

Text: John 11:1-45

Title: “Believe and Live” Pt.2

INTRODUCTION

Before I get started today I want to share some sad news with you. This week we have received word that two of our staff members will be moving from our church. Our children’s minister, Scott Eudaley, and our contemporary worship leader, Jared Longoria, have both indicated that they will be moving on to other opportunities of service. We’re saddened by this, but are grateful for their service to the Lord in our church and want to be a blessing to them as they go on their way. Next Sunday afternoon we will have a time to say goodbye to the Eudaleys and the Longorias from 5-6pm in the West Building. Pray.

Today I’m concluding the series of messages I’ve been preaching on the miracles of Jesus. There are seven of them that John specifically includes in his Gospel. He calls them “miraculous signs” because they point us to who Jesus was and what He came to do. In fact, at the end of his gospel record John said this:

John 20:31 - But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John recorded these miracles, and I’ve been preaching about these miracles, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. If you have never been saved, you have all the evidence you need that you should take Jesus seriously, and come to Him for eternal life. If you are already saved, you have all the evidence you need to continue to trust in Jesus for every realm of your life.

Stop to think about how the power of Jesus was demonstrated in every realm of the human experience in these miracles we’ve studied. (Write these in your notes, if you like.) Jesus’ power was demonstrated in the social realm when He rescued a wedding by turning water into wine. Jesus’ power was demonstrated in the natural realm when He calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. His power was demonstrated in the material realm when He multiplied a little boy’s lunch to feed thousands of hungry people. His power was demonstrated in the physical realm when He gave health to a sick girl, when He gave strength to a paralyzed man, when He gave sight to a blind man and, most spectacularly, when He gave life to a dead man (as we’ll see again today in the raising of Lazarus). And Jesus did all of that to demonstrate that He had ultimate power in the spiritual realm to bring eternal life to those who are spiritually dead.

Open your Bibles once again to John 11. Last week and this week we’re focused on the last of these seven miracles John records, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Let me remind you of what’s happening here. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were great friends of Jesus. When Lazarus became gravely ill his sisters sent word to Jesus who was in another town.

John 11:3 - So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

John 11:4 - When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

Keep that in mind, because it’s important in order for us to understand why Jesus performed this miracle. You see, upon learning of Lazarus’ illness Jesus didn’t go immediately to help him. In fact, He deliberately delayed His trip to Bethany where Lazarus lived. So by the time Jesus arrived Lazarus had already died and his body was placed in a tomb. When He arrived in Bethany, one of the sisters, Martha, ran out to meet Jesus. **READ JOHN 11:21-27.**

A little later, the other sister, Mary, came out to meet Jesus. It’s a very emotional scene. **READ JOHN 11:32-45.**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION – The Kimbell Art Museum here in Fort Worth is one of the finest art museums in the country. If you take a tour of the museum you will find displayed there a very famous work of art called “The Raising of Lazarus” by the Italian artist Duccio (*Duccio*), painted back in the 1300s. Duccio shows the moment when Jesus called Lazarus forth from the tomb. (Notice the guy holding his nose.)

Can you imagine what a stir it created when Lazarus, a man who had been dead for four days, walked out of his tomb all wrapped up in his burial clothes?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION – A few weeks ago we were all concerned about Dr. Kent Brantley who was diagnosed with the deadly Ebola virus. He was brought back to the US for treatment and he miraculously survived. When Dr. Brantley was finally discharged from Emory Medical Center in Atlanta he stood before a press conference and said, “Today is a miraculous day. I’m thrilled to be alive, to be well, and to be reunited with my family.” If Lazarus would have held a press conference after Jesus raised him from the dead, he might have said the same thing.

Now remember we must see all of this through the lens of Jesus’ statement in v.4.

John 11:4 - “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

So Jesus is orchestrating all of this ... Lazarus’ sickness, Jesus’ delay in going to them, the crowd of curious people who had gathered to mourn with this family. All of it is being orchestrated by Jesus for a specific purpose ... “for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

And that’s true of everything that happens to us, good or bad. And we may expect to see the glory of God in all of the circumstances of our lives. I said last week that the glory of God is the outshining of all of His marvelous attributes. Jesus is saying that as a result of this heartbreaking situation they will see things about God and about His Son that they would not have otherwise seen.

There are at least two ways that God’s glory in Christ shines through this experience. First, the glory of God is seen in...

1. THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US (John 11:1-20).

You cannot read this chapter without knowing that John intends for us to see the glory of God in the love that Jesus had for them ... and that He has for us, even when we suffer. We saw it last week in various places. Jesus spent a lot of time in this home. He loved these three people, and they knew it. But Jesus loved them more than they realized. And that explains why Jesus didn't go immediately to heal Lazarus. Jesus' love desired the very best for them (for them to see the glory of God), and that can only happen in this case if Lazarus dies.

