

## **John Chapter 11 (DDC) – June 8, 2008**

### **Summary of where we are at:**

- As we continue to move through John... tonight we are crossing over the halfway point through the 21 chapters of John.
- I think it is important to continue to remind ourselves that John is carefully picking out certain incidents in the life of Jesus by which he might show us that Jesus is the Messiah
- And (even more than that) he is showing us that Jesus is the Son of God...,
- which as we've discussed does not mean he is a son (as in the way we would picture it in human form).
- But rather that he is begotten of the father.
- He is the only begotten son (singular)
  - Like man begets man
  - And a deer begets deer
  - And a dog begets dog(pause)
  - God begets God..
    - He has demonstrated this idea of begetting likeness to us in EVERY biological reproductive occurrence
  - And Jesus being the begotten son of God... is God
  - ...Like me being begotten of a man (my dad) am a man
  - But while the father and the son are equally distinct persons, together with the spirit they form (as the Bible teaches) one God.
  - One God three facets... the Father the Son and Holy Spirit
- And John is taking specific instances, specific works (and miracles) that Jesus performed in order to demonstrate to us the totality of:
  - First: Jesus, who is begotten of the father... and who became a man... and came to us.
    - It says in John 1, Jesus was existent with the father before time
    - And through him all things (every thing that we know) was made
    - And Jesus came to us
      - It says: The word became flesh and dwelt among us.
      - God came to us as a man
      - That we might see and understand God(pause)
  - And Second John seeks to demonstrate to us is: what Jesus (what God in the flesh) has done for us.(pause)
  - God died for us... so that we might understand God's heart for us(pause)
- And John uses specific instances from the life of Jesus where by we might understand what Jesus (God in the flesh) has done.

- Because (the fact is) it is far too big of a thing for us to understand merely by him telling us.
  - Imagine if all he had said was “you are forgiven....”
  - Our response might be “well thanks... I guess”
  - I would imagine a lot of us wouldn’t even listen... or understand... or even care
- But Jesus’ through the miracles he preformed...
- and through teaching and discourse surrounding those miracles, demonstrates to us the totality of our existence apart from God...
  - We are without birth. – (as it talks about in Chapter 3) - there is no life in us – only biological life
  - We are hungry – (as it talks about in Chapter 6) - we lack fulfillment – we can never be satisfied – we go from one thing to another thing and can never be satisfied
  - We are blind. – (as it talks about in Chapter 9) - Jesus is the light and apart from that light we are blind
  - And... we are dead. – as it talks about in the chapter

(long pause)

- But... Jesus offers us a way back (the way back) to God
- It’s interesting, as you look around at various religions... the ultimate questions that everyone seeks to answer all revolve around death.
- Death is the ultimate unknown
- And in this chapter Jesus’ demonstrates that he is not just a man who can perform miracles.
- But he demonstrates that he is God.
- He holds the keys to life and death
- He is the resurrection and the life.
- So the story begins:

**Joh 11:1** Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

- Bethany is what you might call a “quaint little town”
- It’s located adjacent to Jerusalem; just east of it... very close to the Mt. of Olives.
- And, interestingly enough, it is called here the village of Mary... and her sister Martha
- So... why would John as he begins this story... clarify to us that Bethany is known as the village of Mary and her sister? Why is that important? (or even pertinent??)
- If these are such important stories... why does he start off by clarifying that little detail?

(pause)

- The answer I would give is it helps us understand the context of this story.
  - So... it is the town of Mary and her sister.

- Mary must have been a special kind of a person that, when you think of Bethany, you think of Mary... and probably to a lesser extent, her sister.
- She is that kind of a sociable person, so friendly, so outgoing, that everybody knew her, and must have been captivated by her... such that it became known as her town.
- You can kind of picture someone saying, "Bethany? Yeah, that's the town of Mary."
- It kind of gives us a picture of Mary

(pause)

- Well as we study the scriptures we find Mary was very devoted to Jesus.

