

Slide 1

The Raising of Lazarus (II)

JOHN 11:28-57

Introduction

1. Two weeks ago, we began looking at John 11, and the amazing miracle which John narrates for us — the raising of Lazarus, a man who had been dead for four days.
2. As I pointed out then, this miracle takes place in the little town of Bethany, located only two miles from Jerusalem.
3. This little village was the home of Lazarus and his two sisters Martha and Mary.
4. While the miracle which occurred there served as the climax of Jesus ministry, it was also the event which would lead to Jesus' final clash with the authorities in Jerusalem.
5. In the first 27 verses of this chapter, John has recounted for us . . .
 - a. The message delivered to Jesus on the other side of the Jordan River that Lazarus was sick (vv. 1-3).
 - b. Jesus' purposeful delay in journeying back to Bethany (vv. 4-6).
 - c. His words to the twelve prior to their return (vv. 7-16).
 - d. His arrival in Bethany and conversation with Martha (vv. 17-27).
6. Tonight, as we look at the last half of this chapter, we will see . . .
 - a. Jesus encounter with Mary, Lazarus and Martha's sister (vv. 28-32)
 - b. The raising of Lazarus (vv. 33-44)
 - c. Reactions to Lazarus' resurrection (vv. 45-57)

Slide 2

I. Jesus' Meeting With Mary (vv. 28-32)

A. MARTHA TELLS HER SISTER OF JESUS' ARRIVAL (VV. 28-29)

1. As we saw in the beginning of the chapter, “stayed two days longer in the place where He was” after receiving word that Lazarus was sick (v. 6).
 - a. The trip by the messenger to tell Jesus that Lazarus was sick had taken a day.
 - b. The trip back to Bethany by Jesus and His disciples would also take a day.
2. So, by the time Jesus and His disciples arrived, Lazarus “had already been in the tomb four days” (v. 17).
3. After Martha had spoken with Jesus, she went away and called for her sister, Mary.
4. She secretly told her, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you” (v. 28).
 - a. Martha called Jesus “the Teacher” a term which sets Jesus apart from other teachers.
 - b. Jesus evidently wanted to have a private conversation with Mary.
 - c. His purpose may have been to comfort and instruct her.
5. Upon hearing this, Mary quickly went to meet Him.

2a

B. MARY'S MEETING WITH JESUS (VV. 30-32)

1. Jesus was still outside the village proper where Martha had first encountered Him.
2. Any attempt by Martha to ensure a private conversation between Jesus and her sister failed when Mary “rose up quickly and went out” (v. 30).
3. Those who “were consoling” her arose and followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb.

4. When Mary reached Jesus (v. 32), she fell at His feet and uttered the same words as her sister, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v. 32).
5. It may have been that the sisters said this to each other several times after Lazarus died: ‘if the Teacher had been here, our brother would not have died.’
6. It is interesting to note that each time Mary of Bethany appears in the Gospels, she is at Jesus’ feet (cf. Luke 10:39; John 12:3).

Slide 3

II. The Raising of Lazarus (vv. 33-44)

A. JESUS’ REACTION (vv. 33-37)

1. Notice what John tells us about Jesus’ reaction when He saw Mary weeping and those who had come with her also weeping.
2. John said that . . .
 - a. “He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled” (v. 33, NASB95, ESV, NIV84).
 - b. “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (KJV, NKJV).
3. The verb rendered groaned (“deeply moved”, NASV, NIV) is an unusual one.
 - a. It signifies a loud inarticulate noise.
 - b. Outside the N.T. it is properly used of the snorting of horses.
 - c. When used of men it usually denotes anger, outrage, or emotional indignation.
4. At what was Jesus’ anger and outrage directed?
 - a. Death and the one who has the power of death (cf. Hebrews 2:14), whom He has come into the world to destroy.

