



INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 11:28-32 Martha goes to her sister Mary to deliver this news that *"the Master had come and He calls for her."* Mary arose quickly and goes to see Jesus. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was at the same place Martha had met Him. But, when the neighbors and friends saw Mary quickly leave, they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn over Lazarus. When Mary saw Jesus, she fell down at Jesus' feet giving Him reverence and worship and saying as well *"if thou had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."*

LESSON: I. A TIME OF SORROW JOHN 11:33-37

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. Jesus sees how Mary and the Jews were wailing. There were some Jews that wailed and moaned hypocritically and insincere in their sorrow. However, Jesus did not hide his emotions, for He groaned in the spirit and was troubled, causing strong emotions within Him. He was greatly moved with compassion for all who were suffering and hurting. But He also was deeply troubled by the whole scene of sorrow and death. Death held His dear friend Lazarus, but, Jesus came to defeat death.

11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. At this point, Jesus turns and asks *"where is he laid?" "Where have you laid Lazarus?"* Of course, Jesus already knew where Lazarus was laid, but He needed to distract the people from their deep wailing and arouse their expectation for something unusual that was about to happen. He's showing them that He is still concerned even after receiving their news, and hearing Martha's confession of faith. The people said **"Come and see"**, the same words as Jesus gave the invitation to Andrew and John (His first disciples) as they saw and followed Him (1:39).

11:35 Jesus wept. The shortest Scripture in the Bible is *Jesus wept*". and yet the deepest one. Why did He weep, for He already knew the outcome? There are so many speculations, but, it is here that we are reminded of the humanity of Jesus, as He breaks out into tears. He enters into all our experiences and knows how we feel. He sympathizes with us. *"He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"* Is.23:3. And He wants us to have the faith to believe, not of unbelief.

11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!—The Jews then seeing Jesus weeping with the others, they began to see His love for Lazarus, saying *"Behold how he loved him."*

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?— Then some of the Jews began to debate...

1. How much Jesus loved Lazarus because He wept (11:37).



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2. Others complained because He didn't arrive in time to heal Lazarus.

3. And others reasoned that since Jesus opened the eyes of the blind, and caused them to see, this man Lazarus should not have died (11:38).

For generations there have been and still are questions and concerns that if Jesus loved us so much why did He allow this or that to happen? All I know is that there is good and evil in the world and He sends rain on the just and the unjust. If we die in Christ we have another home. This world is not our own. It will decay because of sin. Since He is Creator, there is a time to be born and a time to die (Eccles.3:2a). He knows our end time and resurrection time. What is out of our hands is still in God's hands!

II. A TIME OF ACTION JOHN 11:38-41a

11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave.

Tombs at that time were usually caves carved in the rock of a hillside. A tomb was often large enough for people to walk inside. Several bodies were usually placed in one tomb. After burial, a large stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb.

Groaning within Himself meant...

- He saw the pain of Mary and Martha and their dear friends (11:37).
- He sensed the terrible dread and bondage that death held over His dear friend Lazarus, and over the whole human race.
- He was keenly conscious of His own terrible death that lay only a few days away.

He felt the emotions of both compassion and anger, sympathy and indignation. He groaned from deep within, sensing an intense love for all who suffer; a holy anger, and a posture of what death would bring. Jesus stood face to face with the grave.

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. I don't think they were expecting Jesus to say *"Take away the stone."* Jesus always has a purpose for the things He does or commands us to do. And we see that Martha still didn't quite understand. This strange request Jesus was giving went right over her head. She had just made a profound declaration (11:27) to Jesus' declaration (11:25-26)! This reminded me of Peter. At one point he had made a profound declaration and the next point Jesus told him get thee behind me Satan (Matt.16:23). All Mary knew was Lazarus had been dead for four days, and by now his body was stinking. It looks like she has forgotten their earlier conversation.

11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?— Jesus now has to remind Martha of the earlier conversation that they had already had.

- He wanted her to conquer her complaining and lay aside her objections.
- He wanted her to trust Him, and to quit questioning what He did.
- He wanted her to trust...
 - His judgment and Will.
 - His knowledge and understanding.
 - His Words and instructions.

Very simply, Jesus wanted her to rest in Him, to place an unlimited, resting faith in Him, because the promise was: *"if she would believe"*— (rest in him), she *"would see the glory of God."* *"The glory of God"* meant Jesus' *mercy and power and care on the earth*, as well as in the next world to come. The person who will step back and let God act as He wills; the person who genuinely believe in God will see the glory of God here and forever. If Martha wanted to see the glory of God, she had to believe. And to believe

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meant it was time to take action.

