

**Title Slide** ~ Pray ~

Lord God reveal the glory of Jesus to us, in a new way this morning, that you may be Glorified... and lead us to believe in him, that we may enter into new life, being born again by your grace. In Jesus name we pray, *amen*.

I wonder who you relate to most strongly in this story? You might be suffering like Mary and Martha, wondering where is Jesus in the midst of your struggle? Maybe just being here this morning is the best you can do to trust in God at the moment. The disciples were feeling afraid in John 11. They were feeling really anxious about their future and their physical health. Thomas thought they were all going to die... Maybe you can relate to the friends of Mary, Martha and Lazarus who were trying to comfort their friends in the midst of their own grief and pain. You might be like Lazarus, in need of new life. Jesus speaks to us through his words to each of these groups of people. We encounter the care and concern of Jesus in the way he relates to us in each of these circumstances. Jesus is the answer no matter where you are at this morning.

As we heard, Lazarus was sick, we don't know what the ailment was, maybe with primitive medicine he did not know either. His sisters Mary and Martha send word to Jesus requesting his assistance. They had seen the healing power of Jesus and were seeking a miracle. Verse 4 gives us the first clue to the purpose of Jesus on this occasion...

➤ **The purpose of bringing glory to God**

The purpose of this illness was to bring glory to God.

**Pink Slide 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.”

What pictures come to mind when you imagine the glory of God? Do you imagine the glory of heaven, the glory of the divine? Maybe a white light shining from heaven?

**Glory/Crown Slide**

From the outset of this passage, the author tells us that the sickness won’t end in death and that ultimately it will serve to bring glory to God the Father and God the Son. I’m sure that the disciples and the messengers who sent word to Jesus expected Lazarus to recover, but John has a unique understanding of the glory of God. We see this most clearly in John 17:1-5

□ John 17:1-5

**The Glory of the cross Slide**

Just before his arrest, Jesus prays to be glorified:

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

**Brick wall slide** (I would leave this slide displayed until the next slide)

4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

You see, for John, the Glory of God was most fully seen in the suffering of Jesus, there was glory in the cross on which the Son of God would die for the sins of the world. The death of Christ did not detract from the royal glory of Jesus, rather the cross was the crowning glory of the Son.

I believe that the way Jesus suffers in his compassion for his friends and all those who mourn for their friend Lazarus, is to the glory of Jesus and serves to bring glory to God.

➤ **The tension builds**

□ John 11:3-5; 21-21; 11:28-37

Notice that there is a tension that permeates this story from beginning to end, I'm sure you noticed it as it was read. The tension is created by two realities:

On the one hand, John begins by telling us how much Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus' sisters know that all they need to say to Jesus is "Lord, the one you love is sick."(v3). The depth of this relationship is repeated in verse 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

But on the other hand, we observe Jesus behaving in such a strange way. Jesus does not act as we might expect. After Jesus received word of Lazarus' illness, and after we are reminded of how much Jesus loves these three, we read in verse 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.” This is an odd way for any person to behave who’s loved one is ill. It is especially strange for Jesus to respond in this way, given that he had the power to do something about Lazarus’ sickness.

The sisters noticed this. The first thing that Martha said to Jesus on his arrival was, 21 ... “if you had been here, my brother would not have died

Mary complains in the same way saying, 32 ... “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

The Jew’s who were there consoling Mary and Martha also took notice, saying,

37 ... “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

The tension in the story is so thick that you can cut it with a knife. Jesus claims to love these three, and yet he deliberately left them alone in their moment of need. He withheld his presence. He did not come in answer to their heartfelt plea. There is a tension that exists between the claim that Jesus loves these three and what we know that Jesus allowed them to suffer.

That same tension exists in our lives today, doesn’t it? We are told that Jesus loves us. We are his sheep; he is the good shepherd. We are told that the Father cares for us. We are his beloved children in Christ Jesus. And we know that God is able to do anything he pleases! Nothing is impossible for him! And so we pray to him. We cry out to him. We say, Lord, come and do this or that. Lord, would you heal? Lord, would you take away this suffering? Lord, would you heal this sorrow? Lord, would

you save? And often there is no answer. It seems as if God is distant. It seems as if God is withdrawn. That he could act, we all know to be true! What are we to think when he does nothing?

