

JESUS RESURRECTS

CORE PASSAGE: JOHN 11:17-27,38-44

CONTEXT

The book of John is unique among the four Gospels. John's Gospel highlighted seven signs Jesus performed that pointed to His identity as not only the promised Messiah but God Himself. John also included seven "I am" statements that intentionally connected Jesus's identity to the God who revealed Himself to Moses as "I AM" at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). In John 11, Jesus performed both a miraculous sign and declared an "I am" statement to show His power over life and death.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.

As you examine John 11:17-27,38-44:

- Notice that Martha understood that Jesus could do whatever He wanted, including resurrect her brother.
- Affirm that Jesus's desire was for people to believe in Him and His mission.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many Parables
(Mark 4:1-34)

Jesus Walks on Water
(Mark 6:45-52)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Mark 6:30-44)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions
(Mark 7:24-37)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** John 11:1-16

☐ **Day 4:** John 11:38-57

☐ **Day 2:** John 11:17-27

☐ **Day 5:** John 12:1-11

☐ **Day 3:** John 11:28-37

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 21



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 11:17-27

ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS WILL LIVE FOREVER WITH HIM.

Circle Jesus's "I am" statement. Then underline Martha's response.

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). **19** Many of the Jews had come

to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. **20** As soon as Martha heard that

Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Then

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. **22** Yet

even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." **23** "Your brother

will rise again," Jesus told her. **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the

resurrection at the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one

who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. **26** Everyone who lives and believes in me will

never die. Do you believe this?" **27** "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah,

the Son of God, who comes into the world."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

RESURRECTION: Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



The siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were no strangers to Jesus. These were some of Jesus's closest friends. Jesus Himself was grieved to know Lazarus had died and his sisters were mourning. Nevertheless, Jesus understood Lazarus's death was an opportunity for revelation. In ancient Judaism, a belief persisted that a dead person's soul hovered over his body hoping to reunite, but the soul only stayed for three days. Lazarus had been dead for four days, which meant his soul was gone and it was too late for hope.¹

Mary and Martha responded to Jesus uniquely in a previous encounter (Luke 10:38-42), and they did so here as well. This time Mary remained in the house, possibly angry at Jesus, but Martha came to Him on the road, grieving but hopeful. Martha believed Jesus could have healed Lazarus, and though her brother was now dead, she still had faith in Jesus, saying: "Whatever you ask from God, God will give you" (John 11:22).

How are you prone to respond to Jesus when circumstances don't work out how you think they should?

Jesus's response to Martha, promising her brother's resurrection, was not a surprise to her. Like most Jews in the first century, Martha believed in a future resurrection. But what Jesus said and Martha heard were two different points. Martha was thinking about the future—"the last day" (v. 24)—while Jesus was planning to act in the present.

Next, Jesus uttered perhaps His most popular "I am" statement: "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Notice what Jesus was and wasn't saying. He was not saying He can provide resurrection and life but that He is the resurrection and the life. These are not gifts Jesus provides but qualities of His divine identity (see 1:1-4). Resurrection and life are experienced by those who are in Christ.

Of course, to experience resurrection and life requires faith, specifically faith in who Jesus is. Martha believed in Jesus, saying: "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God" (11:27). But it does seem Martha was confused about what Jesus was intending to do next, bringing the future into the present.

What does it mean to be united with Christ and share in His resurrection?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 11:38-44

BY RESURRECTING THE DEAD, JESUS POINTED TO HIS MISSION FOR THE FATHER'S GLORY.

Highlight Jesus's purpose for this resurrection miracle.

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** "Remove the stone," Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. **42** I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me." **43** After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **44** The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go."

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"Death reigns everywhere, for the death of the soul is alienation from God. So people who believe in Christ, although they had been once dead, begin to live; for faith is a spiritual resurrection of the soul and, as it were, brings the soul alive, that it may live for God."²

—John Calvin (1509–1564)

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



John wanted his readers to know that Lazarus was really dead. A stench of rot was in the air. Nonetheless, Jesus said, “Remove the stone” (v. 39). Unlike our burial customs, ancient Jews often placed their dead in above-ground tombs. These tombs often were caves with a slab to lay the body upon. After one year, the body would have decayed and the deceased’s bones would be placed in a small ornamental box called an ossuary.³

Jesus was undeterred by the stench of death. Again He referenced belief as He told Martha that with faith she “would see the glory of God” (v. 40). Each of the seven signs Jesus performed in John were meant to reveal the glory of God in Jesus to the witnesses of Jesus’s works. But the active ingredient of such sight and recognition was faith. Without faith, the people missed the meaning of the miracle.

What are some ways we can witness the glory of God today?

Next, John gave us a glimpse into Jesus’s prayer life. A couple of features of Jesus’s prayer are worth noting. First, Jesus prayed to God. By looking up and addressing God as Father, we get a glimpse into the intimate relationship between Father and Son. Second, Jesus

wanted the crowd to hear Him pray to the Father. He wanted them to get a picture of the Son’s relationship with the Father. Jesus wanted the crowd, including Martha and Mary, to know the Father sent the Son to do His will.

