

**Third Presbyterian Church**  
**Midweek Bible Study**  
**Miracle Series**  
**Miracle of the Resurrection of Lazarus**  
**Lesson 11 – Jesus, I have a Stinking Situation**

**John 11:1-15, 34-44 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.  
<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."  
<sup>4</sup> 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." <sup>5</sup> Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. <sup>7</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."  
<sup>8</sup> "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"  
<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. <sup>10</sup> It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."  
<sup>11</sup> 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." <sup>12</sup> His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." <sup>13</sup> Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. <sup>14</sup> So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,  
<sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>34</sup> "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" <sup>38</sup> Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." <sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

1. In hearing of Lazarus's death, Jesus is calm, but his actions are looked upon to be uncaring and indifferent.
  - a. When you have a situation in your life that needs Jesus immediate attention and a response is not immediate:
    - i. what are we do to?
    - ii. What have you done?
2. How does Satan keep people in a situation bound by doubt and fear?
  - a. How do we minister to someone who feels helpless in a stinking situation in their life?
3. Under what circumstances have you doubted the power of God?
4. When have you had faith in God's ability to work out an impossible situation?
  - a. When have you been instrumental in helping someone else in their stinking situation?
5. In what way has God "raised you from the dead"?
6. What is one miracle God has done in your life?
7. When have you thought you had a better plan for your life than the one God was working out? Share the outcome and the lesson.
8. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

**A. The Death of Lazarus and Its Purposes, 11:1-16**

**(11:1-16) Introduction:** Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. The death of Lazarus gave Jesus the opportunity to reveal Himself as the resurrection and the life. There were seven purposes for Lazarus' death. (Note: each purpose is also applicable to the death of the believer.)

**1. (11:1-3) Jesus Christ, Family of— Martha:** Lazarus was sick. Jesus had said, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). At this particular time Jesus was being rejected by almost everyone. Apparently He was an unwelcome guest in most homes. He was walking about preaching and proclaiming that He was One with God, the Son of God Himself (see outline—' John 10:22-42 and notes—' John 10:22-42). Just imagine a man making such a claim. He was thought to be "mad" and devil-possessed (Mark 3:20-21; Luke 4:25). His own family was even having difficulty with Him at this time. They were apparently so embarrassed by His claims and the rumors of His insanity that on one occasion they travelled a great distance to bring Him home lest He be harmed.

However, there was one family who always opened its home to Jesus when He was in and around Jerusalem—the family of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, who were brother and sisters. They lived in Bethany, a suburb about two miles outside Jerusalem. Their closeness to Jesus is the reason the sisters felt so free to interrupt His evangelistic tour with the request to help their sick brother. Jesus' great love for this family should be noted throughout this passage.

**2. (11:4) Sickness— Jesus Christ, Glorified:** the first purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to glorify God and to proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. Lazarus' sickness was not *for* death. He was to die *for* the glory of God and Christ. He was sick, and he was to die so that the works of God could be demonstrated. Lazarus died so that...

God could be glorified...	Christ could be glorified...
• By showing His desire for man to have life	• By having the opportunity to do the work of God
• By proving His power to give life	• By demonstrating God's power
• By showing His approval of Christ by which He proved that He really did love the world enough to send His Son to save the world	• By showing compassion
	• By strengthening the belief of believers
	• By leading unbelievers to believe

In raising Lazarus from the dead both Jesus and His Father were glorified as the *Life* of the world. In dealing with the blind man, both were glorified as the *Light* of the world (John 9:3, 5). (See note—' John 9:5 for more discussion.)

**"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:23).**

**"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalms 29:2).**

**3. (11:5) Jesus Christ, Love for Man:** the second purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to show Jesus' great love. Note: each member of the family is mentioned personally. He loved the family, but He also loved each one individually. This is a fact in the Scripture that needs to be stressed, for each one had a need, and each one needed and received the help of Jesus. Lazarus' death gave Him the opportunity to demonstrate His great love not only for the families of the world, but for each individual in the world.

**"He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3).**

**"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).**

**"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:9).**

**"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35).**

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).**

**"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).**

**4. (11:6) Trial— Waiting Upon God:** the third purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to show the necessity for *waiting upon God* in great crises. Jesus was not waiting two days so that Lazarus would die and He could perform a great miracle. Jesus knew that Lazarus was either already dead or that Lazarus was going to die on the very day the person brought word of Lazarus' illness. We know this because Lazarus had already been buried four days when Jesus arrived in Bethany (John 11:17, 39). Jewish burial immediately followed death. The four days would be counted from...