(pause)

- This is the same Mary (I'm sure you all know the story) that was sitting at the feet of Jesus...just sort of drinking in and learning as he taught...
- All the while... Martha (her sister) was working and sweating trying to get things in order for the meal that was going to come that night
- Things cleaned... the food made... all the preparations taken care of
- Busy like some of us tend to get
- And if you recall (from Luke Chapter 10), Martha (tired and sweaty no doubt) came to Jesus feeling frustrated because her sister is doing nothing to help with the preparations.
- She said to Jesus "Lord, make her come and help me."
- A very reasonable request.
- She's working so hard... and Mary is sitting here listening to Jesus ... doing nothing.
- So she says "Put things right."
- But Jesus replies to her, "She's chosen the better way Martha."
- You're always so busy, wanting to make sure everything just right,
- And that's not bad.
- But Jesus instructs her that given those circumstances... Mary has made a better choice....
- God was there with them... in the flesh.... and Mary was there drinking it in
- So there was this close relationship between Jesus and these sisters.
- It says in verse 2:

**Joh 11:2** This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. *(which is a story that begins the passion week... we will read about in the next Chapter – Ch.12)*

- John felt it necessary to further identify who this Mary is
- If you study through the New Testament you will find that there are really four Mary's involved around the story of Jesus.
  - His mother
  - Mary Magdalene
  - Mary who was the wife of Cleopas. (Jesus's Aunt)
  - Mary, the sister of Lazarus (this Mary)

- John identifies for us here which Mary we are talking about.
- (pause)
- So... we begin in a quaint little mountainside village outside of Jerusalem...
  - In the town of Bethany... the town of Mary and her sister.
  - And the story begins with Lazarus (Mary and Martha's baby brother) sick.
  - They are worried no doubt... like you and I would be if our baby brother became sick
- In verse 3 it says:

**Joh 11:3** So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

(pause)

- The Greek language has really three words for love
- The word for love used here is *phileō* which is a personal friendship love.
- The love we would have for your brother... or perhaps your best friend
- That love that accompanies affection and friendship
- It's that rich love we experience in personal relationship.

(pause)

- As I was preparing for tonight I spent some time considering my perception (or rather my understanding) of what it means when we say God loves us.
- What does that mean?

(pause)

- Love can mean so many different things.

(pause)

- I can understand (with fairly little effort) the certainty of that egopeay love that is God
- He has (and is) that perfect transcendent love for all of us.
- But the question that I found myself asking is:

- Sure God loves me (and everything else) ... in that big hazy egopeay love sort of way...
- But does God like me?... Is God fond of me?
- You see what I'm saying?
- "God is love" can feel pretty impersonal.

(pause)

- So this story begins to really peaks my interest.
- They sent a message saying the: "Lord the one you love (the one you are fond of) is sick"

(pause)

- And as you examine the scriptures, you'll find that God (like this story of Lazarus) loves us with not only that egopahy love (that we kind of assume is there)... but He also loves us with that pheleo love... that personal love.
- "Which honestly... completely blows my mind"
- I can't picture how looks. If God loves me as a friend... how does he treat me?

- What do our interactions look like?
  - So (as I said) this story peaks my interest.
  - We are talking about Lazarus... a man whom God is fond of... who Jesus loves... like you and me.
- (pause)
- I also find it interesting that Mary and Martha did not make any demands that Jesus come and heal Lazarus.
  - All they did was inform Him, "Lord, the one you love is sick."
- They didn't feel it necessary to tell Him how to respond or to demand a response.
- (pause)
- I have to believe we can learn something from that.
  - Their only message was "Lord the one you love is sick."

**Joh 11:4** When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

- So there's a purpose... is what he says
- And he kind of hints at what's to come.
- And then John goes on to tell us:

**Joh 11:5** Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

- Ok I have to quickly stop and note, the order here.
  - People loved Mary... such that the town of Bethany began to be known as the town of Mary and her sister.
  - But as the holy spirit inspired John to write his gospel he wrote,
  - Jesus loved Martha and her sister
  - That's not how most of us would have written it.
- (pause)
- If you are anything like me... I tend to be more of a Martha than a Mary
  - Certainly no one would name a town after me.
  - But I love to work hard for the lord.
  - And here we see a bit of what you might call poetic justice for all the Martha's out there.
  - Who does Jesus love?
  - Martha... oh and that sister she has.
    - Not quite how we see things...
- Ok, back starting in verse 5.
  - Notice the important link between verse 5 and 6
  - It says, starting verse 5:

