

## Teaching Points

Tonight, we move on with the seventh sign in John's gospel - the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We resume the narrative with Christ arriving in Bethany and being greeted by Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus.

At this point in the event, Lazarus had already been dead and buried for 4 days. This left no room for doubt as to whether he was truly dead or not. There is no scenario here where he was merely sick or unconscious. He's truly dead; so much so that Martha hesitates to see the grave opened because her brother's body would have already begun to decompose.

Let's take a look at Christ's conversation with Martha in verses 20-27.

### 1. See the pain and faith of Martha.

***"Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died."*** This is an expression of frustration. She's disappointed that Jesus didn't come sooner and heal Lazarus. Praise God for the freedom He allows us in expressing ourselves to Him. Martha is being honest and direct with Christ.

***"But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."*** This is real faith! She's confident that Jesus has a unique relationship with God the Father. Even in this difficult moment she believes that Jesus has no limits to what He can do. She understands that death does not have the last word - Christ does.

### 2. Jesus introduces the topic of resurrection.

Martha is frustrated because Jesus didn't prevent Lazarus' death. But Jesus wants to point her to a reality that's much bigger than healing him from sickness. In other words, Jesus wants to show Martha and her family a greater work than merely restoring a sick body - He wants to show them His resurrection power.

**Discussion Question:** Notice Martha's response, ***"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection of the last day."*** (v. 24). How does she know this? Remember, she didn't have the New Testament...

**Thoughts:** *Martha's response shows that she had good theology. She understood the doctrine of the resurrection - even before the New Testament was written. That's because God has always testified to His people that His love for them and plans for them are eternal. The Old Testament speaks emphatically about the resurrection of our bodies and God's promise of everlasting life. These promises are found in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Christ. Jesus brings clarity and focus to these awesome realities...as Martha and her family are about to find out.*

Martha has goof theology in terms of the coming resurrection...but Jesus is about to show her another level of glory on this point. According to Jesus, the resurrection is not just an event...it's a person! He claims to BE the resurrection and the life. Here is our next I AM saying in John's gospel, "***I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though He may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.***" (vs. 25-26). This is Christ's way of saying that ALL life is found in Him. This includes our natural bodily life and our spiritual born-again life. It also includes our resurrection life. He Himself IS the resurrection. He is the sovereign over life and death - period.

After having a similar, albeit briefer, conversation with Mary, Jesus goes on to the grave site. When He sees the tomb He weeps.

**Discussion Question:** Why did Jesus weep?

**Thoughts:** *A lot is packed into this small verse. Christ's weeping is a demonstration of His genuine humanity. He grieves with those who grieve - showing His love for and identification with these mourners.*

*He also weeps because He sees a crowd of people who grieve without hope. In other words, they don't know Him or the power of His resurrection - and He weeps over their ignorance and unbelief.*

*A case can also be made that Christ is weeping at the effects of sin. Death is the penalty for sin and here is Christ - the conqueror of sin and death - weeping as an expression of His passion and opposition to the grave and it's fearful hold on men's hearts. Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us that Christ came to destroy the devil, the power of death, and release us from the fear of death. Amen!*

And now we finish with the grand finale. Jesus stands at the opening to Lazarus' grave. See in verse 43 how He calls out with a loud and authoritative voice, "***Lazarus come forth!***" This is not Jesus asking nicely. This is not Jesus pleading with the dead man. This is Christ exercising His almighty power to make the dead come to life!

**Discussion Question:** How does this event correspond to the way Christ makes us live spiritually?

**Thoughts:** *This is the perfect picture of how Christ raises dead sinners to life. He demonstrates His divinity and sovereignty by calling the dead to life. His voice contains life-giving power in it. This is true in such a way that the dead surely live when Christ calls them. The only thing Lazarus did to help with this miracle was die! This is similar to our role in our salvation - the only thing we contribute is the sin that made it necessary. Praise God for sovereign grace that makes the dead live! (Ephesians 2:1-10)*

John 11:18-44

## **Prayer Focus**

D.A. Carson makes a wonderful observation about this story Jesus shows up to a funeral and draws all the attention to Himself! Wow. This is an incredible lesson about His awesomeness and the abundant hope found in Him. He is greater than our sin, our death, and the grave. Let us pray with thankfulness and expectancy to the one who has no limits!