- the day of travel by the messengers in bringing word to Jesus (John 11:3).
- the two days needed for Jesus to complete His ministry (John 11:6).
- the day or two needed by Jesus to travel to Bethany (John 11:17). (Remember huge crowds thronged Jesus, which prevented Him from traveling rapidly. It is possible He completed His ministry in one day and took two days for travel to Bethany.)

The point is this: Martha and Mary were learning to wait upon God throughout the whole experience. In facing severe illness or death, there is no answer but to wait upon God. Jesus knows when to act. He knows the exact moment, the best time...

- for us to bear the trial.
- for us to stand.
- for us to be helped.
- for us to learn the most.
- for us to bear testimony of God's power and strength.

Whenever that moment arrives, the Lord arises and meets the need of the believer. What the believer must do is what Martha and Mary had to do: learn to *wait upon God*. The Lord will arise and act at the right moment.

**Thought 1.** We cannot dictate to God when to act nor how to act. Note two examples.

- 1) Note Mary, Jesus' own mother. At the marriage feast she wanted Him to go and secure more wine. He rebuked her for interfering with His work, the work of God. He has His own way and time, the very best way and time for meeting the need (cp. John 2:3-4).
- 2) Note Jesus' own brothers. They tried to ridicule Him into going by caravan with them to the feast in Jerusalem. Jesus rebuked them for the same reason He had rebuked Mary. He, the Son of God, knew how to conduct His ministry and when to go about doing it. He knew what was best.

**"Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day" (Psalms 25:5).**

**"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psalms 27:14).**

**5. (11:7-10) Opportunity— Service:** the fourth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to teach the need to grasp opportunity. It had been three days since Jesus had received word of Lazarus' illness. Jesus now said it was time to go into Judaea, for Bethany was in the district of Judaea. The disciples protested, for it was the Judaeans

leaders who had stood so opposed to Jesus and had threatened to kill Him (John 10:31). The disciples could not believe their ears. Why would Jesus jeopardize their lives?

Jesus' answer was forceful and it stands as a great lesson for all of us. There are only twelve hours in a day. Jesus must walk, that is...

- go and do His work while it is day.
- go and do what is right, regardless of the danger.
- go and do what is right lest the day pass and the opportunity be lost. (Cp. John 9:4.)

If Jesus had walked in the dark and failed to work and failed to do what He knew to be right, He would have stumbled. He would have shown that there is no light in Him. The idea is, of course, that there is light in Him. He knew the work to be done and the right thing to do, so He must go into Judaea.

**Thought 1.** A man must do the same as Jesus. A man has only twelve hours of daylight (approximately).

- ⇒ He must walk, that is, work and do what is right, grasping the opportunity while it is day.
- ⇒ If he walks in the night, he will stumble. When the night comes, it is too late to walk. Works cannot be done in the night without stumbling about. The opportunity is lost.

**"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).**

**"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).**

Note the term, "the Light of this world." Jesus is "the Light of this world." A person has only twelve hours, only a certain amount of time to see "the Light of the world." Once the night comes, the opportunity is lost.

Note also the statement, "There is no light in him [a man]." Man has no light within. All he can do is walk...

- as he sees.
- as other men see.
- as the world sees.

The problem with such a walk is that no man or any combination of men can see beyond the physical and material world, and the end of the world is fear—the fear and trembling brought about by bondage and death. (Note the fear of the disciples above, John 11:8.) The end of the world is not life. Life comes only from Jesus, "the Light of this world" (see Deeper Study #1—John 8:12).

**"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).**

**"In him was life; and the life was the light [Jesus Christ] of men" (John 1:4).**

**"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).**

**6. (11:11-14) Death— Jesus Christ, Power:** the fifth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to show Jesus' great power over death. Jesus stated very plainly what He was going to do. Lazarus was asleep; therefore, He would go and awaken Lazarus out of his sleep. However, the disciples misunderstood what Jesus was saying. *By sleep* Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead, but the disciples thought He meant that Lazarus was resting in sleep. Note that Jesus gave His meaning of sleep: "Lazarus is dead." Note four significant things.

1. Jesus called Lazarus "our friend." He was dead, but he was still "our friend." This is a hint that Lazarus is still a friend despite being dead, that he is still living, still alive in another world. Note the strong feelings Jesus had for this believer, Lazarus.