**Joh 11:5** Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

**Joh 11:6** Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

- So John didn't want any confusion in our minds.
  - JESUS LOVED MARTHA, MARY and LAZARUS... period
  - So it wasn't a lack of concern, but there was a deliberate waiting of Jesus for two days.
  - So why would he stay??
  - If he loved Lazarus why would he stay?
- (pause)
- Well, Jesus (while all of this was occurring) was at the Jordan River.
  - So He is about twenty miles east of Bethany.
    - (the Jordan river is river that flows out of the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea)
- 
- In those days, an average day's journey was about 10 miles.
  - So, just about every ten miles along whatever road you were traveling you would come either to a village, or if there were no villages in that span, then they would have an inn.
  - So when you went somewhere, you planned on traveling about 10 miles per day.
  - Well it's pretty barren between Bethany and Jericho, no villages at all, so about halfway there is an inn.
  - When we envision an inn we picture a hotel or a motel, but really an inn isn't the same thing. (Well they might be now... but back then they weren't)
- 
- An Inn was a walled-in area with a little house (somewhere within the walled area) where the innkeeper would stay.
  - And there was usually a well in the center of the courtyard.
  - There weren't rooms at the inn but travelers could huddle up next to the perimeter wall and be sheltered from the wind.
  - So essentially it was just a place to spend the night, get water.
  - No food; just a place to camp for the night and get water.
- 
- And so, Jesus being at the Jordan River was a two-day journey from Bethany.
- 
- So let's add this up.
  - Lazarus becomes sick to the extent his sisters (Mary and Martha) began to worry if their brother was going to make it.
  - So they send a message to Jesus. Hoping he will come quickly.
- 
- Well it would have taken two days for a messenger to get from Bethany to the Jordan River.
    - (or perhaps 1 if the messenger ran the whole way or perhaps traveled through the night)
  - Well it says here after Jesus received the message, He stayed two more days at the Jordan River before He began the two-day journey back to Bethany.

- So, all in all you have between five and six days (depending on how fast the messenger made it to Jesus) from the time the message went out to Jesus and when Jesus arrives in Bethany.
- But we must notice Jesus deliberate delay of two days before going to Bethany.
- And... during this deliberate delay, Jesus knew exactly what was going on in Bethany.
- Lazarus was sick and dying... yet he deliberately delayed

**Joh 11:7** Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

- Judea is similar to what we could call a county.
- It is essentially the area that Jerusalem (and Bethany being directly adjacent to Jerusalem) are located in.
- So He's saying "Let's go back to that area now".
- And his disciples respond:

**Joh 11:8** "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

- Last time Jesus was in Jerusalem they said to Jesus, "Tell us plainly if You're the Messiah."
- And Jesus response to the was (this is Ch.10) "I and the Father are one" (pause)
- Again asserting His divinity... but also his relationship with the Father
  - His oneness with the Father
  - Remember... one God, multiple persons
- Well their response was they became angry.
- And they (again) took up stones in order to kill him.
- But... Jesus again miraculously escaped. And went to the Jordan River... and that is where he is now.
- So his disciples say to him, "Hey, Lord, the last time you were there, they tried to stone You. What do You want to go back for?"

**Joh 11:9a** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?..."

- In other words, "is there not a period of time where the light of the sun shines on us and illuminates our physical path?."

**Joh 11:9b** ...A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light.

**Joh 11:10** It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

- Jesus has told us numerous times that he is the light.

- And what he is basically saying here is, if my works are to mean something (if they are to be understandable), they must be done while it is yet day.
- While I am still here.