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,” (Hebrews 2:14, NASB95)

- b. B.B. Warfield, in his comment on this passage wrote, “What John does for us in this particular statement is to uncover to us the heart of Jesus as he wins for us our salvation. Not in cold unconcern, but in flaming wrath against the foe, Jesus smites in our behalf.” (B.B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ*, Philadelphia, 1950, p. 117)
5. Not only does John tell us that Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit,” but also that He “was troubled.”
 - a. Literally, the Greek text says He “troubled Himself.”
 - b. These two words, ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν, when put together, mean to shake or tremble.
 - c. “So powerful was Jesus’ emotional reaction to what was before Him that he ‘shook’ under the force of it.”
 6. At this point, Jesus asked, “Where have you laid him?” (v. 34).
 7. Instead of giving Jesus directions, they invite Him to come and see.
 8. The next verse, John 11:35, is the shortest verse of the Bible — “Jesus wept.”
 9. There are two things which I would like for you to consider here:
 - a. First, the Greek word used by John to describe the weeping of Jesus is different from that used to describe the weeping of Mary and those who had followed her (v. 33).
 - 1) The word used of Mary and the Jews (κλαίω) indicates a loud, demonstrative form of mourning, a wailing.
 - 2) That used of Jesus (ἐδάκρυσεν, found only here in the N.T.), points instead to a quiet weeping.

3) The crowd interpreted Jesus' tears as an expression of love.

Slide 4

b. This brings us to the second thing I want you to consider. Why does Jesus weep? There are two possible reasons:

1) Jesus shed tears of grief for a departed friend and his mourning relatives as any one else might do. The later response in v. 36, "See how he loved him!", seems to suggest this.

Rom. 12:5 – "... weep with those who weep."

Isa. 53:3 – "... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

2) His grief was generated by the same sin and death, and the same unbelief that had prompted his outrage.

10. Some who were in the crowd asked a question, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" (v. 37).

a. There is no reason to assume the Jews are mocking Jesus. They are puzzled and confused.

b. However, their question reveals a faith which does not rest on who Jesus is and what He has revealed about His Father.

c. It is a faith dependent upon displays of power, and such a faith constantly demands new signs and miracles.

Slide 5

B. EVENTS AT THE TOMB (vv. 38-44)

1. Their unbelief seems to prompt another display of strong emotion on Jesus' part — He was "again . . . deeply moved within" (v. 38).

2. John tells us that the tomb where Lazarus is buried is a cave with a large stone up against its entrance.

3. Jesus said, "Remove the stone" (v. 39).

4. Notice the scene around the tomb:

a. The crowd is watching and listening.

- b. Mary is weeping and others are weeping.
5. Martha protests to the removal of the stone — “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days” (v. 39).
- a. The fear of a stench indicates the body had not been embalmed.
 - b. Aromatic spices were used in Jewish circles not to embalm bodies (as did the Egyptians) but to counteract repulsive odors from bodily decomposition.
 - c. It is evident she did not understand from her earlier conversation that Jesus was about to raise her brother.
6. Jesus’ question to Martha serves as a summary of what He had said earlier in verses 23-26 — “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” (v. 40).
- a. To raise to life someone who has died is an act of revelation.
 - b. It is the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ.
 - c. To raise Lazarus to life would be a spectacular miracle, it would be a display of the power of Jesus.
 - d. However, for Jesus the glory of His Father was the important thing.
7. Martha apparently gave her consent because the stone is removed.

Slide 6

8. Jesus’ prayer in vv. 41-42 is remarkable for several reasons:
- a. His direct reference to God as ‘Father’ is characteristic of his praying (cf. 17:1, 11, 25).
 - b. The prayer assumes that Jesus has already asked for Lazarus’ life, and that all he must do is to thank his Father for the answer.
 - 1) Verse 11 also assumes that the raising of Lazarus had been determined for some time.
 - 2) “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep” (John 11:11).

- c. The public nature of his prayer is not a matter of playing to the gallery.
 - 1) Through His prayer, Jesus sought to draw His hearers into the intimacy of His own relationship with His Father.
 - 2) In it He demonstrates the truth of John 5:19ff., that He does nothing by Himself but is totally dependent upon and obedient to His Father's will.
 - He may ask, but it is His Father who grants.

Slide 7

- d. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth" (v. 43).
 - 1) When the dead body of Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God (5:25, 28-29) it sprang to life.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." (John 5:25, NASB95)

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth . . ." (John 5:28-29a, NASB95)

- 2) Lazarus came out, still bound with the graveclothes he had been buried in.
- 3) Upon his exit from the tomb, Jesus ordered the graveclothes removed.
 - The resurrection of Lazarus pales in comparison to what is to come.