**Thought 1.** Jesus' love reaches out for every believer just as much as it did for Lazarus. Jesus calls every believer His friend. And note the words "*our* friend." Every believer is to be the friend of all other believers. There is to be a sweet fellowship between all believers.

2. Jesus predicted that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. He would "awaken" and resurrect him. This is a picture of the resurrection of believers (cp. John 11:23-26).

**"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25).**

**"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).**

3. The disciples misunderstood. Many still do. They misunderstand the meaning of death and the resurrection.

4. Jesus said that death is as "sleep"

**7. (11:15) Hope— Resurrection:** the sixth purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to help strengthen the disciples' belief. Jesus said an astonishing thing: He was rejoicing that He was not in Bethany when Lazarus was sick. Why? Jesus joyed over what was to happen. Lazarus was to be raised from the dead, which meant that every thoughtful believer, both then and in succeeding generations, would experience a great leap in faith.

**Thought 1.** The glorious event of Lazarus' resurrection stirs the heart of sincere seekers, for it pictures the most glorious hope of life possible. Jesus Christ has the power to give life and to raise the dead (John 5:24-29; 1 Thes. 4:13f; 1 Cor. 15:1-58). Any follower of Christ who truly experiences the scene of Lazarus' resurrection is bound...

- to take a great leap in faith.
- to have his faith stirred to new heights.
- to see his faith grow progressively.

**"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).**

**8. (11:16) Courage— Loyalty:** the seventh purpose of Lazarus' sickness was to stir the disciples' courage and loyalty. Note that Thomas took the lead here. He showed great courage and loyalty to Christ, a dynamic example for every believer. He demonstrated...

- a deep love for Christ, a love that was ready to die for Him.
- a willingness to stand and to die with his fellow believers in the Lord's work.
- a knowledge that to die for Christ is better than to live without Him.

**"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27).**

**"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" (Ephes. 6:24).**

**"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).**

**B. Jesus and Martha: A Growth in Faith, 11:17-27**

**(11:17-27) Introduction:** this passage is a dynamic conversation between Jesus and Martha. What happened caused a great growth in Martha's faith. A seeking heart and a study of the conversation will cause any believer's faith to grow and to grow significantly.

1. The scene was Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem about 2 miles away (v.17-20).
2. Martha's complaining, limited faith (v.21-22).
3. Martha's fundamental faith (v.23-24).
4. Martha's declared faith (v.25-27).

**1. (11:17-20) Jesus Christ, Ministry— Compassion:** the scene was Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem about two miles away. When Jesus arrived, someone told Him that Lazarus had already been buried for four days (see note—John 11:6). Jesus did not actually enter the city of Bethany. He apparently stayed on the outskirts of the city. Just why we are not told. Perhaps the multitude following Him was too large to crowd into the city, or perhaps He was simply avoiding those who were so bitterly opposed to Him. There was an enormous number of mourners who had come to comfort the family, and some of these were opposed to Jesus (John 11:46).

Whatever the reason for remaining on the outskirts of the city, Jesus apparently sent a messenger to tell Martha that He had arrived (cp. John 11:28). As soon as she heard, she quietly left the house and ran out to meet Him. (Cp. John 11:28 for what apparently happened with Martha as well as Mary.) Mary, however, remained at home.

Note the striking contrast between Martha and Mary, a contrast that is ever so characteristic. Martha was the woman of action and energy, the one loaded with initiative; therefore, she was the one who went out to meet Jesus. Mary was the contemplative and meditative one; therefore, she remained at home to receive the mourners (cp. Luke 10:38-42).

**2. (11:21-22) Faith:** Martha's complaining, limited faith in Jesus. Martha believed in Jesus. She even believed that Jesus could have healed Lazarus and kept him from dying. But Jesus had not come immediately when He was called; therefore, her brother was dead. Why did Jesus not come when He was called? Why did He not heal Lazarus, when she and the family loved Jesus so much and had done so much for Him? Why did He let Lazarus die?

The point is this: Martha did believe in Jesus, but her faith was a complaining faith. She did not believe to the point of *resting* in faith. She did not believe with an *unlimited and resting faith*. She was not entrusting the matter completely into the Lord's hands. She was not yet convinced that what had happened was for the best. She trusted Jesus as her Savior, but she questioned what had happened. She complained and even reproached Jesus.

A complaining, questioning faith is a *limited faith*. It is a faith that questions Jesus' Lordship...