**Joh 11:11** After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

- What happens to a believer is different from what happens to a nonbeliever in what we call physical death.
- And because there is a vast difference, the Bible does not always use the same term to signify the departing of a believer's soul from his body.
- The Bible uses the word sleep at times.
- If you recall Jesus went to heal Jarius' daughter, and when He got to the house, the people were all wailing because she had died.
- In Mark Ch. 5 what does Jesus say??, "She is not dead, she's only sleeping."
- And they laughed Him to scorn, and it says He put them out.
- Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, said,

**1Th 4:13** Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

**1Th 4:14** We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

- And so, the Bible uses the idea of sleep as a euphemism (or rather an idiom) of a believer's death in order to help us understand the eyes of this body will be shut
- But as a child of God our new eyes will be opened.
- It does help us understand... "I can kind of see what that will be like"
- But like all examples or models, they are imperfect.
- And unfortunately there are those who have taken this imperfect model of sleep and created a doctrine of soul sleep.
- The doctrine of soul sleep (or "Conditional Immortality,") is primarily taught by Jehovah's Witnesses and to some extent the Seventh-day Adventists.
- It refers to the belief that when we die, the soul ceases to exist, or "sleeps."
- During this period of soul sleep the believer is not conscious of anything and the soul is completely inert until the time of the final resurrection of the dead.
- This might be fun to discuss afterwards.
- However, the fact is the Bible does not teach this.
- The Bible teaches that to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord.
- And that is in direct conflict with what some people have inferred from the text here.  
(pause)

- So why would Jesus (and Paul) and others in the Bible use the word sleep here to describe the death of a believer?
- Well in order that we might distinguish the difference between a believer and a non-believer, regarding death
- And Jesus used it here of Lazarus. He said, "He is sleeping."
- Now, after Jesus says this, we can see His disciples did not understand Him.
- They thought of sleeping like we think of sleeping.

**Joh 11:12** His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."

- They were thinking when someone is sick and they begin sleeping, chances are they are getting better.
- And so it is clear they didn't quite get what Jesus was saying.
- John clarifies in verse 13:

**Joh 11:13** Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

**Joh 11:14** So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,

**Joh 11:15** and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

- It says He is glad Lazarus is dead.... Did you guys catch that?
- At the beginning we read Jesus was fond of Lazarus. I thought Jesus loved Lazarus
- Yet he let him die.
- But more than that it says he is glad he has died.

(pause)

- Now, had Jesus been there, He would have no doubt healed Lazarus.
- And that would have been a fantastic miracle.
- But Jesus has something more impressive (more impossible) in mind.
- And it was through Lazarus's death that it was to be achieved.

- So He waited until Lazarus had died.
- In fact, He waited long enough that they had already entombed Lazarus.

- At that time they would bury (or entomb) a person the same day they died.
- This is because in Israel at that time they really didn't practice any sort of embalming to any great extent.
- So they would bury the person the same day that they died because the blood in the body would start to literally rot, and the body would begin to produce a horrible smell.

(pause)

- And so, Jesus essentially says to his disciples, "I'm glad for your sakes that I wasn't there... that you might believe when you see this miracle.
- You might know (even better) who I am... and belief and faith and understanding strengthened."

**Joh 11:16** Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

- Kind of an odd response from Thomas.
- In preparing for tonight, I found many different interpretations on that verse.
- Everything from it was just a dimwitted comment and Thomas didn't understand what was being said.
- To him referring to them laying down their lives that Christ might heal them.
  
- My personal opinion is Thomas is referring to the fact that if they go to Jerusalem they may die if they are seen with Jesus.
- I picture Thomas as a bit of a realist.
- And I believe he is simply saying "If we go to Jerusalem... chances are we are heading towards our death."
- "But let's go nevertheless... that we may die with you Lord."

(pause)

- So they went.

It says:

**Joh 11:17** On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

(pause)

**Joh 11:18** Bethany was less than two miles<sup>[1]</sup> from Jerusalem,

**Joh 11:19** and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

**Joh 11:20** When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

- People react so differently during a tragedy.
- It says Mary stayed at home. No doubt devastated.
- But when Martha when heard Jesus was coming she left the home and went out to meet Him.
  