Slide 8**III. Reactions To Lazarus' Resurrection (vv. 45-57)****A. BELIEF AND UNBELIEF (vv. 45-48)**

1. Just as Jesus' words and deeds have divided the Jews in the past (e.g. 6:14,15; 7:10-13, 45-52), so it happens here again.
2. Many of those who had followed Mary when she left the house to go see Jesus believed when they saw the miracle.
3. However, there were others who simply went away to the Pharisees, known to be the enemies of Jesus, and told them the things Jesus had done.
4. Because of the report, the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council or Sanhedrin.
 - a. The Pharisees by themselves could not take decisive judicial action.
 - b. The highest judicial body in the land was the Sanhedrin, which was allowed under Roman authority to control all Jewish internal affairs.
 - c. This judicial body consisted of seventy members.
 - d. The high priest presided over it as the seventy-first member.
5. They reasoned, "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (v. 48).
6. More than anything else, they were afraid the Romans would come and take away *from them* the temple and the nation.
7. In reality, they were concerned less with the well-being of the nation and more for their own position of power and prestige.

Slide 9**B. THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS (vv. 49-57)**

1. "Caiaphas, who was high priest that year" presided over the Sanhedrin.
 - a. He had been appointed high priest in AD 18 by the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus.
 - b. He remained in office until AD 36, the same year Pontius Pilate was removed from power.
2. Caiaphas spoke up and said, "You know nothing at all," the ancient equivalent to our "You don't know what you are talking about!"

3. He added, “nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.” (John 11:50)
 - a. In other words, if the safety of the nation could be secured by one man’s death, then it is a simple matter of calculation that this man should die.
 - b. *On this occasion justice took second place to prudence.*

Slide 10

4. Notice that John makes the point that Caiaphas “did not say this of his own accord,” — because he was high priest God spoke through him words with a fuller meaning than he knew.
 - a. “that Jesus was going to die for the nation” (v. 51).

Both Caiaphas and John thought of Jesus’ death as substitutionary: either Jesus dies or the nation dies. While Caiaphas was thinking at a purely political level, John was focused more on the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29, 34).

- b. “that Jesus would [should] die . . . not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (v. 52).

The purpose of Jesus’ death was not limited to the nation of Israel but to Gentiles as well as the “other sheep that are not of this fold” (10:16).

5. Caiaphas’ words mark a turning point.
 - a. His advice was accepted, the decision was made.
 - b. All that remained was to carry it out, as quickly as possible.
 - c. Jesus must be arrested and put to death.

Slide 11

6. Because of their decision, John tells us that “Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews” (v. 54).

- a. He relocated 12 miles to the north, to “a city called Ephraim” (v. 54).
- b. He would not die before the Father’s appointed hour.
7. In the meantime, Passover was drawing near.
 - a. This is the third Passover which John records in his gospel (2:13; 6:4).
 - b. Before the feast, many from the countryside went up to Jerusalem to purify themselves ceremonially.
 - c. John is letting us know that Jerusalem will be crowded with pilgrims.
8. During all this, Jesus’ enemies were actively looking for Him, questioning whether He would even come to the feast.
9. The circulation of orders by the chief priests and Pharisees alerted both residents and pilgrims coming from outside Jerusalem of the Sanhedrin’s intention to take decisive action against Jesus.
10. Anyone who knew His whereabouts and did nothing would be considered an accessory.

Conclusion

1. There are two things I would like for you to consider as we conclude this lesson:
 - a. This first is this — not only does our death and the deaths of our loved ones reveal our Lord’s compassion and grief, it also provokes His anger and wrath at what the devil has done to His creation.

Slide 12

- 1) In Hebrews 2:14-15, we find these words, “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” (Hebrews 2:14–15, NASB95)

2) Prior to Christ's death on the cross, you and I were condemned to be "slaves of sin" (Romans 6:17), but through His sacrifice we have been "freed from sin" (Romans 6:22).

- ❑ The question which each of us must ask ourselves is this, "Have I taken advantage of the freedom which Christ offers me, or am I still being kept in slavery by Satan?"

Slide 13

b. The second thing I would like for you to consider involves something which I said earlier, "The resurrection of Lazarus pales in comparison to what is yet to come."

1) In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Paul wrote, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, NASB95)

2) You and I can only imagine what that day will be like.

**What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
And I look upon His face,
The One who saved me by His grace.
When he takes me by the hand
And leads me through the promised Land
What a day, glorious day, that will be.**

2. Please know this. It will only be a joyous day for those who are prepared, whose sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ.

3. Does this describe you? If not, it can tonight. Will you come to Jesus