- that questions if Jesus has done what is best.
- that questions if Jesus knows what is best.

It says to Jesus, "If you had been here, if you had acted differently, if you had done this or that, then this trial would not have happened." Note that Martha was convicted immediately for having complained and reproached Jesus. She blurted out:

**"But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (John 8:22).**

But note even here how her *limited faith* showed itself. She did not say, "Lord, I know that you can do anything you will." She said, "Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." She was still limiting Jesus to some level below God. She was not grasping that Jesus Himself was the Resurrection and the Life. She had a complaining, limited faith in Jesus.

**"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26).**

**"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him [Peter], and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased" (Matthew 14:31-32).**

**"When Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" (Matthew 16:8-9).**

**"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10).**

**3. (11:23-24) Faith— Resurrection:** Martha's fundamental faith. Jesus made a striking declaration, "Thy brother shall rise again." He could have said it no clearer. Lazarus was to arise from the dead.

Martha misunderstood. She thought Jesus meant that Lazarus would arise in the resurrection at the last day.

1. Note that Martha had a *fundamental faith*. She believed in the resurrection, one of the fundamentals of the faith. She believed what Jesus had taught, and He had been drilling the resurrection into His followers (cp. John 5:28-29; John 6:39-40, 44, 54; John 12:48).

2. Martha's fundamental faith experienced disappointment. The promise of a future resurrection and reunion is not always a comfort. Her loved one was gone. There was now no contact and no relationship with him, not on this earth. Everything about her life was now completely changed. Her household was radically different. She believed in the resurrection and believed in all the fundamentals of the faith, but the resurrection was so far in the future, it was of little comfort to her then.

The point is this: a *fundamental faith* is essential. A person must believe in the fundamentals of the faith, but a fundamental faith is short—it is not all there is to faith and to our life in Christ. It is not a living faith, not a faith that lives in the presence of Christ. And what is so desperately needed by man is what was needed by Martha: a living faith, a faith that is alive and vibrant, dynamic and moving, conscious and acting, communicating and fellowshiping. What is needed is the knowledge that Jesus, the very One who stands before us, *is* "the resurrection and the life."

**"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).**

**"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).**

**"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6).**

**"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5).**

**4. (11:25-27) Jesus Christ, Claim— Faith— Heaven— Death:** Martha's declared faith. Note three points.

1. Jesus' great claim: "I Am the resurrection and the life." Here is a critical fact: Jesus did not say that He *gives* the resurrection and life to man, but He *is* the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus, of course, does give the resurrection and life to believers; but His point is not this fact. His point is far more important. Jesus declared that He is the very being and essence, the very power and energy of life. Therefore, He can...

- give and sustain life as He wills.
- resurrect and restore life as He wills.

This is a phenomenal claim. It means that man—in fact all of life—exists only by the will and power of Jesus. Being the power and energy of life, Jesus is the Source of all life. There is nothing existing apart from His will; therefore, if a dead person wishes to live, only Jesus can give him life. And if a living person does not wish to die, only Jesus can keep him from dying.

**"In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).**

**"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26).**

**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).**

2. Jesus' great promise: believe, and two phenomenal things happen.

a. "He that believeth in me, though he die [*kan apothanē*<sup>PWS: 3979</sup>], yet shall he live." He lives in the other world: in heaven, in the spiritual dimension of being, in the very presence of God Himself. The believer who has passed from this world is not some place...

- in some semi-conscious state.
- in a deep sleep, locked up in some compartment someplace.

- in space moving about and floating around on a fluffy cloud.

The believer is fully alive: he lives in heaven, in the other world, in the very presence of God Himself. Another world exists just as this world exists. It is not a world that lies out in the future; it is a world that exists now—a spiritual world—a spiritual dimension—a world that the Bible calls heaven. It is the spiritual world and dimension where God and Christ and angels and all those who have gone on before now live.

The point is this: when a person who has *believed in Jesus* dies, he goes to live in heaven, in the spiritual world where God and Christ and the heavenly hosts live. *Hallelujah!* Only the word *hallelujah* can express the hope and joy that fills the soul of the true believer.

**"And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30-31).**

**"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).**

**"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26).**

b. "Whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The idea is that the believer shall never taste death, that is, never experience death. Quicker than the believer can blink an eye, he passes from this world into the next world. He is transported and transferred into heaven. The believer never loses a single moment of consciousness. One moment he is conscious and living in this world; the next moment he is conscious and present in the next world. There is only one difference. He is immediately perfected: transformed, made perfect, made much more conscious and aware, more knowledgeable and alive than ever before.