11:41a Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. We all know that Jesus could have rolled that stone away by Himself, but He didn't. The command to take action was given. And the stone was rolled away from Lazarus' tomb by the people. Everyone there gets to learn something.

III. A TIME OF VICTORY JOHN 11:41b-44

11:41b ...And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Jesus and the Father are One, and He took the time to lift up His eyes upward toward the Father in a prayer of thanksgiving. Before attempting anything, Jesus acknowledged the Father's help by thanking Him in prayer. The prayer was none other than a Prayer of Thanksgiving, rather than a Prayer of Petition. Thanksgiving came first.

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. Jesus knew the Father had heard Him. He already knew the Will of the Father. He already knew when He was to come to the tomb of Lazarus. He already knew His purpose when He got there. How? - Because He and the Father are in close communion. Now we see and hear what Jesus knew. He says the Father always hears Him. He demonstrates thanks for the purpose of the people standing around. He already Knew, but He wanted the people to Know—

- that they may know His source.
- that they may know that He and the Father are One in communication.
- that they may believe that the Father had sent Him.

He's thanking the Father for the miracle planned; for the miracle that's only possible by Him.

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

1. The power over death came from Jesus alone. He alone has the power to raise the dead.
2. The power over death came with a loud voice.
 - a. It was a "*shout*" which matched the enormity of the miracle. It stressed the enormous power required to raise the dead.
 - b. It was a "*shout*" which stressed that the power within Jesus is the power of God Himself.
 - c. The "shout" of Jesus is personal. His great shout of power came forth with the name Lazarus. He only spoke three words: "*Lazarus, come forth.*" Jesus shouted the name of Lazarus. He didn't just shout "*Come forth.*" He shouted "*Lazarus come forth.*" If he hadn't called him by name, He would have emptied the whole graveyard. Jesus knows every believer by name, and He is personally concerned over the death of everyone. The day is coming when "He will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord 1Thess.4:16-17. ("*Come forth*") *Praise God!*

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."

3. The results of the power over death through Jesus' shout were twofold:
 1. Lazarus who was dead came forth. He came forth immediately, obediently, and visibly. The enemy could hold him no longer when the Son of God spoke and called him forth by name. He who was



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dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes. There was no way he could remain in the grave; no other power could hold him there. His face was even bound about with a napkin.

- In Jesus' day there were at least two separate pieces of burial clothing on the body.
 - The grave clothes (the wrappings/cloths a dead body is buried in) wrapped around the body.
 - And the napkin upon the face.

When Jesus was buried, He also had a napkin wrapped around His face. It was left folded either by Him or an angel as He was resurrected.

2. Lazarus who was dead had to be "Loosed, and let go." The people witnessed and took part in rolling the stone away—and loosing or the unwrapping the cloths off Lazarus.

The completion of the miracle was to *"loose him and let him go"*, so all could see Jesus' divine power over death. This was certainly a cause for victory!

SUMMARY:

¹When Jesus saw Martha weeping and other people wailing with her, He was deeply troubled (11:33). He asked where they had put Lazarus, and when they showed Him, He broke into tears. He sympathized with them in their sorrow. He enters into all our experiences and knows how we feel (11:34-35). Here we are reminded of the humanity of Christ and His love and concern for His people. The Jews debated whether or not He could have prevented this tragedy by not allowing him to die (11:36-37) (11:33-37).

Jesus saw the pain of Mary and Martha and their dear friends, and He groaned in Himself coming to the grave. Jesus then commanded the people to take the stone away from the grave. Martha didn't quite understand because she knew the body would be stinking after four days. But, Jesus now has to remind Martha of the earlier conversation they had had already. If she wanted to see the glory of God, she had to believe. And to believe meant it was time to take action, so Jesus commanded them to take away the stone (11:38-41a).

Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed thanking the Father that He always hears Him because of their close communion. Jesus wanted the people to believe that the Father had sent Him. The miracle is now seen as Jesus shouted, *"Lazarus, come forth"* and he came forth bound in graveclothes with the napkin still on his face. If Jesus had not called Lazarus by name when He shouted, the whole cemetery would have been emptied. The completion of the miracle was to *"loose him and let him go"*, so all could see Jesus' divine power over death. This was certainly a cause for victory (11:41b-44).

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/jesus-calls-lazarus-forth-from-the-grave/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

