

John 11:28-54 – Jesus Raises Lazarus

Jesus told Martha, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” He asked Martha if she believed it. She said that she believed he was the Christ, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. She didn’t directly say that she believed that Jesus was the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus had said that the illness of Lazarus was not for death but for the glory of God. When Lazarus died, the sisters must have wondered what Jesus meant by his message. Martha and Mary were confused and hurt. The death of a loved one brings a lot of emotions, frayed nerves, tension, accusations and plenty of “what if” questions. The next part of chapter eleven heightens the emotions and tension.

Read John 11:28-37.

Why did Martha leave Jesus and go get Mary? How did Mary respond to Martha’s message? Where was Jesus when Mary left the house? How did the Jews who were with Mary respond to her departure? (11:28-31)

When Mary met Jesus, what did she do and say? How did Jesus respond to the weeping of Mary and the others? When Jesus asked where Lazarus was, what did they tell him? (11:32-34)

Why did Jesus weep? This is the only place in the New Testament that this Greek word is used. It is related to the noun meaning “tear”. (11:35)

How did the people respond to Jesus’ tears? (11:36-37)

The people’s response illustrates two common responses to a painful event. Some people believe that God is loving but that he is not able to intervene in all of life’s events. Their “god” is caring but is not sovereign, not all powerful and not able to carry out his will. Others believe that God is able to intervene but that he just doesn’t care about us. Their “god” is powerful but unloving and vengeful. People struggle with the idea that God can be both loving and all powerful. Why would God love someone and yet allow that person to suffer? It doesn’t seem logical. Jesus provided the answer in verse four of this chapter. It is for the glory of God. These concepts come into focus when we think of God the Father allowing Jesus to suffer and die on the cross. Could God the Father not save him? Did God the Father not love him? It only makes sense in light of the fact that this was God’s perfect plan to save his people from the curse of sin and death.

Read John 11:38-44.

What did Jesus tell them to do when he came to the tomb of Lazarus? Why did Martha object? What does this tell us about Martha's understanding of what Jesus was about to do? (11:38-39)

How did Jesus respond to Martha's objection? (11:40)

After Martha's objection was addressed, they rolled away the stone covering the entrance of the tomb where Lazarus was. What did Jesus say and do? What happened to Lazarus? (11:41-44)

Read John 11:45-54.

How did the people react to this sign? (11:45-46)

It is very disturbing to think that the religious leaders were unhappy that Jesus was healing many people, giving sight to a man born blind and even raising someone from the dead who had been in the tomb for four days. They may have appeared to be more "spiritual" than the depraved religious leaders during Jeremiah's time but inwardly, they were the same. They loved themselves. They did NOT love God. Why did they think Jesus needed to be stopped? (11:47-48)

Who was Caiaphas? What was his plan? How did God speak through him despite his act of rebellion against God? (11:49-53)

What does John tell us about Jesus' death? (11:51-52)

Where did Jesus go after he raised Lazarus from the dead? (11:54)