**"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51).**

**"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).**

- c. Note a crucial point. Receiving eternal life is conditional: a person must believe. It is "he that believeth" and "whosoever lives and believes" that lives and shall never die. It is as Jesus asked Martha: "Believest thou this?" If a person believes Jesus, he shall never die; he shall live forever.

3. Martha's great declaration. Martha believed, and she confessed and called Jesus "Lord" (see Deeper Study #2—John 2:24). She declared that she believed three things:

- a. That Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (see note—John 1:35-42).

**"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).**

**"But I know him [God]: for I am from him, and he hath sent me" (John 7:29).**

- b. That Jesus is the Son of God

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).**

**"And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (John 12:45).**

- c. That Jesus is the One who was to be sent into the world by God (see Deeper Study #1—John 3:31).



"And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42).

**Thought 1.** Knowing that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life means three things. It means...

- that Jesus is alive, living right before us in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is both *in us* and *all around us*. Our faith is living and alive and in constant communion and fellowship with Him.
- that our loved one is present with Jesus, no longer imperfect in mind and body, but perfect: more conscious, more aware, more alive than he was on earth. How do we know this? Jesus is alive in heaven, and "to be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).
- that Jesus is alive, so the resurrection of our glorified bodies is assured (1 Cor. 15:1-58).

### C. Jesus and Mary: The Real Needs of Man, 11:28-37

(11:28-37) **Introduction:** man has great needs. These are seen in the experience of Mary with Jesus.

1. Need 1: the glorious message of Christ (v.28).
2. Need 2: the right response—arise quickly and come to Christ (v.29-30).
3. Need 3: the reaching out of people to help others (v.31).
4. Need 4: the confession of faith (even if it is limited and weak) (v.32).
5. Need 5: the understanding, feelings, and compassion of Jesus (v.33-36).
6. Conclusion: the misunderstanding of man—how could Jesus love so much and let this happen (v.37)?

**1. (11:28) Jesus Christ, Message:** the first need is for the glorious message of Christ. Martha had made a great confession of faith: "Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:27).

The great confession apparently struck some kind of hope within Martha. Just what she was expecting, perhaps even she did not know, but there was a spark of hope. Her Lord, the Son of God Himself, was now with her. Whatever could be done would be done; whatever help was available would be given. Her faith and trust were in Him. Only one thing was missing: her dear sister, Mary. So she hastened to share the glorious news with her. Note that she shared three things.

1. The Master (see Deeper Study #1—John 11:28).
2. The Master "is come." The answer that we so desperately need is now available. The One who can give us the help we need has now come: the Teacher who can teach us how to meet all of our...
  - needs and necessities.
  - troubles and trials.
  - sorrow and hurt.
  - loneliness and emptiness.

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

3. The Master is come "for you." Jesus calls and summons you. He wonders where you are and why you have not come. He wants you now.

**"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).**

**"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).**

**2. (11:29-30) Jesus Christ, Response to:** the second need is to make the right response to Christ—the response of arising quickly and running to Him.

1. The message of Christ was enough to stir Mary. It is enough to stir action within the heart of any person who honestly seeks the answer to the riddle and trials of life and death.

2. When Mary heard, she responded quickly. The idea is that she jumped up (arose quickly) and ran to meet Jesus. Hope and expectation were stirred in her heart. Note that the message had come to her in a very quiet manner: secretly, in a whisper, without anyone else knowing it (John 11:28).

**Thought 1.** No matter how quietly the message is proclaimed, man is to respond by arising quickly and running to meet Jesus.

3. Mary acted on her own and made her own decision.

- ⇒ She did not consult with friends and neighbors, not even with those who were closest to her. She got up and went to Jesus, leaving both friends and neighbors behind.
- ⇒ She did not consult with religionists. Religion was important to her. The local religious leaders were even present, visiting and comforting her in her sorrow and sharing the comfort that their religion offered. But it helped her so little. When she heard the message that the Lord *was calling for her*, she went to Him, saying nothing to the religionists.
- ⇒ She did not consider appearance or decorum. Think about the situation. There was a house full of friends and neighbors. Who was going to greet them, receive their sympathies, express appreciation, and handle their presence? None of that mattered to Mary, not now. The Lord *was calling for her*. She must respond and go to Him immediately.
- ⇒ She did not consider the distance. Jesus had not yet entered town, so Mary had to walk a considerable distance to reach Him. She had to make the decision to break away from those back in the house despite what they might think and feel. She had to march forward and travel to Him in order to respond to His call.