- Now, Bethany is up near the top of the Mount of Olives basically on the eastern slope.
- From Bethany you can see all the way down to the Dead Sea
- Which if you recall, Jesus is at the Jordan River which is the river that flows from the see of Galilee to the Dead Sea.
- When Jesus returned the road that he would have taken would be the road from Jericho
- (Jericho is located just east of the Jordan river)
- Well from Bethany you can see the road coming from Jericho for miles, as it winds on up the hill towards Jerusalem.
- So, as you're looking out from Bethany, you can see someone coming from a long distance.

- And so, Martha saw a company of people coming and realized it must be Jesus and the disciples.
- And so, Martha left the people that had gathered to mourn... and she went out and met Jesus on his journey.... before He ever got to Bethany.

**Joh 11:21** "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

- Disappointment... and perhaps bitterness in her voice
  - "Lord, where were you?"
  - "Why didn't you respond?"
  - "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died."
  - "Why didn't you come when we called?"
  - "Don't you realize it's been six days?"
  - I thought you loved Lazarus... I thought you loved me
- And in some ways this is kind of a rebuke of Jesus.  
(pause)
- But then Martha (no doubt) realizing who she is talking to says:
- She said:

**Joh 11:22** But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

- What a huge expression of faith.
- But I don't think that Martha was anticipating the resurrection of her brother at this point.
- The reason being, when they are at the tomb and Jesus tells them to roll the stone away she says "But by this time there is a bad odor."
- So I don't think she was quite picturing it yet.
- But rather I think she was attempting to say
  - "I know I'm sad, and it feels like you didn't come through for us..."
  - "but it's not about me it's about you."
  - "What every you want God gives you"
  - It's not about me.

**Joh 11:23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

**Joh 11:24** Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

- She is referring to the rising of all souls to be judged by God.
- That accountability where all men will stand naked in front of God.
- But:

**Joh 11:25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

**Joh 11:26** and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

(pause)

- Whenever someone tells me that "Jesus was just a moral teacher"
- Or they say... "Jesus never claimed to be God"
- My response to them is... "have you read the Bible?"

(pause)

- These are not the words of a moral teacher.
- These are either the words of God
- Or they are the words of a lunatic (or perhaps a skilled pathological liar).
- But certainly not a moral teacher.

- What a radical claim. (and this wasn't the first)

- No man would dare make this statement at risk of immediately being classified as a lunatic, a madman.
- For someone to stand before you and say, "I'm the resurrection and the life. If you live and believe in me, you'll never die."
- The guy's got to be diluted... or he is what he says he is.
- These are the kind of statements that mark Jesus as a raving lunatic or as God.

(pause)

- So Jesus makes this radical claim... then he says "Do you believe this?"
- Do you believe that I'm the resurrection?
- Do you believe that I'm the life?

(pause)

- Jesus always demanded a "yes" or a "no." You cannot be neutral.
- I think this is such an important point.
- He said, "If you're not for me you... are against me."
- If you are lukewarm I will spew you out of my mouth
- Our culture hates statements like that.
- So why would he say that? Why would Jesus demand an answer?

- It is simple.
- Belief is the provision by which God has chosen to save us from the results of our rebellion and results of our decadence and our sin.
- He has chosen to save us by that means.
- So.. he's saying... do you believe... or not. There's no middle ground.

(pause)

- But belief is a funny thing. It is something you choose.
  - You decide to believe in something.
  - People choose to believe things all the time that logically they know are not true.
    - A good example would be the boogie man
    - Or big foot
    - Or horoscopes
    - Or any other superstition they defy logic but people choose to believe it.
  - And likewise people choose not to believe in things that they know are not true.
    - People know that if they date this person or that person they will get hurt
    - Or if they do drugs... or do this or do that... they will get hurt
  - Yet they choose to do it anyway and choose to believe something they know to be false.
  - So here is the funny thing about belief.
  - You either believe something or you don't.
  - Indecision is choosing not to believe.
  - Every time someone says "I don't know if that is true"
  - They are really saying... "I don't buy it"
  - And so Jesus requires a yes... or a no.
  - And he is deliberate in requiring this so we don't kid ourselves and end up doing what humans are so good at doing... an that's putting the decision off.
  - Do you believe it or not.
  - If you believe it, then you have the hope of eternal life; if you don't believe it, you have no hope.
  - There is no other hope, there is no other way.
  - And you can't move to a middle position.
  - There is none.
  - Either you believe it or you don't.
- (pause)
- So Jesus challenged Martha on her faith, and she responds.

