

Dying To Live
Clay Spencer
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Key Scripture: John 11 and 12

What defies human reasoning is bearable when the glory of God is the driving motivation and the sovereignty of God is the guiding force.

1. John 11: 1-6

- This is not saying that God made Lazarus ill, but that the circumstances of Lazarus' illness and death is an opportunity for the Son of God to be glorified.
- "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." – This is important because of what come after it. "Yet when He heard that Lazarus was sick He stayed where He was two more days." Jesus arrives four days after Lazarus has died. Where was He? Did they send people out saying, "Go find Him"?
- They realized this was very serious. They know the Healer. In their heart is "He'll come and it will be alright."
- We often find ourselves in overwhelming circumstances. We get to the point where we say 'this is serious. I better send a message to Jesus that the one He loves, mainly me, is in serious trouble. So we pray, expecting Him to come, but sometimes He delays.

2. John 11:7-16

- The disciples and Jesus had been in Judea where Jesus had made the statement that He was the Son of God and that He and the Father were one. That caused the Jewish leaders to want to kill Him. They tried to arrest Him, because this was high blasphemy. The disciples didn't think it was a good idea to go back to Judea.
- Jesus was trying to tell them "When you have the light, you don't get into trouble. It is when you are in darkness and the light isn't in you that you have trouble. I am the light of the world, if you're with me our mission will be accomplished."
- The disciples were confused and fearful of what would happen to them. The plan to go to Judea was overwhelming. Jesus had to tell them, "No, Lazarus is dead. We're going to wake him up." He had the plan that would glorify God the most.

3. John 17-21

- In those days, when a Jewish person died, he was buried the same day. The grieving family would sit in the house and friends and family would come and sit with them and remember the loved one.
- When she heard that Jesus was near, she ran to meet Him. She had been with Lazarus while he was sick and dying, waiting for Jesus to come. Sitting with someone as they die is a very difficult thing to go through. It is overwhelming and difficult to watch someone you love suffer. As they watched their brother die, they were listening with the thought, "Is He coming? Will He get here in time? And He doesn't. All their hopes are dashed. Then they hear the word 'He's on His way.' So Martha runs to say, "If only you had been here my brother would not have died." It's not a rebuke, just that they so much wanted Him and needed Him to be there. She had faith that He could have fixed it.

4. John 11:23-27

- Martha and Jesus have a conversation that has brought comfort to believers ever since then. (“Your brother will rise again.”) She knows that Lazarus will rise on the resurrection day. She has her Jewish doctrine right, but now her heart is broken.
- “I am the resurrection and the life...” The resurrection is not a doctrine, it’s a fact: not future but present, not an event, but a person. It’s not that there will be a day, time, and event when Jesus hands out resurrection power to all the Jews. Resurrection is a person! He is the resurrection. The indestructible life is in Him, and in whoever believes in Him. We become possessors of an imperishable life that comes from God. Lazarus had this life. He knew Jesus and loved Him and believed in Him. The Spirit of Christ, the life of Christ was in him. Resurrection is not a day far away, but a present reality!
- Jesus asks Martha, “Do you believe this?” She answers yes, a general answer of faith in Him, but still doesn’t quite understand what Jesus is saying.

5. John 11:28-37

- When Mary comes she falls at her feet, wraps her arms around His feet and sobs. She says the same thing as Martha. “We wanted you, we needed you. We knew that if you were here we would all be saved.” Her pain is real and her faith is real.
- Everyone is grieving and mourning. Jesus loved Lazarus. He also weeps. He is moved with compassion, but also with agitation of spirit. Greek word for troubled or agitated means ‘snorting like a horse about to go into battle’. Jesus was agitated in His spirit because He was about to go up against death.

6. John 11:37-45

- Jesus comes to the tomb, and says take the stone away. Sometimes when we want a miracle, there is something that we need to do. Even that may seem too much in our time of need.
- Martha doesn’t want to see Lazarus in this state of decay. She has been through so much grief. She wants to protect Jesus and protect herself from more pain. She couldn’t stand it.
- Jesus redefined glory to include loss, rejection, and even death. Can we see God’s glory in the midst of our suffering? We don’t always know what He is doing.
- Jesus’ prayer- He was doing it this way so that people would believe in Him and see God’s power and glory. Many came to believe. Those He loved came to believe more fully, but some still doubted.
- “Lazarus, come forth!” in Greek it means, “Here! Outside!” Jesus’ shout is one of raw authority, and the power of His voice expresses “the power of God by which the dead are brought to life.” Jesus stood entirely apart by performing the act by the creative, life-giving power of His sheer word. Lazarus goes to the voice. We all hear His voice, (Come out of your deadness and darkness!) when we finally come to Jesus Christ heart, soul, and body. (John 5:25) “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live.”
- Some didn’t believe because they were still dead in their sins. They went to the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews, who were afraid that God would once again visit the nation in judgment and allow them to be exiled and destroy the temple. They were afraid of losing their religious system and their power. They immediately set out to kill Jesus. (12:10-11, 18-19) They didn’t realize that they were going against God Himself. Lazarus’ resurrection triggered the decision.

7. John 12- A celebration dinner party is given for Jesus at the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. This is followed by the triumphal entry of Jesus. It goes from celebration to Jesus' judgment and death

- Vs. 20-28 "The hour has come for the Son of God to be glorified."- In a few days He will be made known by His own resurrection.
- Vs. 24-25 – The glorification principle. A seed must fall to the ground and die before it brings forth fruit. Your support system is gone, your identity is gone, all seems lost, but within us is the seed of indestructible, imperishable life of God.
- We want to please the Lord with our life, for Him to use us and say "well done". We imagine all the ways that we will please Him when things are going well.
- Jesus glorified Himself most when Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were in the most desperate situation of their lives. He loved them, but didn't rescue them from the situation. He didn't stop all the grief. He didn't tell them, "It's going to be alright."
- He tells us it's going to be all right. (Romans 8:28)
- Jesus used their lives to glorify Himself when their lives were totally out of control. Lazarus died- he had no control at all, the sisters were hysterical.
- God's sovereign hand was over them and His goodness was giving goodness to them, and showing His own glory. Because of them we know that we don't have to fear death.
- Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. He can and will and plans to use us. Is my life more effective when my hands are off the wheel? How are you being asked to die?
- The prayer of our hearts is the prayer of our Savior. "Father, glorify your name."

8. Romans 8: 18-19- "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."

- However much suffering we have on this side of life, it is going to be more than made up for on the other side. It is so outweighed by the glory that is to come, that we would say, "I'd go through it again."
- God leads us into things that overwhelm us, but it is in those moments that He uses us the most to bring Him glory. It is when we don't have what the means to deal with it, but we keep our sanity by knowing that He is sovereign and He is good. And He will glorify Himself.

Discussion Questions:

Share a time when you were in overwhelming circumstances and it seemed that God did not answer your prayers. How did that affect your faith in Him?

What does it mean to you that the resurrection is not an event but a person, Jesus Christ?

Do you believe that you will have eternal life because of your faith in Christ? Why?

Is there an area of your life where you are being asked to die to yourself?