This passage contains the shortest verse in the Bible, John 11:35 that simply says that "Jesus wept." I believe He wept for several reasons, but one of the main reasons is because of His love for His friend. What tender mercy and compassion Jesus has in His heart for those who are grieving. The mourners who had come to be with the family noticed this and they said...

John 11:36 - "See how he loved him!"

Listen, Jesus loves you just as personally as He loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He loves you just as tenderly as He loved them. He loves you just as fervently as He loved them. He feels your pain just as deeply as He felt the pain of these friends here in John 11. I said last week that God's love is not a pampering love, but a purifying and perfecting love. That's why His love sometimes allows us to go through very painful experiences. That's one way that John 11:4 is fulfilled and the glory of God in the face of Christ is seen ... by the love He has for us.

But there's another way that the glory of God is displayed here. We see the glory of God revealed in...

2. THE POWER OF JESUS OVER DEATH (John 11:21-45).

When you put these two qualities together ... love and power ... you have a mighty mixture. If God loved us, but didn't have the power to intervene against our enemies, He wouldn't trust Him. And if God had power to do great things, but didn't use it with love we wouldn't trust Him. In the glory of God we see the perfect mixture of all these qualities. He has love *and* power.

Now I want you to read again the life-changing truth Jesus spoke into this woman's life as she faced what she thought was an irreversible tragedy ... the death of her brother. Look at this conversation between Jesus and Martha.

John 11:21 - "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Mary makes a similar statement later. They both made the mistake of thinking that Jesus only had the power to heal before someone died. But the circumstances took them into a realm where they would discover that the power of Jesus was greater than they dreamed or imagined.

John 11:22 - But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

John 11:23 - Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

John 11:24 - Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

John 11:25 - Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

John 11:26 - and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Think about what Jesus is teaching Martha. Did you notice that twice Martha said, “I know”? You see, she knows *something*, but what she needs most in those moments is to know *someone*. Jesus said, “You think you know about the resurrection; I am the resurrection and the life.” It’s one thing to know about the resurrection; it’s another thing to personally know the Resurrection (Jesus). It’s one thing to know about eternal life; it’s another thing to personally know the One who is Life. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”

Now Jesus spoke the next sentence to calm Martha’s fear about Lazarus.

John 11:25b - He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

I don’t think Jesus is referring here to the fact that He intends to raise Lazarus. Jesus is saying, “I am the resurrection and the life. I have power over death. So whoever puts their trust in Me will live, even though he dies.” Jesus is speaking about the resurrection of the dead that is our hope as believers. So Jesus is saying, “Martha, even though Lazarus has died, I will be His life. There will never be a moment when he will be away from Me.”

Then Jesus speaks the next sentence for Martha.

John 11:26a - and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Jesus is saying, “Martha, whatever happens with your brother, whatever darkness you face because of that, just know that I will be your life. Because you live and believe in me you will never die. There will never be a single second when I will not be with you. Even if you, yourself, go through the darkness of physical death, you will wake up to eternal life and live forever.”

And this is how Jesus will accomplish what He said back in v4:

John 11:4 - When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”

The power of Jesus over physical death was demonstrated when Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave alive. He did this to show that He has power over a greater death ... spiritual death. The power of Jesus over spiritual death would be demonstrated a short time later. Jesus would die on the Cross as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He would be buried in a tomb just like Lazarus was. But three days later, by the power of God, Jesus would be raised, but not like Lazarus. Lazarus was resuscitated and he walked out of the tomb with the same body wrapped in his grave clothes, and sometime later he

died again. Jesus was resurrected and he came out of the tomb with a new, resurrection body, never again to die. Jesus, in His resurrection was the prototype for all believers. What happened for Jesus when He died will one day happen for us.

After speaking these life-giving truths into Martha's life He asked her a question...

John 11:26 - Do you believe this?

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Martha, do you know this?" No, Jesus asked her, "Martha, do you believe this?" Jesus is asking, "Because I am the resurrection and the life, will you trust Me to be everything to you in this dark moment?"

VIDEO ILLUSTRATION (00:01:40) – What does that trust look like. Earlier I mentioned Dr. Kent Brantly, the medical missionary in Liberia, who contracted the deadly Ebola virus. Nearly everyone who gets that virus dies. NBC's Matt Lauer did an hour-long interview with Dr. Kent Brantly. Dr. Brantly was about as close to death as a human being can get. But all over the world people were praying and believing God for his deliverance. And Dr. Brantly was trusting in God. This is what trust looks like. Watch this.

PARENT/CHILD DEDICATION