**Joh 11:27** "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ,<sup>[2]</sup> the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

- So Martha states very clearly "yes I believe".
  - And it is through that belief... through that faith in Jesus that she gains eternal life.
- (pause)

Now remember the verse in Chapter 10

**Joh 10:27** My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

**Joh 10:28** I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;

- On a side note, you can see how inconsistent it would be to say that someone who had eternal life died.
- It's a total inconsistency of terms.
- "Oh, he has eternal life. But, he died yesterday."
- And that is why Jesus and Paul and others used that sleep idiom (we talked about before) when regarding the physical death of a believer.

Well it says:

**Joh 11:28** And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you."

**Joh 11:29** When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

**Joh 11:30** Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.

**Joh 11:31** When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

**Joh 11:32** When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

- So, He's getting the accusation now from the other sister.
- "Lord, where were You? Why didn't You respond? If You'd only have been here, things would have been different."

**Joh 11:33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

- He could see the pain and despair they were going through,
  - And He loved Mary and Martha.
  - But he could see the pain of human limitations.
- (pause)
- And it says:

**Joh 11:33** Jesus ... was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

- It bothered Him to see the pain of humanity.

**Joh 11:34** "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

**Joh 11:35** Jesus wept.

- Now, there are those who suppose that Jesus wept because His friend Lazarus was dead. (in fact I read commentaries that said things to that effect)
- But... In my opinion that is ridiculous.
- Why would He weep because Lazarus was dead?

- Jesus deliberately waited to come knowing that Lazarus would die.
- And He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.
- So why would he be weeping? Why not just go and raise Lazarus from the dead?

Chuck Smith gave the following explanation:

“He was weeping when He saw the pain and the sorrow of humanity, when He saw the pain that His friends Mary and Martha were experiencing as a result of death. And He wept for their grief. Jesus is moved by our infirmities; we have such a great High Priest, who is touched by our weaknesses. He sees us in our frailties. He sees us in our griefs. And He's touched by our feelings of grief and sorrow, by our weaknesses. He is a loving and compassionate Lord, and One who is moved by our own sorrow and grief. And so, He wept for them.”

I think of it like this.

--story about when my Grandpa died...

- And I remember seeing my dad in that state... having to fight back tears of my own.
- It is interesting that in death, in reality we aren't usually weeping for the person who is gone, but for those that are left.
- Likewise Jesus was not weeping for Lazarus.
- He was weeping for Martha and Mary.

**Joh 11:36** Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

- The mourners that were with Mary and Martha assumed he was weeping because of Lazarus was dead.
- Had they known (like we know) what Jesus was about to do... I doubt they would have come to that conclusion.

**Joh 11:37** But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

- Referring to when Jesus opened the eyes of the man who was born blind.
- Apparently this had become well known by now.

**Joh 11:38** Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

- A fairly common tomb of the day.

**Joh 11:39** "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

- The blood would have been rotting and the stench would have been very strong.

**Joh 11:40** Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

**Joh 11:41** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

**Joh 11:42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

- Jesus stated very clearly "I and the father and one"
- And now he is about offer another great proof to those watching... and to us as well
- And he is making the point of saying... I'm not doing this for myself.
- I'm doing this for you. That you might believe.
- Don't miss this.

**Joh 11:43** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

- Many people write that had Jesus simply said "Come out," the whole graveyard would have been resurrected.
- So instead He says, "Lazarus, come forth!"

**Joh 11:44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

**Joh 11:45** Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

- And really how could you not??
- It's interesting that Lazarus had to die in order to be resurrected.
- The Bible talks a lot about, dying to ourselves.

Jesus says in:

**Mat 16:24** .."If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

**Mat 16:25** For whoever wants to save his life<sup>[8]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

- Through Lazarus' death, God gave him life.
- Jesus teaches that if we want life... if we want to really live
- Then we must give our life up
- We must die to ourselves, die to our wants, die to our carnal desires.