These scenarios create tension in our lives. We might start to wonder if God is able. We say to ourselves, perhaps he has not answered my prayer because he is unable to act? Or we reason, perhaps he is able, but he does not care. And so we are left with this awful tension in our lives.

### **John 11:33-36 Slide**

33 When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

It is true that Jesus delayed his return to Bethany in order to accomplish the will of God, but that does not mean that Jesus' heart was cold and indifferent towards his friends! The emotion that we see here was genuine emotion. When he saw the impact of Lazarus' death on everyone, how they were feeling hopeless and overwhelmed, Jesus was "deeply moved", he was "greatly troubled." The Greek word here is 'Dar-Rar-So' and it is the word meaning agitate or to stir. Jesus was deeply troubled in his spirit and demonstrates heartfelt concern for those he loves. He shows empathy for the pain and anguish that comes with suffering and death. Jesus is troubled by the troubles we encounter.

### **John 11:33-36 Slide** (New slide)

34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

The depth of emotion and loving concern for us is shown in tears of Jesus.

### **Jesus wept slide**

Verse 35 might be the smallest verse in the bible, but it is none the less one of the most powerful and important verses in scripture because it demonstrates how God loves us.

Jesus cries for us and with us.

This too is to the glory of God.

When you are in the midst of a trial, big or small, remember that God is in sovereign – powerful – control. Remember also that he sometimes allows trials and tribulations, but those are for a purpose. They are for his glory and our good. Never forget that Jesus loves you. Hold the image of him troubled and moved and weeping close to you heart knowing that he suffers with us and for us. He sympathizes with us in our weakness, pain and struggles.

Cling to Jesus. He is the Son of God. He is the resurrection and life. He is our only hope for life now, and life eternal.

### **'I am the resurrection and the life' slide**

Chapter 11 is a very significant chapter in John's gospel. In chapter 12 we enter into what is known as the passion week of Jesus' life. Chapters 12 through 19 tell us about things that happened in the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Chapters 1 through 11 tell us about Jesus' earthly ministry, which lasted about 3 years. And yet 8 chapters (12 through 19) are devoted to the one week leading up to Jesus' death. The death of Jesus was obviously very important to John. Jesus came to die. His

mission from the Father was to lay down his life for the sheep that he might take it up again. Chapter 11 is significant in that it serves as the conclusion to the first half of John's gospel, which focused upon the earthly ministry of Jesus in general.

The disciples are a key part of this chapter. Before Jesus departed for Bethany he shared with his disciples his purpose for them:

11 [Jesus] 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."

You may recall from my sermon last month that this was John's purpose in writing the gospel: 'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

After all, the disciples are the crew that will be tasked with spreading the Good News in the years to come. The fate of the message of Jesus lies with them. He's preparing them for the work that lies ahead, leading them to an understanding of the magnitude of the task and the stakes involved. They are just beginning to grasp the scope of the work, the dangers it brings, and its compelling necessity. This episode clarifies much of this for them.

This chapter is significant in that it contains the last miracle of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel (besides Jesus' own resurrection). The miracles of Jesus play a very important role in John's Gospel. First there is some claim made about the person or work of Jesus and then John tells us about a miracle that Jesus performed, which serves to illustrate, or demonstrate, that what has been said about Jesus is in fact true. The miracles of Jesus are called signs. They are called signs because they point to the fact that what was said by Jesus, or about him, was in fact true. Jesus, for example, claimed to be the light of the world in chapter 8 and in chapter 9 we read about him healing a man who was blind from birth. The man lived his whole life in darkness but Jesus, who is the light of the world, gave him light. This miracle is no different. The resurrection of Lazarus is the climax of Jesus' miracles as presented to us in John's Gospel.

Look at how Jesus consoles Martha in verse 23 [“Your brother will rise again.”](#) As a pastor this is exactly how I would comfort a Christian who is grieving the loss of a loved one in the Lord. I would say, You will see him again, or, you will see her again in the resurrection. They have not died – they have merely passed from this life to the next. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And your loved one will rise again. This is probably how the Jews who came from Jerusalem were consoling Mary and Martha. Most of the Jews believed in the resurrection at the end of the age, and so they were likely encouraging the sisters, saying, “your brother will rise again.”

