

JOHN 11:45-12:11

Lazarus—Loosed & Living for Jesus

I. BRIEF REVIEW OF JESUS RAISING LAZARUS.

A. At our last time studying in John (11-17-21), Pastor Reggie did a wonderful job teaching about Lazarus' sickness...

Jesus' purposeful delay in going to Bethany...

His ministry to the grieving family...

And the raising of Lazarus.

1. One thing really sticks in my mind that Reggie shared:

a. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He needed no help in being unbound by the funeral garments He was wrapped in. As Reggie said, they just collapsed on spot where He had lay. He needed no help.

b. **HOWEVER**, Lazarus needed help in being **“loosed”** from his funeral clothes. (Sandy & I singing **“Take of those rags Lazarus”** in a music program at Trinity years ago.)

c. Lazarus' **“new life”** and his need for help is a “picture of our salvation... & need for “help” in sanctification.

d. AND that sanctification is a life—long process of **“putting off the old and putting on the new”**.

2. Col. 3:1-14, **“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.... Put to death therefore what is earthly in you... Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, ...”**

(NOTE: underlining is mine. 😊)

3. It is a poor testimony indeed for a Christian... if we fail to **“put off”** the old grave clothes of our past life!

B. Here we have seen... LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD & LOOSED

II, LAZARUS' WITNESS TO OTHERS.

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A. True believers **WILL** be a witness

1. Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you **will** be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
2. The scripture says, "you **will** be witnesses", **not**, "you *might*... or you *should* be witnesses".
3. Christian friend, we **are** witnesses. The question is:..... **what kind of witness are you & I ?**
4. I'm not trying to "lay a guilt trip on you". I'm trying to challenge you (& myself) to think about this matter of our witness.
5. We can not do it on our own... & yes, we all have failed... but we can be better witnesses through our moment-by-moment surrender to the Holy Spirit.
6. I think sometimes when we use the word "the", addressing "the Holy Spirit", we somehow lower Him (capital H) to a lesser position from "the Father" and "the Son". He is as much a part of the Godhead as the Father & the Son. Francis Chan has written a book, "The Forgotten God" (speaking of the Holy Spirit). We need His help & guidance.
7. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, that we will have "power when the Holy Spirit comes on us".
8. Please consider... pray about... your "surrender" to Him (**Jesus**)... and your "alertness & obedience" to the leading & empowering of the Holy Spirit.

B. Lazarus **was** a witness.

1. Jhn 11:45, Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he (Jesus) did, believed in him,
 - a. "Many... who saw...(Lazarus' alive)... **believed**".
2. **We (spiritually) have been "raised from the dead" !!**
3. People **saw the change** in Lazarus... without him saying a word !!
4. Jhn. 12:11, "...because on account of him (Lazarus) many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus..... v.17, The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.
5. What Jesus had done in Lazarus brought many to believe in Jesus.

6. **Warren Wiersbe says**, “It’s the **privilege** and **duty** of every believer to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

C. The Plot Thickens.

1. After we read that v. 45, “many believed in him”, we see v.46, “... some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.”
2. I like how Eugene Peterson puts it in *The Message*, “they **told on Jesus**”.
3. V. 47, “The Council” (Sanhedrin) was called into session, to “what to do” with Jesus... “What are we to do?”
4. There are **only 2 responses** any of us can do with Jesus.....
... we can “accept Him & believe”... or we can “reject”.
5. The Sanhedrin’s interest was not to accept Him.
6. Their concerns:
 - a. “Everyone will believe in Him”
 - b. “The Romans will come...”
 - c. “And take away our place”, many think this refers to the temple (which they refer to “our”, as if it was theirs & not God’s!
 1. Could refer to their jobs/position of authority (income)!
 - d. “And take away... our nation”. (Tragically the nation would later fall... but not because of Jesus or His teaching)

D. The Unlikely Prophet.

1. Jhn 11:49, But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish. He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.
2. The statement, “You know nothing at all”, speaks of how the Sadducees were known for their rudeness even to each other,
3. One commentary reports that it was understood that the high priest, by virtue of his position had special powers of divination.
4. Caiaphas certainly exercised that by stating that it would be better for “one man” (Jesus) to “die for the people”, than for the whole nation to die.

