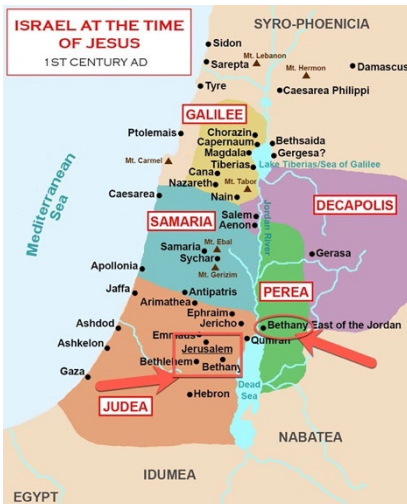


Bible Study July 19, 2023

Death From Different Perspective - JOHN 11 (ESV)

The Death of Lazarus

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.



The village of Bethany was located about two miles east of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho.

John 10:40 (ESV) tells us Jesus was across the Jordan where John had been baptizing. ***⁴⁰ He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained.***

(John 1:28 – John baptized in Bethany East of the Jordan which was about 15-20 miles away – 1 day trip.)

Knowing Jesus doesn't exempt us nor our loved ones from pain and death.

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were Jesus' very close friends and disciples. Jesus loved them, yet he did not rush to spare them grief. The presence of pain and suffering in the lives of both believers and nonbelievers can teach us that Christians do not have different experiences in life. Rather, we experience life differently. Our hope in Jesus does not insulate us from life's difficulties, but it does provide a way through and beyond them. God can use difficult experiences for good in our lives in many ways, one of which is to make us more compassionate servants for him as we comfort others.

² It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

As their brother grew very sick, Mary and Martha turned to Jesus for help. They believed in his ability to help because they had seen his miracles. We, too, know of Jesus' miracles, both from Scripture and through changed lives we have seen. When we need extraordinary help, Jesus offers extraordinary resources. We should not hesitate to ask him for assistance.

Perspective Of Jesus:

⁴ But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

This illness is for God's Glory?

Jesus said, "This illness does not lead to death, it is for the glory of God"

Isaiah 43:1-7 (ESV) reminds us that God created you for his glory.

¹ *But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.*

² *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.*

³ *For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.*

⁴ *Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.*

⁵ *Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.*

⁶ *I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,*

⁷ *everyone who is called by my name,
whom I **created for my glory**,
whom I formed and made.”*

Any difficult situation a believer faces can ultimately bring glory to God because God can bring good out of any bad circumstance (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). When trouble comes, do you grumble, complain, and blame God, or do you see your problems as opportunities to honor him and grow in your spiritual maturity?

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

Jesus loved this family and often stayed with them. He knew their pain but did not respond immediately. His delay was not from lack of love; he had a specific purpose in mind. God's timing, especially his delays, may make us think he is not answering or is not answering the way we want. God's best plan for us is sometimes painful. But he will meet all our needs according to his perfect schedule and purpose (Philippians 4:19). Patiently await his timing.

Perspective of the Disciples:

⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” ¹¹ After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” ¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

The raising of Lazarus was an essential display of his power, and the resurrection from the dead is a crucial belief of the Christian faith. Jesus would not only be raised from the dead (10:18)—he also has the power to raise others.

We often remember Thomas as “the doubter” because he doubted Jesus’ resurrection (20:25). But here he demonstrated love and courage. The disciples knew the dangers of going with Jesus to Jerusalem, and they tried to talk him out of it. Thomas merely expressed what all of them were feeling. When their objections failed, they were willing to go, even though dying with Jesus was a real possibility. They may not have understood why Jesus would be killed, but they were loyal. Doing God’s work has unknown dangers. Will you remain loyal to Jesus when opposition increases?

Perspective of Martha:

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Jesus previously taught that in the last days He would raise those that believed in him.

John 25-29 ²⁵ “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Jesus has power over life and death as well as the power to forgive sins. Because he created life (see 14:6), he can surely restore life. Whoever believes in Jesus has a spiritual life that death cannot conquer or diminish in any way. When we realize the power and the wonder of his offer to

us, how can we not commit our lives to him? To those who believe, what wonderful assurance and certainty we have: “Since I live, you also will live” (14:19).

27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

We know Martha best for being too busy to sit down and talk with Jesus (Luke 10:38-42). But here we see her as a woman of deep faith. As she worked to offer hospitality to Jesus, she obviously also listened to him and took his words to heart. Her statement of faith is exactly the response that Jesus wants from us. No matter how busy we are, we must listen to him, believe in him, and then follow him.

Perspective of Mary

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

John stresses that God cares for us. When Jesus saw the weeping and wailing, he, too, wept openly. Perhaps he empathized with their grief, or perhaps he was troubled at their unbelief or at death’s destructive grip. Whatever the case, Jesus showed that he cares enough for us to weep with us in our sorrow. Here we see many of Jesus’ emotions—compassion, indignation, anger, sorrow, and even frustration. In his life on earth he often expressed deep emotion, and we must never be afraid to reveal our true feelings to him. He understands them, for he experienced them. Be honest, and don’t try to hide anything from your Savior. He cares.

Prayer of Jesus

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

Tombs at this time were usually caves carved in the limestone rock of hillsides. They were often large enough for people to walk inside. Several bodies would be placed in one tomb. After burial, a large stone would be rolled across the entrance.

39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her,

“Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Jesus had raised others from the dead, including Jairus’s daughter (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:42-43; Luke 8:40-56) and a widow’s son (Luke 7:11-15).

The Perspective of the Pharisees

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

The Jewish leaders knew that Jesus was becoming dangerous to their way of life. They feared that if they didn’t stop him, the Romans would misunderstand the kind of Kingdom Jesus had come to establish and lash out against them. Rome gave partial freedom to the Jews as long as they were quiet and obedient. But Jesus’ miracles often caused disturbances as people began to wrongly think he was a political leader who would lead a rebellion against Rome. The Jewish leaders feared that Rome’s displeasure would bring additional hardship to their people and nation.

⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all.⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,

John regarded Caiaphas’s statement as a prophecy. As high priest, Caiaphas was used by God to explain Jesus’ death even though Caiaphas didn’t realize what he was doing.

⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

John highlights that Jesus wanted to unite the children of God scattered around the world, both Jews and Gentiles (see 10:11, 16). This began with Jesus’ ministry but took a giant leap forward at Pentecost, when people from many nations converted and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4-8)

⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

Even when confronted point-blank with the power of Jesus’ deity, some refused to believe. These eyewitnesses not only rejected Jesus—they plotted his murder. They were so hardened that they preferred rejecting God’s Son to admitting they were wrong. They wanted to fit God into their own

plans instead of be open to his marvelous power. Beware of pride. If we allow it to grow, it can lead us into enormous sin and spiritual blindness.

⁵⁴ Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.