(pause)

- If you look around God has model this truth for us
- Think about, when are you happiest? When you are trying to make others happy.
- If you want someone to love you... how do you make them love you?
- By giving your love to them.

- What we give up is what is given back to us.
- (pause)
- But if we try to take it... it will be taken from us.
- (pause)
- I always feel a great deal of pity for people who work and work and try so hard to obtain what we Americas call “the life”
  - They work and they pull and they grasp to get... to have... to something.
- But the Bible says every thing they have... will be taken from them.
- (pause)
- But if we give our life up...
  - If we die to what we want... if we die to ourselves (this is what baptism signifies)
  - All these things will be given to us... Joy and peace and fulfillment
- (pause)
- And when we stand before God, we won't be left saying... I took and I pulled and I grasped every thing that I could. I sucked the marrow out of life.
  - Instead we will be able to say... I gave you all that I could give you. I gave you my life.
  - We only get one chance.
- And as I was preparing... and considering this story, I kept asking myself:.
  - Who am I living for?
  - Am I continuing to die to myself... to live for Christ?

(pause)

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- So now as we finish this chapter up... we have a bit of a section break.
  - Jesus says... I am the resurrection and I am the life... and then He raises Lazarus from the dead
  - Next we see how the religious leaders of the day “deal” with what God has done

It says:

**Joh 11:46** But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.  
**Joh 11:47** Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

- So, they call a meeting of the elite leaders
- It's time for them in the “name of God” as they would claim to deal with Jesus
  - As you would deal with something that threatens you
- “What is to be done with this man?”

**Joh 11:48** "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place<sup>[3]</sup> and our nation."

- So they are worried.
- They are worried if they let Jesus continue to amass this following, the Romans will no longer recognize them as the leaders and religious governors of the Jews.
- We'll lose our jobs. And we'll lose our position. What are we going to do? We've got to do something.
- If we don't, everything we have... the power, the prestige... the wealth... is threatened."

**Joh 11:49** Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all!

- In other words... That is never going to happen.
  - We will make sure of that.
- (pause)
- Now Caiaphas was the high priest.
  - One of the roles of the High Priest was once a year they would perform a sacrifice in order to atone for the sins of the nation.
  - And so Caiaphas (as High Priest and the person who would make that yearly sacrifice for the nation) says something here completely remarkable and completely prophetic.
  - He says:

**Joh 11:50** You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

- He's saying... Surely it is better that one man dies... than all of us perish...
  - Caiaphas didn't understand fully what he was saying.
  - But... he was the high priest.
  - And because of that position, he was now prophesying (God was now speaking through him) that one man will die for all.
  - And interestingly enough, it is Caiaphas (the high priest responsible for making that yearly sacrifice for the sins of the nation) that orchestrates this.
- (pause)
- If you are anything like me, you get a bit perplexed as you consider the idea of predestination vs. our own autonomy (or our free will)
  - This is such a beautiful example of a man (Caiaphas the High Priest) exercising his free will and saying something rather horrible.
  - In his free will he is advocating killing Jesus (God in the flesh)
  - And God allows that. He gives him the ability to say that.
  - God uses something He knew Caiaphas would say....
  - to foretell ultimately what Jesus will accomplish.
  - He dies... that we all may live.

- So John points this out here in the next verse:

**Joh 11:51** He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation,

**Joh 11:52** and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

- I love hearing this.
- For some reason... as a gentile... I love hearing that God included me.
- I was part of his purpose in saving mankind.

**Joh 11:53** So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

**Joh 11:54** Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

- From here Jesus left Jerusalem and went back east towards the Jordan River.

**Joh 11:55** When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover.

- It was necessary to go through the purification rites in order to participate in the Passover.

And so,

**Joh 11:56** They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?"

**Joh 11:57** But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

- So we are going to stop there tonight.
- The end of chapter 11.
- As we move into chapter 12 we move in to the passion week.
- We move into the last week before Jesus (God in the flesh) is crucified.
- And that is a very special week.

### **Closing Prayer**