and that He has to go to Judea He tells them **our friend Lazarus sleeps**. He knows that Lazarus is already dead. How does He know that, because He is God? So He tells them that He is going to **wake Him up**.

The disciples think that he is sleeping and the sleep will help him **to get well** so Jesus tells them plainly that Lazarus is dead. So what He is saying is that I know that Lazarus has already died and I am going to Judea to raise Him from the dead. What a statement.

Then look at what Jesus says in Verse 15



**Verse 15: and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.**

Jesus tells them **I am glad** that I was not there and that Lazarus died and the reason is, is because when I raise Him from the dead this is really going to increase your belief and faith in Me which will bring glory to Me and My Father.

And the disciples were going to need that belief and faith in Christ that He had the power over death as the resurrection and the life in just a few short days because Jesus human life will end and then what hope would they have. Remember what Jesus said in **John 10: 18 I have the power to lay My life down and I have the power to raise it up.**

Jesus said ‘I am glad for your sakes so that your faith will increase and it will sustain you in the time ahead’. Then will look at Verse 16.

**Verse 16: Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples ‘let us also go that we may die with Him’**

That is a real love and devotion to Jesus by being willing to die with Him and remember that is what Jesus said in **Luke 9: 23 – 24 if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.**

Your version might say Thomas who is called ‘Didymus’ which is just the Greek word for twin. He was a twin. He had a great love for Jesus that would follow Him to death but he had a weak faith that believe they would die, in light of what Jesus had just told them in Verses 9 – 10 about the day and night sovereign God.

Before we become too critical of his faith, what about ours? What are we willing to do in love for our Savior? He was willing to die **with** Him. But we know that was short lived, right. When Christ was arrested in the garden, the disciples fled, including Thomas. But history records that Thomas did die for Jesus, just not with Him at that time.

When we look at our lives today, most of us are not only unwilling to die for Him, we are unwilling to live for Him. Most of us live for ourselves and our own desires and goals and appetites and pleasures and things or whatever and that is as far from a willingness to die, or even live for Jesus, as you can get.

Sometimes we claim to be Christians and talk down about Thomas being the doubter; but He had an incredible love and devotion to Jesus that would allow him to stand up and say ‘lets go that we may die with Him’. What kind of love and devotion do we show?

Do we say or sing ‘I love you Lord’ and then live for ourselves? That kind of love is a lie. It is better to say nothing and live for Jesus and be willing to die for Him than to say something and not live for Him. You become a contradiction.

The love and devotion for Christ is a self-sacrificing, selfless devotion to Him that say ‘whatever the cost’ in every area of our lives that bring glory to Him through what we think, say and do.

Gospel and closing prayer.

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**‘Raising the dead for the glory of God’**

Introduction and Review:

The Reason for the Miracle:  
John 11: 4, 15, 40, 42

A similar Miracle:  
Mark 5: 35 – 43, Luke 7: 11 – 16

Verses 1 – 2:  
The Location of the miracle

Verses 3 – 4:  
Hebrews 12: 5 – 6, John 11: 35 – 36  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12: 7 – 10

Verses 5 – 6:  
Psalm 37: 5

Verses 7 – 10:  
John 9: 4, Psalm 139: 16, Ecclesiastes 3: 2

Verses 11 – 16:  
John 10: 18, Luke 9: 23 – 24

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