**"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9-10).**

**"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).**

**"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).**

**3. (11:31) Ministering:** the third need is for people, friends and neighbors, to reach out to help each other. This is a touching picture. When the neighbors and friends saw Mary leave quickly, they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn over Lazarus. They were with her for one reason: to "comfort" her. Naturally, they followed her, thinking she needed help in bearing up under her loss. Note what happened.

1. They, too, were brought face to face with Jesus. Because they were set on comforting Mary, they were to share in Mary's experience with Christ.
2. They, too, were given the opportunity to trust Christ. In fact, many did "believe on Him" (John 11:45).

**Thought 1.** The friends and neighbors set a clear example of helping others. The world needs more and more neighbors such as these. Note the result of sincere help. It does not go unnoticed by Christ. Many are brought to Christ when they help those who already know Christ.

**"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).**

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).**

**"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Hebrews 13:3).**

**"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).**

**4. (11:32) Confession:** the fourth need is the confession of faith, even if the faith is limited and weak. As soon as Mary saw Jesus, she fell at His feet in homage and worship and made a confession of faith in Him.

1. She called Him, "Lord"
2. She expresses, however, the same complaining, limited faith that Martha did (see note—John 11:21-22 for discussion).

**Thought 1.** The need of man is to make a genuine confession of faith. Even if one's belief and confession are weak, they will grow as one walks with Jesus day by day.

**"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).**

**5. (11:33-36) Jesus Christ, Compassion:** the fifth need is the understanding, feelings, and compassion of Jesus. Note three things.

1. Jesus "groaned [*enebrimēsato* <sup>PWS-1818</sup>] in spirit." The word "groaned" is often interpreted to mean stern reaction, displeasure, or anger (because of its use in other places). Some interpreters feel that Jesus was angry with the friends and neighbors because of their loud wailing and moaning, feeling that they were being hypocritical and insincere in their sorrow. This interpretation is difficult to see.

- ⇒ Mary was certainly sincere in her sorrow, and Jesus was definitely touched by her need.
- ⇒ The Jewish friends and neighbors (which were "many," John 11:19) were sincere in "comforting" her (John 11:31), and many were open to trusting the Lord (John 11:45). Jesus was certainly touched by those as well.

In light of the whole scene, it seems best to see Jesus gripped with intense emotion. He was deeply moved...

- by Mary, who was so broken in sorrow.
- by Martha, who was gripped by pain and hurt.
- by those who were really feeling the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of the family.
- by the terrible tragedy of death and the pain it causes.
- by the terrible price He was soon to pay conquering death. (This was certainly glimpsed by Jesus in such a scene as He was now experiencing.)

Jesus does *groan in spirit*: He groans in understanding and feeling and compassion for all who are hurting and suffering. The words "was troubled" (*etaraxen heauton*) mean agitated, moved deeply, disturbed within.

Jesus was actually feeling the misery and pain of all. His spirit was disturbed and agitated, deeply moved by the whole scene of sorrow and death.

2. Jesus asked where the dead (person) was. Note that Jesus knew where the grave was, but He asked where it was for two reasons.

- ⇒ If He had gone straight to the tomb, there was the possibility of some charging Him and Lazarus with being in collusion and tricking the people.
- ⇒ He needed to distract the people from their deep wailing and arouse their expectation for something unusual about to happen.

Note also that Jesus demonstrated His concern over the dead. He wishes to know where every dead person is, both those who are *spiritually dead* and those who are *physically dead*. He wants to point man's attention to the fact that all men lie in the grave. All must look to Him if they wish to escape death (see Deeper Study #1—Hebrews 9:27. Cp. John 3:16; John 5:24.)

3. "Jesus wept" in love. Why? He wept over death, over man's pain, sorrow, suffering, and fate. Man was never made for sin and death; man was made for righteousness and life. Sin and death...

- deceive and lie      • misuse and defeat
- hurt and maim      • destroy and corrupt
- separate and      • condemn and doom
- alienate      eternally

**"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).**

**6. (11:37) Man, Misunderstanding— Trials— Evil, Problem of:** the misunderstanding of man. The people asked the same question that is so often asked by men of every generation. How could Jesus love so much and let this happen? The problem, of course, is not Jesus. People just do not understand...

