

RAISING LAZARUS

The story of Lazarus in John 11 is a breathtaking revelation of both the power and love of Jesus Christ, a narrative that turns our understanding of life, death, and love upside down. At first glance, the sequence of events is puzzling, even unsettling. Jesus hears that His dear friend Lazarus is gravely ill, yet He delays going to him. Why would He wait, knowing the agony this would bring to Mary and Martha? The answer lies in a love so profound, so divine, that it transcends our natural understanding.

Jesus declares, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God maybe glorified through it” (John 11:4). Jesus tries to explain the crisis in a positive light by saying that Lazarus's death is not the end but the means through which the glory of God will be revealed. This is no ordinary love story; it is one that teaches us the essence of true love; not the mere absence of pain, but unveiling God’s glory as the ultimate good.

When Jesus finally arrives in Bethany, Lazarus has been dead for four days. The grief of Mary and Martha is raw, and their faith is marked with sorrow. Martha says, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,” (John 11:21). Jesus responds with a statement that shifts the focus onto what was truly important, and the main reason to why He allowed this to happen, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).

In that moment, Jesus is not merely offering comfort. He is unveiling a truth that changes everything. He is not just a teacher pointing to the resurrection; He is the Resurrection! His authority over life and death is not an abstract concept; it is embodied in His very being.

And then, standing before the tomb, Jesus weeps. The Creator of the universe, the One who holds all things together, enters into the sorrow of His creation. His tears remind us that divine love does not bypass human pain; it enters into it. But Jesus does not leave them in their grief. With a loud voice, He commands, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). And Lazarus, still wrapped in burial cloths, walks out of the tomb—a living testimony to the power of the One who is life itself.

This miracle is not merely about Lazarus’s restoration; it is about our own destiny. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die because through his death, He could reveal the greater truth of His mission: to conquer death itself. This event foreshadows Jesus’ own resurrection, the ultimate display of His deity and victory over the grave. Lazarus’s resurrection points us forward to our own, for just as he was called from death to life, so too will all who believe in Christ be raised to eternal life.

Yet, this story is also an invitation to wrestle with a deeper truth: the nature of God’s love. Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. And because He loved them, He allowed them to experience

pain. In our human understanding, love often means shielding those we care about from suffering. But God's love is far greater; it seeks our highest good, even when it comes at the cost of temporary pain. True love reveals the glory of God, for only in seeing His glory can our souls find their deepest satisfaction.

When Jesus delayed, He was not being unsympathetic. He was giving them (and us) a gift far greater than immediate relief. He was giving them a glimpse of the glory that transforms sorrow into joy, death into life, and despair into hope. As Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

This story challenges us to reexamine our understanding of love, suffering, and glory. To be loved by God is not to be spared from all pain but to be drawn into the revelation of His glory, which alone can satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts. This is the paradox of divine love: it is a love that lets Lazarus die so that he (and we) might know the fullness of life in Christ.

In the end, the raising of Lazarus is not just about physical resurrection; it is a signpost pointing us to the ultimate reality of who Jesus is. He is the Resurrection and the Life, the One who holds the keys to life and death, and the only source of eternal hope. His love does not end with the grave; it transforms it into a doorway to glory.

The question Jesus asked Martha echoes through time: "Do you believe this?" It is the question that defines our lives, for to believe is to receive life in His name. And it is in that life; rooted in the glory of God—that we find the love that never fails.