



JOHN 11:1-16

LESSON: JESUS' RESPONSE TO A DIRE NEED — February 14, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 10:31-42 The Jewish leaders picked up stones to kill Jesus (10:31), but Jesus wanted to know which of the good works He showed them from His Father that they wanted to stone Him for (10:32). They said that it wasn't for the good works, but for blasphemy. He was trying to make Himself God (10:33). Jesus took them to the Law and showed them where the message of God came that "you are gods" (10:34) — (Ps.82:6 I called you all gods, sons of the Most High), so the scripture can't be changed or broken (10:35). So Jesus asks about the One whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, "you're blaspheming because I said I'm the Son of God?" (10:36). So, Jesus puts it to them that if He doesn't do the works of His Father, don't believe Him (10:37). But, if He do the works, and they don't believe Him, believe the works, so that they may come to know and believe the Father is working in Him and He's in the Father (10:38). The Jews tried to arrest Jesus, but He escaped out of their hands (10:39) and went beyond the Jordan to the place where John the Baptist had first baptize people. And this is where He stayed (10:40). Many people began to come to that place and said John did no miracle, but all the things he said concerning Jesus was true (10:41). And many people at that place believed in Him; they came to the decision that He was the Messiah (10:42).

LESSON: I. JESUS SUMMONED JOHN 11:1-4

11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. This story begins to tell us that Lazarus was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha.

11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)— We find out that this Mary is Lazarus' sister who anoints the Lord's feet with an expensive ointment called spikenard and then wipes His feet with her hair in 12:3. In chapter 12, Jesus said that Mary's anointing pointed toward His burial, that is, His death (12:7). Mary is always at the feet of Jesus, the better or good part (Lk.10:42).

11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. They were all close friends of Jesus, therefore, word had been sent by the sisters that the one Jesus loved was sick.

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. Upon hearing this news, this might have seemed strange to everyone of what Jesus said, but truly a miracle was about to take place. Jesus said "This sickness is not unto death—meaning Lazarus was not going to die. "But (this was) for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be honored through it." There were seven purposes we can see in this story for Lazarus' sickness. The first purpose was to glorify God and proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God.

II. JESUS DELAYED JOHN 11:5-14

11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Each member of the family is mentioned personally by name. Jesus loved the family which leads to the second purpose of Lazarus' sickness: to show Jesus' great love. The very reason Jesus was sent into the world was because of the Father's love and that



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same love in Jesus is toward each individual in the world given to Him by the Father.



11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Jesus didn't go readily to see Lazarus. He waits two days before He and His disciples depart toward Bethany, and He was nowhere near Lazarus and the sisters. **The third purpose of Lazarus's sickness was to show the necessity for waiting upon God in great crises.**

Can we truly wait on God?

- Mary and Martha sent for Jesus (11:3).
- Jesus remained where He was for two days (11:6).

The point is this: Martha and Mary were learning to wait upon God throughout this whole experience.

- Waiting is just a delay, not an end point.
- While waiting, pray, praise, worship, and thank God for the results. Waiting is not for you to be worried nor be in anxiety.
- When you are unable to do anything, God is able to do everything because you have invited Him in. But remember He will do things in His own way in His time. *"He may not come when you want Him, but He always right on time!"*

Two days might have passed by since receiving the news of Lazarus' sickness, but, we will learn that Lazarus has died and had been buried in the grave for four days.

11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, **Let us go into Judaea again.** Going back to Judea was dangerous because in 10:33 the Jews had accused Him of blasphemy. In 10:39 they sought to arrest Him, but He escaped. But Jesus determined the time. He said, *"Let's go into Judea again."* The time had come for them to see who He truly is.

11:8 His disciples say unto him, **Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?**— The disciples knew what had occurred the last time Jesus was in Judea, for they were about to stone Him for His sayings. So, they're pretty much trying to warn Jesus by saying, *"a short time ago they wanted to kill you. You going again?"* The disciples protested Jesus' return there because of the threat to His life. Bethany is north of Judea. But Jesus alludes to the fact that His time on the earth is a final period of time and it cannot be changed. He was to go and do what is right, regardless of the danger. Thomas is the only one who will come into agreement with Jesus in 11:16 saying *"Let us also go..."* but for the wrong reason. **The fourth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to teach the need to grasp opportunity (11:8-10).**

- In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. We all have an opportunity to give, to teach, and to encourage.