- that the nature of the world is decay and corruption, trial and trouble, suffering and pain, death and hell—all because of selfishness and sin.
- that trials and sickness can be an opportunity for God to do a great work (see note—John 11:4).

**"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).**

**"It [the body] is sown in corruption....dishonour....weakness....a natural body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44).**

**"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50).**

**"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).**

#### **D. Jesus and Lazarus: Power Over Death, 11:38-46**

**(11:38-46) Introduction:** Jesus Christ confronted death and demonstrated His great power over death. In confronting and conquering the tomb of Lazarus, He demonstrated that the believer's hope is not in vain. The believer will be raised from the dead, resurrected by the great shout of the Lord's power.

1. Jesus confronted the dead (v.38-39).
2. The great promise of unlimited, resting faith (v.40).
3. The great prayer of purpose (v.41-42).
4. The great shout of power over death (v.43-44).
5. Conclusion: the reaction to Jesus' great power (v.45-46).

**1. (11:38-39) Jesus Christ, Compassion— Comfort:** Jesus confronted the dead. Note three striking points.

1. Jesus groaned in Himself. He stood face to face with the grave. Again...
  - He saw the pain of Mary and Martha and their dear friends.
  - He sensed the terrible dread and bondage that death held over His dear friend Lazarus, and over the whole human race.
  - He was keenly conscious of His own terrible death that lay only a few days away.

He felt the emotions of both compassion and anger, sympathy and indignation. He groaned from deep within, sensing an intense love for all who suffer and a holy anger and displeasure against death (see note—'[John 11:33-36](#)).

2. Jesus was confronted with an objection *from a believer*. Note two things.
  - a. An unbeliever might question if Lazarus was truly dead. Note the emphasis upon the fact that Lazarus *was* truly dead.
    - ⇒ Lazarus was in a real tomb, a tomb of the wealthy. Martha's wealth was indicated by her having owned a house large enough to lodge Jesus and His disciples. If by any stretch of the imagination Lazarus had been mistaken for dead, he was certainly dead now, for it had been four days since he was buried. He would have been placed in an enclosed tomb, being critically ill and very weak. Four days without food or water in such circumstances would kill any weak and critically ill person.
    - ⇒ There was Martha's shock at Jesus' request. The body would have started to decompose after four days.
  - b. It was a believer who objected to Jesus confronting the situation. There was distrust and uneasiness in Martha's objection. She was not sure that Jesus' action was wise and for the best. She was uneasy about what Jesus was doing and asking. She did not want the situation disturbed. She was satisfied with things as they were, with Lazarus laid to rest as he was. What she wanted was to be comforted, not disturbed.

**Thought 1.** Many believers want things left alone, being happy with things as they are. They want only enough of Christ to give them comfort and security and ease. They want little if anything to do with His demands and confrontation with the sin and death of the world (see [Deeper Study #1—Luke 9:23](#)).

**"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" ([Matthew 13:58](#)).**

**"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" ([John 12:37](#)).**

**"Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear" ([Romans 11:20](#)).**

**2. (11:40) Trust— Faith:** the great promise of unlimited, resting faith. Jesus challenged Martha to take an enormous leap of faith. He wanted her to conquer her complaining and to set aside her objections (see note—'[John 11:21-22](#)'). He wanted her to trust Him, to quit questioning what He did. He wanted her to trust...

- His judgment and will.
- His knowledge and understanding.
- His Word and instructions.

Very simply, He wanted her to *rest* in Him, to place an unlimited, resting faith in Him. (See [Deeper Study #1—John 11:40](#) for discussion.)

Note what the promise was to Martha (and to all): if she would believe and simply rest in Him, she would "see the glory of God." By glory was meant Jesus' mercy and power, love and care on this earth. However, the promise applies to the next world as well. The person who will step back and let God act as He wills—the person who truly rests in God—will see the glory of God in the next world.

**3. (11:41-42) Prayer, Purpose of; Power of:** the great prayer of purpose. Note the wording of this point: *prayer of purpose*. Every prayer is to be a prayer of purpose. This is Jesus' point. He was praying for a specific

purpose, and in so doing He demonstrated the purpose and the power of prayer. When a man truly prays with purpose, he receives the answer to his prayer and witnesses to the power of prayer. Note Jesus' prayer.

1. Jesus addressed God as "Father." Jesus had an intimate and continuous relationship with God: a Father-Son relationship. He knew God as His "Father," and God knew Jesus as His Son (see note—John 10:14-16; esp. cp. John 10:15).