5. KJV, v.50, “It is **expedient** for us that one die”; Caiaphas was not thinking prophetically, but of what was most “advantageous”.
6. In v.52, we see that John understood this prophetic word from Caiaphas to include “**not only the nation only, but but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad**”
7. When I read that Caiaphas in v. 51, (said) “**he did not say this of his own accord...**”, I thought of how God used a donkey to speak to **Balaam**, Num. 22.
 - a. Such an interesting story of the prophet Balaam being hired by Israel’s enemies to put a curse on the nation of Israel.
 - b. Balaam not only could not curse Israel...
 - c. He couldn’t even see the angel of God blocking his path...
 - d. Nor did he have enough spiritual sense to understand the wrongness of his behavior...
 - e. It took **his donkey** speaking to him to stop Balaam !!
 - f. In our text, God used a disbelieving Jewish high priest to unknowingly prophecy Jesus dying for the world !!
8. The raising of Lazarus pushed the key religious leaders to take action.
9. V. 53, “**So from that day on, they made plans to put him (Jesus) to death.**”

III. LAZARUS WAS PERSECUTED

A. Lazarus’ example.

1. Jhn 12:10, 11, “**So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.**”
2. Many of the Jewish leaders who met to plot against Jesus were Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. Lazarus was an obvious witness to the folly of their teachings.
3. All of the Jewish religious leaders were losing followers to Jesus, and Lazarus was an obvious witness to the reality of Jesus being the longed-for Messiah.
4. Not only did Jesus “need to go”, Lazarus did as well.
5. **As someone has well said**, “Had the priests not been overruled by God— they would have put an extra cross on Calvary (for Lazarus).”

B. Our threat to “the powers that be”.

1. 2 Tim. 3:12, “**...all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution**”.

2. **Pastor Reggie mentioned someone** being baptized at Heritage some years ago. The person performing the baptism asked, “Are you willing to die from Christ?” The person answered “Yes”.
3. We in the US don’t understand how that could happen !!
4. The last time we had “Bible study” on Wed., we prayed for “the persecuted church”.
7. **Persecution is a reality** in a huge part of our world.... **& it’s coming** to a home & church near you ! (for true believers... who stand on the Word of God... & against specific instances of moral decline in our country & communities).
8. **You can count on it, just as surely as you can count on “death & taxes” !!**

IV. LAZARUS FELLOWSHIPED WITH CHRIST.

A. Lazarus at the table.

1. **Jn. 12:1, 2** show Lazarus reclining with Jesus in fellowship.
2. **“Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.”**
3. No doubt out of gratitude for what Jesus had done for Lazarus, a meal was prepared for Jesus. Lazarus, his family, & others gathered.
 - a. From **Mt. 26:6**, & **Mk. 14:3**, it appears this meal was at Simon the leper’s home, and Martha was the hostess (some think he may have been kin to Lazarus’ family).
 - b. Common customs of the day would have the men reclined at a low table, and the women serving them. (Sorry, ladies!)
4. We as believers should be spending meaningful time **with Jesus**... the One who gave us “new life”... as He had done for Lazarus.
 - a. We do this today in prayer... reading/studying His Word... in worship.... obedient service to Him.
5. It is **inconceivable** that someone who had been raised from the dead (Lazarus... and us!) would neglect the One that you owe our life to !
6. **Lk. 17:11**, tells the story of Jesus’ encounter with 10 lepers. They cried out, **“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”** He healed all 10 of them. One, **(just one)** of them returned to give thanks & worship Jesus for what He had done for him.
7. Is that not amazing... & the one who did so was a Samaritan!

B. Jesus Anointed by Mary, [Jhn 12:3](#), “Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”

1. It was less than a week before Jesus would die on the cross.
2. The meal was served, & Mary comes to anoint Jesus. [One commentator said](#), “Mary’s gift was remarkably *humble*. When a guest entered the home, usually the guest’s feet were washed with water and the guest’s head was anointed with a dab of oil or perfume...”
3. “A pound” of this ointment was worth “300 denarii”, [v. 5](#), according to Judas... that was a year’s wages for a common worker !!
4. Picture if you will this extravagant act of worship... & the one who sacrificed the gift... letting down her hair (which women never did in public) to “[wipe his feet with her hair](#)” !
5. [Spurgeon said](#), “It was very costly, but it had not cost a penny too much now that it could be used upon *him*. There was a pound of it, but there was none too much for *him*. It was very sweet, but none too sweet for *him*.”
6. We hear a lot today about “[aroma therapy... & essential oils](#)”. Mary’s extravagant act of worship **gives new meaning** to the term, “essential oils” !!
7. “[The house was filled with the fragrance...](#) “
8. One last note: Mt. & Mk. both record Mary anointing Jesus head. There is no need to think this is a contradiction. Considering the amount of oil involved, she probably anointed both Jesus’ head and His feet.

C. Judas’ Objection, [vs. 4-7](#), “But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.”

1. Judas objects to the “waste”... estimates the cost... & is exposed as a thief !
2. Only Jesus realized the true meaning of Mary’s act of worship.

3. Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. v.8, For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

D. The Plot to Kill Lazarus, vs. 9-11, “When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

1. There were “large crowd” of Jews in Jerusalem for Passover.
2. They were looking this time not just for Jesus... but for Lazarus also.
3. Because of the changed life of Lazarus (death to life !), Lazarus was now a threat to the Jewish religious leaders also.
4. **Spurgeon said**, “When men hate Christ, they also hate those whom he has blessed, and will go to any lengths in seeking to silence their testimony.”
5. Someone has well said, “Had God not intervened, there would be another cross on the hillside for Lazarus”
6. And aren't you so glad God does intervene!