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.** So, Jesus gives this scenario of time—12 hours in a day. Whatever we do within the hours of the day is important. Therefore, if a man walks or travels within the daytime, he walks without stumbling because he can see the natural light of the sun. He can do his work while it's day. A person walking in the light of God's Will can't be harmed and won't stumble. When Jesus says to them "Go", then the Light of the World's presence will go with them, making it the right opportunity for them!

11:10 **But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.** There's a different

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feeling in this verse. If a man walks or travels at night, there is darkness all around him, and he stumbles because he lacks light; he can't see God's Will. So, a person walking in the night with no light (darkness) will stumble without God's Light in him; God's Will in him. He will make unwise decisions and not perceive the challenges or even where to go.

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. After what Jesus said, He tells the disciples, " *Our friend Lazarus sleeps.*" Jesus is not worried about Himself, but it was an urgency to do His Father's Will. **The fifth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to show Jesus' great power over death.** Many picture death as annihilation; as ceasing to exist. However, "Death" is called "sleep" in order to picture the idea that the believer is:

- Resting in the presence and comfort of God.
- Resting from the labor of his service on earth.
- Resting and refreshing himself for a greater service for God.

—Jesus said that Jairus' daughter was sleep (Matt.9:24).

—When Stephen was martyred, he is said to have fallen asleep (Acts 7:60).

—Some of the five hundred witnesses to Jesus' ascension are said to have fallen asleep (1 Cor.15:6).

—Believers already in heaven are said to be asleep in Jesus (1 Thes.4:13).

Lazarus was Jesus' friend, only sleeping waiting for the One who has power over death!

11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Well, the disciples thought Lazarus was physically asleep and assumed that sleep was the best thing for his illness and for him to recover.

11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. While Jesus was speaking of Lazarus' death, the disciples thought Jesus was referring to literal rest and that Lazarus was sleeping, for He had told them earlier that this sickness was not unto death (11:4).

11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. Since the disciples didn't get it the first time, Jesus had to speak bluntly that Lazarus was dead. Wow! They knew that Jesus had delayed His going to Lazarus, so this probably shocked them! The scripture in 1st Thessalonians 4 where Paul writes to the Thessalonians telling them that he didn't want them to be ignorant concerning them that sleep. So, Jesus really had to break it down so they could understand what He really meant.

III. JESUS DETERMINED JOHN 11:15-16

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 tells them, for their sakes (the disciples), He's glad that He wasn't there when Lazarus died. Why? Because when He raises Lazarus from the dead, they all will be astonished and believe. **The sixth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to help strengthen the disciples' belief.**

11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Thomas, called Didymus (Gr "twin"), encourages the disciples to go with Jesus, that they may die with Him. The outlook for safety in Judea looked dim to the disciples and Thomas felt that Jesus would be killed, and as a result he was willing to go and be killed also. **The seventh purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to stir the disciples' courage and loyalty.** Thomas was known as a doubting man, but he took the lead here by showing great courage and loyalty to Jesus which should be demonstrated by every believer.

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SUMMARY:



This story begins to tell us that Lazarus was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha. This was the Mary who had anointed the Lord's feet with ointment and wiped them with her hair. They were all close friends of Jesus. Therefore, word had been sent by the sisters that the one Jesus loved was sick. Upon hearing this news, Jesus says "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified through it.*" This might have seemed strange to everyone, but truly a miracle was about to take place (**11: 1-4**).

Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He heard of Lazarus' sickness, but delayed going to see him for two days. After the 2 days Jesus told His disciples to get ready to go. The disciples protested Jesus' return to Judea because of the threat to His life. The last time He was there they tried to stone Him. Bethany is north of Judea. But Jesus alludes to the fact that His time on the earth is a final period of time and it cannot be changed. A person who walks in the light of God's Will cannot be harmed, but the person who walks at night with no light (darkness) will stumble without God's Light in him. After what Jesus said, He tells them, "*Our friend Lazarus is asleep and I'm going because I must wake him.*" Well, the disciples thought Lazarus was asleep physically and assumed that sleep was the best thing for his illness for him to recover. But Jesus had to plainly say that Lazarus was dead (**11:5-14**).

For the sake of the disciples, Jesus tells them that He's glad that He wasn't there when Lazarus died. Why? Because when He raises Lazarus from the dead, they will all be astonished and believe. Thomas, whose called Didymus (Gr "twin"), encourages the disciples to go with Jesus, that they may die with Him. The outlook for safety in Judea looked dim to the disciples and Thomas felt that Jesus would be killed, and as a result they would be killed as well. Thomas was known as a doubting man, but he took the lead here by showing great courage and loyalty to Jesus which should be demonstrated by every believer (**11:15-16**).