

Master of Life and Death

Jesus Raises Lazarus

Text: John 11:17-44

OPEN

Have you ever received that dreaded phone call that someone you love is very sick or has had a bad accident? When we receive news like this our thoughts are consumed with wanting to help, wanting to be there for the one we love. This week we are examining the story where Jesus received news that his close friend Lazarus, “the one he loved”, was deathly sick. Instead of rushing to his friend’s aid, Jesus waits...2 more days. Although his followers did not understand his delay, Jesus reveals his purpose in the waiting. The waiting was not a reflection of a lack of love Jesus has for others, but **the sickness became an opportunity for God’s glory to be displayed** not only in Lazarus’ life but also Jesus’ life. As we examine the story we will see that in order for Jesus to bring life to his friend, the one he loves, he himself must face death head on showing that he alone is the master of life and death. After Jesus raises Lazarus he has his grave clothes removed so he can dress like the living. Jesus not only calls us from death to life but to live like the living. We no longer need to wear the grave clothes of our past because Jesus clothes us in his righteousness.

REFLECT

- Read John 11:1-16. This seventh and final miracle that John records is the most dramatic of all. (1) What are some of the tensions that set up this story? (2) Describe the type of relationship Jesus has with this family from Bethany (v. 1-4) (3) What was the cost for Jesus to return to that area (v. 8, 16).
- Read John 11:17-27. What is the purpose for Jesus waiting for 2 days before going to Bethany (see v. 14-15)? *For Lazarus to have been dead for 4 days when Jesus arrived means he was already dead before Jesus received the news. The Jews believed that a deceased person’s Spirit could re-enter their bodies for three days after death.*

DISCUSS

- God uses Lazarus’ sickness as an opportunity for his glory to be displayed in Jesus the master of life and death.
 - Have you ever waited on God through a challenging time?
 - How has waiting on God developed a heart of dependence on him?
 - Even though Martha doesn’t understand Jesus’ delay she has not lost faith in Jesus (v. 22,27). How has your faith been strengthened through a loss in your life?
- Divide into three groups each reading one passage: Psalm 130:5-6; Psalm 27:13-14; and Psalm 33:20-22. How does your passage provide hope in waiting on God? Share with the whole group.

Seeing the pain of his friends Jesus is emotionally moved. He cries (v. 35) but also is “deeply moved” (v. 38) which is better understood as anger. Jesus’ anger is directed at the curse of death itself. This is the enemy that he has come to destroy once and for all.

- How does this picture of Jesus being deeply moved and angry at the destructive nature of sin give you confidence in his care over you?
- How does Hebrews 4:14-16 remind you that Jesus deeply cares?
- Jesus doesn’t only raise Lazarus but has his grave clothes removed so he can be redressed to live like the living. Read Colossians 3:12-14. What qualities from this list do you need to be more clothed in?

APPLY/PRAY

- In what ways have you been “waiting on the Lord”? Pray that God would reveal his glory in the waiting and strengthen your faith.
- What are some “grave clothes” from your past that you struggle to remove? Pray that God would replace those with his righteousness (see Colossians 3:12-14).
- Pray for our church, our elders, staff, and ministries leaders. Pray that God would give us everything we need to participate in reaching our community for Christ.

