

COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN **THE ONE WHO RAISES US FROM THE DEAD** John 11:1–45

Without a doubt, apart from His own resurrection, this is the greatest of Jesus Christ's miracles. Yes, feeding 10,000 (at least) is no small feat. Making a man paralyzed 38 years walk again, is astounding; and curing congenital blindness is medically impossible. But nothing beats reversing necrosis and creating new cells to bring back life. That's what resurrection involves! And the story leading to the resurrection of Lazarus is just as pregnant with meaning as the resurrection of Lazarus itself.

Here's our narrative in four major movements:

1. An Unnecessary Delay? (The Death of Lazarus, 11:1–19)

- Was Jesus responsible for the death of Lazarus? In one sense He was: "it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (v. 4). But in the truest sense, Lazarus was responsible for his own death, just like you and I, "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).
- God gets blamed too much for what sin has brought upon the human race. Name the curse or tragedy, sin is behind it. Do you sometimes blame God for the tragedies of life, but freely take credit for the good things in your life?

2. The Grieving Sisters (Martha and Mary Confront Jesus, 11:20–32)

- Martha and Mary had the exact same comment: "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." These words are not a rebuke. They are words of grief and faith: she is confident that if Jesus had been present while her brother was ill, Jesus would have healed him. Perhaps, even if there was something off in what they said, God chose to look at the faith behind the grief, and responded accordingly.
- Jesus told Martha (John 11:25) "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

Jesus wanted to change Martha's focus from an abstract belief in what happens on the last day (John 5:21, 25), to a personalized belief in Him who alone can provide it. He Himself is the resurrection and the life. And because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, in the face of death – ours, or those we love – He is to be trusted, for He will do nothing except what displays the glory of God.

3. The Grief of God (The Heartache of Jesus, 11:33–38)

- Both verse 33 and 38 can better read “He was outraged inside”. Why? One or both of these can be the reason:

- a) Jesus was angry with the sin, sickness and death in this fallen world that wreaks so much havoc and generates so much sorrow; Or,

- b) He was angry at their unbelief. People were grieving like pagans, like ‘the rest of men, who have no hope’ (1 Thes. 4:13). Deep grief at bereavement is natural; but grief that degenerates to despair, that pours out its loss as if there were no resurrection, is a denial of that resurrection.

- If you live long enough as a Christian, you will never live life without experiencing the anguish of bereavement. There are precious words of comfort here: if they were in the Lord, you will see them again. But there is also a warning here: few things grieve the heart of God as much as unbelief. Let’s make sure Jesus doesn’t grieve at our grief.

4. The Power of God (The Resurrection of Lazarus, 11:39–45)

- In this unforgettable scene, Jesus calls out the decayed Lazarus by name, and he comes out, alive. What kind of power does that take? Paul spoke of this in Eph. 1:18-21: “I pray . . . that you may know . . . His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand . . . far above all rule and authority, power and dominion”.

- What is the meaning of the resurrection of Lazarus for us? The same as it was for the disciples and believers in Bethany: this event demonstrates Jesus’ ability to make His resurrection power available to His people, right now.

Final Thoughts:

It is one thing to believe that Jesus has the power to raise us up on the last day. But it’s something else to realize that Jesus’ power is unlimited now; that Jesus can bring new life to the deadened areas of our own lives; that because of Jesus’ power, we can risk taking actions that we might otherwise never have the courage to take.

Let’s never hold back anything God asks from us, for the unlimited power of new life is ours in Him.