**Thought 1.** Believers are hereby taught to call upon God as "Father" and to approach God as a child would: intimately and boldly, yet respectfully and reverently.

2. Jesus requested that His Father do something: "Thou hast heard me." What Jesus asked was not stated, but the reader knows from the context that it has to do with...

- the power to conquer death.
- the strengthening of believers standing around and watching Him.
- the stirring of others to believe and trust Him.

3. Jesus offered thanksgiving to the Father, praising the Father for the glorious privilege of prayer and of being heard and having His prayers answered. This is a striking lesson for believers. God is to be praised for prayer, for the open access He allows into His presence and for the glorious fact that He hears and answers us (cp. John 16:23-24, 26-27).

4. Jesus expressed a perfect and confident knowledge in God: "I knew that thou hearest me always." There is no hesitancy, doubt, or questioning on Jesus' part. He knew perfectly that God heard His prayers—*always*.

5. Jesus bore testimony through the prayer. He prayed...

- to show the close personal relationship between Himself and God.
- to stir belief that He was the *Sent One* of God (see Deeper Study #3—John 3:34; note—John 4:31-35).

Note that the above points could be stated as the purposes for prayer. The purposes of prayer are fivefold:

1. To honor and worship God as "Father."

**"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:15-16).**

**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:4-6).**

2. To secure whatever is needed to live righteously and to minister.

**"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).**

**"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9).**

**"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14).**

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).**

3. To praise and thank God.

**"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6).**

**"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).**

4. To prove and demonstrate one's confidence in God.

**"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14-15).**

**"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).**

5. To bear testimony and proclaim that Jesus is the One sent by God.

**"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).**

**"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42).**

**"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:8).**

**Thought 1.** Jesus always prayed with purpose; therefore, He always received the answer to His prayer and bore testimony to the power of prayer. So it is with every true believer. When we pray with purpose, God answers our prayer, and by so doing He proclaims...

- that Christ is the Son of the living God.
- that Christ is the One sent into the world to open the door (secure access) into God's presence.
- that Christ is the One who has the power over death.

**4. (11:43-44) Death, Deliverance from:** the great shout of power. Note three significant points. (Note also how the resurrection of Lazarus pictures the coming resurrection of the believer. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:12-58.)

1. The power over death comes from Jesus alone. Few prophets have ever raised a dead person except Jesus. Jesus alone has the power to raise the dead. Note that He simply spoke three words, "Lazarus, come forth"; but He shouted them out with a loud voice. Why?

- a. A shout matched the enormity of the miracle. It stressed the enormous power required to raise the dead.
- b. A shout stressed that the power within Jesus is the power of God Himself. With just a shout Jesus can...
  - call forth the enormous power of God.
  - call forth the greatest amount of power imaginable, the power to raise a person from the dead.

**"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26).**

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).**

2. The shout of Jesus is personal. Jesus shouted the name of Lazarus. He did not just shout, "Come forth"; He shouted "Lazarus, come forth." Jesus knows every believer by name, and He is personally concerned over the death of everyone. The day is coming when He will shout "Come forth," and only the ones personally known by Him will come forth.

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).**

**"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3).**

**"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14).**

**"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).**

3. The results of the shout of Jesus were twofold.

- a. The person who was dead came forth. The Son of God spoke and called him forth. There was no way he could remain in the grave, no power that could hold him there. He came forth...
  - immediately                      • perfectly
  - obediently                        • visibly
  - just as he was                    • unquestionably
- b. The person who was resurrected received the personal attention of Jesus. Note the attention and the thoughtfulness of Jesus: "Loose him, and let him go." The wonder of the miracle did not detract Him from continuing to minister and to help wherever He could. It was not enough to share in the wonder of the miracle. Service to God was, and always will be, the call of our Lord Jesus to every man, even in eternity.

**"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23).**

**"Know ye not that we shall judge [oversee] angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor. 6:3).**

**"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).**

**5. (11:45-46) Jesus Christ, Response to:** the reaction to Jesus' great power was divided. Some believed on Him (see Deeper Study #2—John 2:24). Others were gripped with obstinate unbelief and caused trouble. They refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God despite the most powerful evidence. They ignored the evidence and evaded the issue of His demand for belief. Therefore, they lost their opportunity "to see the glory of God" (John 11:40, 46).

**"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).**

**"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).**