

***From Death to Life***  
**John 11 (2/25/2018 AM)**

❖ **This chapter begins with a life *threatening* illness of one of Jesus' dear friends (1-3).**

Bethany was a small village on the southeastern slopes of the Mount of Olives (18). "Jesus had visited this home before in Luke 10.

➤ Committed disciples of Jesus Christ are not *immune* to serious illness.

The teaching that Christians should not get sick is a damnable doctrine. These are the people that Paul warned about who are "teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain", Titus 1:11. Jesus reveals that there is divine purpose in the suffering and death of His disciples (4). He did not mean that Lazarus would not die but death would not be the ultimate issue (5). His actions may seem confusing but His love is certain. Jesus did not delay because He did not care. His delay was deliberate.

➤ Whatever God allows comes into our lives *with purpose*.

This includes sickness, suffering and death. God's love for His children is a perfecting love. Like Lazarus each believer is part of God's overarching "eternal purpose", Ephesians 3:10-13. Jesus taught this to the disciples by His own example. When Jesus announced that they were going into Judea His disciples objected (7-8). They realized that the Jewish leaders had been threatening to kill Him. Jesus' answer to their objections most likely confused them at first (9-10). To the Jews "twelve hours" stood for the whole day. There was a divinely determined allotment of time for Jesus' earthly ministry. Of all the "hours" of His life "His hour" (7:30, 8:20, 13:1) was fast approaching.

➤ No one ever died in the *presence* of the living Christ.

This is one of the reasons for Jesus' delay in going to Bethany. The disciples were at first confused (11). Jesus erased all confusion as He knew that Lazarus was already dead (14). This is one appointment everyone will keep. This is not fatalism but biblical realism, Hebrews 9:27. Lazarus, one of Jesus' closet earthly friends died.

▪ **Christians should have a *biblical* view of death.**

That response (15) at first glance seems insensitive. Jesus already told them that Lazarus' situation was "for the glory of God" (4). Death for the Christian has been transformed into sleep. This is not soul sleep. The Apostle Paul taught "absent from the body...present with the Lord", 2 Corinthians 5:8. This is the ceasing of activity for the body which this chapter illustrates is a temporary state. Also the death of a Christian can bring glory to God. Jesus prophesied how Peter would die. John 21:19, "This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God."

▪ ***If you are not prepared to die, you are not prepared to live.***

❖ **This chapter moves on from the sickness and the death of Lazarus to his *burial* (17).** Burial followed immediately after death. The body was not embalmed. After the fourth day decay would set in.

❖ Lazarus' tomb is described for us (38).

➤ The Word of God does not *overlook* the grief of Lazarus' sisters.

The Bible acknowledges the process of grieving, Deuteronomy 34:8. Over the years certain stages of grief have emerged. These are not necessarily in order or are experienced by everyone.

▪ ***Denial***

▪ ***Anger***

▪ ***Bargaining***

▪ ***Depression***

▪ ***Acceptance***

In Jewish culture grief was expressed openly. A loud wailing announced to the community that a death has occurred, Mark 5:38. Also professional wailing women would be called to the home. Jesus came into this scene as the conqueror of death (20-22).

➤ The *genuineness* of our faith is tested in the face of death.

This was more a statement (21) of regret than blame. Jesus revealed that Lazarus was redeemed (23). Martha knew and believed God's Word as revealed in the Old Testament and in Jesus' teachings (24).

➤ Eternal life rests not in a theology but in a *Person*.

Jesus is still calling people to a personal faith and trust in Him (25-26). Martha expressed her faith clearly, accurately and personally (27). John wrote his Gospel for this very purpose (20:31).

➤ Jesus deals with people personally and *individually*.

The "secretly" involves the idea of whispering (28). Martha may have been concerned for Jesus' safety being so close to Jerusalem. Mary said the exact words that Martha had said (32). These are the only recorded words of Mary in the Gospels. Very likely they had said them to each other many times. We again see Mary at the feet of

Jesus. Martha and Mary show us that we need to take our grief to Jesus. The word “groaned” (33) can mean indignation, anger, sorrow, suffering it conveys deep emotion.

❖ **This chapter concludes with an *empty tomb*.**

This was a quiet shedding of tears (34-35). Jesus has entered into our grief with us. He also wept I believe for those who were and are lost in unbelief. Jesus coming to the tomb gave three commands. (39) “Take away the stone.” Jesus responded to Martha’s objections by appealing to her faith (40). As they were removing the stone Jesus prayed publically to the Father (41). (43) “He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’” Four times in these concluding verses we are reminded that Lazarus was dead.

- Jesus demonstrated for all to see that ***He is God*** having the power of life and death (44).
- “Loose him, and let him go.” People claim that if they witnessed a miracle they would believe. Many did believe in Him but some went away (45-46). The nation as a whole rejected Him. (53) “Then from that day on they plotted to put Him to death.” Lazarus’ resurrection has echoes of the believer’s promised resurrection.
- **Jesus Was Resurrected To Never Die; Lazarus Was *Reanimated* and Would Die Again**