[24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”](#)

**John 11:25-26 Slide**

She knew these things. She was probably taught this from childhood. Jesus probably taught her these things too. But look at how Jesus responds to her.

### 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life...

This is quite a claim. It is yet another “I am” saying of Jesus: “I am the bread of life”; “I am the light of the world”; “I am the door”; “I am the good shepherd”. “I am the resurrection and the life,” the resurrection and the life that the Jews were looking forward to; the resurrection and the life that the Jews were comforting the sisters with; the resurrection and the life that Martha was hoping in is found in Jesus! He is the resurrection and the life.

He goes on to say in verse 25 ... [The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?](#)

Notice that those who believe in Jesus who die physically, in fact go on living. How can that be? Well, though followers of Christ still face physical death, they have passed from death to life according to the spirit. The body will die, but the soul of the Christian goes on living, until the time of our bodily resurrection.

Notice also that the one who believes in Jesus has passed from death to life. He or she existed in a state of death – spiritual death, that is – but in the moment they believe they were made alive in the spirit. They moved from a state of death to life.

This is the power that Jesus has within him.

It is those who believe in Jesus who benefit from the resurrection power and life that is in Jesus. Belief, or faith, is the instrument, or conduit, which brings the benefit of Jesus' resurrection power to us. We must believe in him – trust in him – follow him, if we are to live in the way that he has described.

### **That Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God Slide**

In response to the question Jesus had asked in verse 26:

27 “Yes, Lord,” [Martha] replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Martha is an example to us of how we are to believe. How could it be that Jesus has this resurrection power? How could he have the ability to give life? He could give it because he was and is the Christ, the Son of God. He has the power to give life because of who he is. The Son of God, Messiah.

### **John 11:40 Slide**

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.”

40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

### **lazarus slide**

The raising of Lazarus from the grave is a demonstration of the fact that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He claimed to have power over death. He claimed to have within him the ability to give eternal life. He claimed to be the one who would bring about the bodily resurrection at the end of the age. But those are just claims. Anyone can say these things. The miracle that Jesus performed in raising Lazarus from the grave was a demonstration of the life-giving resurrection power that he has within himself. He is the resurrection and the life, and he proved it in accomplishing this work.

Jesus speaks to us today through his words to Mary, Martha, Lazarus the Jews and his disciples. Cling to Jesus. He is the Son of God. He is the resurrection and life. He is our only hope for life now, and life eternal. Jesus feels our tension. The depth of emotion and loving concern for us is shown in tears of Jesus. Verse 35 is one of the most powerful and important verses in scripture because it demonstrates how God loves us. Jesus cries for us and with us. This too is to the glory of God.

### **Believe and live slide**

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

Therefore, believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God that following the example of Martha who shows us how we are to believe. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He has the power to give life because of who he is. The Son of God, Messiah.

[http://emmausrbc.org/2015/08/30/sermon-john-111-44-i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life/?fbclid=IwAR28kcGwWcTzOcxXwL\\_CF-iiD9Cqz3vcg8ot85QdefSDfOecfgGDB-CzAnE](http://emmausrbc.org/2015/08/30/sermon-john-111-44-i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life/?fbclid=IwAR28kcGwWcTzOcxXwL_CF-iiD9Cqz3vcg8ot85QdefSDfOecfgGDB-CzAnE)

[http://www.belovedcommunitychurch.org/along-the-way-a-sermon-on-john-111-45/?fbclid=IwAR0Zi2NMsPVSbNxCTK6HZ\\_XrRzX86YWBoHIAay2BcwM1bcFGlmbjTMB6K\\_s](http://www.belovedcommunitychurch.org/along-the-way-a-sermon-on-john-111-45/?fbclid=IwAR0Zi2NMsPVSbNxCTK6HZ_XrRzX86YWBoHIAay2BcwM1bcFGlmbjTMB6K_s)

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g5015>