

Sermon Questions for Reflection and Discussion

John 11:1-16 - The Death of Lazarus

John 11:1-16

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) **3** So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

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.” **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, **7** and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

8 “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. **10** It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.” **11** After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

12 His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” **13** Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, **15** and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

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Introduction

- 1) Jesus' Explanation – Jesus told the disciples, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him” (John 11:11). What does Jesus mean by “fallen asleep”? And what does he mean by, “I go to awaken him”?
- 2) A Picture of Jesus - See John’s description of Jesus in Revelation 1:17-19. What is he holding?
- 3) Connect – Now connect John 11:11 with Revelation 1:17-19. What did Jesus do for his friend, Lazarus? What does Jesus promise to do for all of his friends, that is, all who believe, love, and obey him?

Gospel Truth 1 – Death is not death to Jesus.

- 1) Phrase - What does this phrase mean? If death is not death to Jesus, what is it?
- 2) Body and Soul – For those who have been born of the Father by faith in the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit, when your physical body dies what happens to your body? “Our bodies go to sleep until they are resurrected.” What happens to your soul? See Luke 23:43, Romans 8:38, and Philippians 1:23.
- 3) Response – If death is not death to Jesus, what does that mean to you? Does it impact how you see, think, and speak about death?

Gospel Truth 2 – Death ought not alarm us.

- 1) Statements About Death - Consider these statements, “Death is no longer your foe. Jesus conquered death!” and “Easter is God’s ultimate laugh at death.” How do these statements influence how you see or think about death?
- 2) Grief and Mourning – Yet there is a place for grief, mourning, and sorrow. See Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 and Romans 12:15. How do you feel both - a deep sense of loss and sorrow and yet hope in the promise of eternal life? How, in the midst of our grief, do we pray, “Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.”¹

Gospel Truth 3 – Death with Jesus is gain for us.

- 1) What does this mean?

¹ The Commendation, *The Book of Common Prayer According to the Use of the Anglican Church in North America*, (Huntington Beach, CA: Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019 by the Anglican Church in North America), 256

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- 2) Paul – See Paul’s statement in Philippians 1:21. How is “to live Christ”? How is “to die gain”?
- 3) Thomas’ Statement – See John 11:16. Jamie Brown states, “Thomas, the disciple, knows it is better to die with Jesus than to live without him.”
- 4) Hymn – “It Is Not Death to Die”²

*It is not death to die, to leave this weary road
And join the saints who dwell on high
Who've found their home with God
It is not death to close the eyes long dimmed by tears
And wake in joy before Your throne
Delivered from our fears*

*It is not death to fling aside this earthly dust
And rise with strong and noble wing
To live among the just
It is not death to hear the key unlock the door
That sets us free from mortal years
To praise You evermore*

*O Jesus, conquering the grave
Your precious blood has power to save
Those who trust in You will in Your mercy find
That it is not death to die*

What is your response to this hymn? Is it one you would like to listen to?

² It Is Not Death to Die, Original words by Henri Malan (1787-1864). Translated by George Bethune (1847). Music, Chorus and alt. words by Bob Kauflin. © 2008 Integrity's Praise! Music/Sovereign Grace Praise/BMI (adm. by Integrity Music). Sovereign Grace Music, a division of Sovereign Grace Churches. All rights reserved.