As God the Son, Jesus exercised His divine authority and commanded Lazarus to come out of the grave. With words, Lazarus was resurrected back to life. This final sign revealed the glory of God in Jesus. As Creator, God is life itself and therefore the source of life. In an instant, Jesus was able to extend life back to Lazarus. No one else could do this but God!

What hope do you find in Jesus’s power to resurrect Lazarus from the dead?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus’s power to resurrect the dead means He was also able to resurrect Himself, through which He secured victory over sin, death, and the powers of darkness. He did this also to give eternal life to those who believe.

FROM GRIEF TO GLORY

Read John 11:17-27,38-44. Write down how the people in the narrative experienced grief, confession, compassion, and then Jesus's glory.

GRIEF

CONFESSION

COMPASSION

GLORY

How does seeing Jesus turn grief to glory challenge your fears and assumptions in your own sufferings?

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



HEAD

How can you grow in your knowledge of and faith in Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 21. Thank God for the eternal life He has given you now through faith in Jesus and the future life He will give you in the resurrection. Ask God to strengthen your trust in His resurrection power and to act with appropriate boldness and faith.



HEART

What doubts, fears, and sins might you need to confess to grow in your faith?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will your life look different because you believe Jesus will resurrect you?



MARY AND MARTHA

By Leslie Hudson

The Gospel narrators focus on Jesus's closest circle of His disciples, the twelve apostles. But those weren't Jesus's only close friends. We know He was also tight with a trio of siblings in Bethany: Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Though Lazarus takes the spotlight in John 11—being raised from the dead tends to do that—we should take a few minutes to get to know Lazarus's sisters a little better. Their story is an integral part of Lazarus's story and walks Jesus right up to the cross.

A STRONG FRIENDSHIP

The first time we come across this family as we consider the Gospels chronologically, Lazarus wasn't even mentioned. In Luke 10, Jesus sent out His disciples in groups of two (vv. 1-12) and celebrated their victories (vv. 21-24), preached rejection to towns that were unrepentant (vv. 13-16), and shared the story of the good Samaritan (vv. 25-37). Then we read a story of Jesus entering a village, where "a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home" (v. 38). Martha was caught up in entertaining Jesus's entire entourage, but even though "they" were traveling, Martha welcomed "him," meaning Jesus.

Often the story is told that Martha was too busy entertaining, but we're not sure that was the case. Luke reported that she was "distracted by her many tasks" (v. 40), and considering that it was Martha's house (v. 38), any homeowner can understand. Hear her question again, not with a nagging tone but with the sound of an exhausted woman: "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand" (v. 40). Maybe Martha truly wanted to sit at Jesus's feet as Mary did, but she carried the burden of a household. (And all the Type A people shouted "Amen!") Jesus's gentle answer (v. 41), acknowledging her stress and high emotions, revealed He wasn't mad at her, and neither should we be. Rather, we, like Martha, should see that more than any responsibility, we need to sit at Jesus's feet and hear His Word, giving us the soul-care we desperately need.

A FAMILY TRAGEDY

Lazarus's name appears in Scripture only when it's practically too late. In John 11:1, we read: "Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha." Naturally, the sisters sent a message to Jesus: "Lord, the one you love is sick" (v. 3). Jesus explained to His disciples

that the sickness “would not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (v. 4). At Jesus’s instruction, they waited two more days before heading to Bethany. By the time they arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days.

The sisters heard separately that Jesus had arrived, and both approached Him with the same statement: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died” (vv. 21,32). We hear the faith of these sisters burning through their tears of grief. Yes, they believed, but they wondered, “Why didn’t Jesus come sooner?”

MARTHA’S FAITH

Though Martha’s grief was certainly overwhelming at the time of Lazarus’s death, she kept her faith grounded by saying aloud what she knew to be certain: “I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you . . . I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. . . . I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world” (John 11:22,24,27). We can find comfort in our own lives by also choosing to believe and therefore speak (2 Corinthians 4:13) what we know to be true of Jesus.

MARY’S LOVE

In Mary’s final mention in Scripture, she demonstrated her love for the Lord and her understanding of what He had done. She “took a pound of perfume, pure and expensive nard, anointed Jesus’s feet, and wiped his feet with her hair” (John 12:3). Though Matthew and Mark also recounted this

story, only John revealed Mary’s identity. He also pointed out that this happened “six days before the Passover” (v. 1). Passover would have been Jesus’s last supper on the night He was betrayed. John connected the dots for us: In raising Lazarus, Jesus risked His safety by returning to the Jerusalem area. Through that miracle, the Jews had been pushed to the breaking point; raising Lazarus from the dead was the final straw to make them decide that Jesus must die (11:45-57). Jesus’s prophecy that Lazarus’s death would end in glory (v. 4) was fulfilled in a way no one could have predicted—in Jesus’s death so that we might have everlasting life (3:16).

We can’t identify Mary’s thoughts, but in sitting at Jesus’s feet (Luke 10:39), she had captured His worthiness and His passion. She heard Him say He would die when the disciples missed it, and she didn’t waste the opportunity to honor Him.

As you reflect on these sisters from Bethany, open your heart to their hospitality, grief, compassion, and faith. They knew Jesus, loved Him, believed Him, knew His Word, and devoted their lives to Him. Invite the Holy Spirit to give you a heart like theirs even today.

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