



The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Belief in Jesus's death and resurrection brings the assurance of life with Him forever

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Dear Jesus, help me to keep my eyes on You, whether I face difficulty in life or death. Let me find security and peace in You

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better
(Phil 1:23 NKJV)

From "Our Daily Bread", June 08, 2016)

Series: Partners in a New Creation

UNIT 2: The Word: The Agent of Creation

NEXT WEEK

The Word Gives Peace (John 14:15-29)

The Word Resurrects John 11:17-27, 38-44

Lesson Background and Introduction

The raising to life of a man who had been dead four days was among the greatest of Jesus' miracles. Jesus was working out God's plan to bring faith to his followers, but this faith did not come without personal pain. For the raising of Lazarus to happen, he first had to die, resulting in grief to loved ones. As marvelous as the raising of Lazarus was, we should remember that it was different from the resurrection of Jesus. On that day outside Bethany, Jesus broke the power of death over Lazarus temporarily since it's fair to assume that he rose only to die again. Jesus' own resurrection, however, broke the power of death permanently. Traditions claim that Lazarus eventually became a bishop on Cyprus and that his remains are still in the Church of St. Lazarus in the city of Larnaca on that island. This is referred to as the "second tomb" of Lazarus, the final resting place for his body after his second death. Wherever his final resting place, the account of his raising in John 11 points to the hope of his permanent resurrection on the final day; it points to ours as well. Martha held on to this hope even after the untimely death of her brother (John 11:24); we must hold on to it when losing a loved one or facing death ourselves. The key to having such faith is the resurrection of Jesus himself. His resurrection is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). He was the first to be raised permanently. As such, Jesus opens the way to life eternal for all who believe in him. He is the "resurrection and the life," and those who place their faith in him, even though they die, will live again (John 11:25, 26).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Questions - Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, became seriously ill. His sisters, with whom he lived, sent a message Jesus, but Jesus, away on a trip, delayed coming. When the Savior arrived, Lazarus was dead. But Jesus desired to use this incident to deploy God's glory for those who believe. By the time Jesus approached the Lazarus house, a big crowd of mourners had surrounded the family. Mary, one of the sisters, sat at home, consumed with grief. But Martha ran out to Jesus and expressed her disappointment in His delayed response. She wanted Jesus to heal her brother. Already she knew of Jesus' power, that God would give Jesus whatever He asked, although she probably had no idea Jesus planned to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Answers - Jesus assured the grieving sister of her brother's rising again. Martha understood He was referring to all the righteous rising on the last day, but Jesus seized the moment and made one of the greatest declarations in this Gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). He boldly stated He could raise dead sinners from spiritual death and dead bodies from the grave. Jesus raising Lazarus is a picture of Him raising the bodies of believers when He comes again.

Actions - Jesus must have startled Martha and everyone when He said to take the stone away that closed Lazarus's tomb. Martha had to prove her active faith in Jesus and cooperate with Him before He could raise Lazarus. Jesus did not ask her to move every stone in Israel, only one, to see the glory of God. To see His glory means to gain insight into His reputation, character, and attributes. Our faith is reinforced and our joy is restored.

God's Radiance - The men obeyed Jesus and removed the stone. Jesus thanked the Father for hearing His prayer, then commanded with a loud voice of authority for Lazarus to come out. Lazarus had to walk out of that grave at the sound of the Redeemer's voice. As with Martha, our faith allows us to see God at work in hopeless situations. If we believe Jesus' words, we are bound to see the character and faithfulness of God. That is God's glory!

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Problem (John 11:17-19)

The finality of death (17)

- All living humans know they will die (Eccl 9:5)
- People are destined to die (Heb 9:27)
- Death is appointed for all the living (Job 30:23)

The hopelessness of death (18)

- Unbelievers have no hope after death (1 Thess 4:13)
- Unbelievers have no refuge after death (Prov 14:32)
- If hope is limited to physical life, only pity is left (1 Cor 15:19)

The sorrow in death (19)

- Sorrow because of love for the one who has died (John 11:32-36)
- Sorrow because of the death of a family member (Luke 7:11-15)
- Sorrow because of the death of a child (Luke 8:51-53)

The Perception (John 11:20-24)

The faith (20-21)

- Everything is possible for those who believe through faith (Mark 9:21-24)
- Faith despite obstacles (Matt 15:22-28)
- Faith that may be as small as a mustard seed (Luke 17:5-6)

The hope (22-24)

- Hope that does not disappoint (Rom 5:5)
- Hope that is waited for patiently (Rom 8:22-25)
- Hope of deliverance (2 Cor 1:10)

The Proclamation (John 11:25-27)

The great I AM (25)

- The I AM the resurrection because Jesus will raise up the believers at the last day (John 6:39-40)
- The I AM the resurrection because Jesus provides the living hope of resurrection (1 Peter 1:3)
- The I AM the resurrection because Jesus saves through His resurrection (1 Peter 3:18-21)
- The I AM the life because in Jesus is life (John 1:4)
- The I AM the life because Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35)
- The I AM the life because Jesus is the life (John 14:6)

The blessings of belief (26)

Living in Jesus

- The blessing of living in Jesus by being connected to the vine of Jesus (John 15:5)
- The blessing of living in Jesus by being baptized into Jesus (Gal 3:26-29)
- The blessing of living in Jesus by being united with Jesus (Phil 2:1-5)

Never taste death

- Never taste death because through belief in Jesus eternal life is gained (John 3:16)
- Never taste death because of not being condemned through belief in Jesus (John 5:24)
- Never taste death because no one can snatch believers out of Jesus' hand (John 10:28-30)

The three-fold confession about Jesus (27)

Jesus is the Christ

- Jesus is the Christ because God reveals it to believers (Matt 16:16)
- Jesus is the Christ because Jesus admitted it (Matt 26:63-64)
- Jesus is the Christ because the Bible teaches it (John 20:30-31)

Jesus is the Son of God

- Son of God because of the miracles He performed (Matt 14:28-33)
- Son of God because of His activities on the cross (Matt 27:54)
- Son of God because Jesus lives within believers (Gal 2:20)

Jesus has come into the world

- Came in the world to destroy the work of Satan (1 John 3:8)
- Came in the world as the light of the world (John 3:19)
- Came in the world as a Prophet to the world (John 6:14)

The Death (John 11:38-39)

Time of grief (38)

- Though God allows grief, He will show compassion (Lam 3:32-33)
- Even in grief, God's presence brings eternal joy (John 16:22)
- God promises those who mourn will be comforted (Matt 5:4)

Jesus' view of death (39)

- The death of saints are precious in God's sight (Ps 116:15)
- The death of saints brings them to the bosom of God (Luke 16:22-27)
- The death and lives of saints are in God's hands (Ps 31:15)

The Faith (John 11:40-42)

Faith through trusting in God (40)

- Trust in God because He is our shelter (Ps 32:7)
- Trust in God because there should be no fear of death (Ps 23:4)
- Trust in God because He is our refuge (Ps 46:1)

Faith through prayer (41)

- Prayer because of confidence in approaching God's throne (Heb 4:16)
- Prayer because Jesus is interceding for us (Rom 8:34)
- Prayer because if offered in faith is effective (James 5:15-16)

Faith in God's attentiveness (42)

- God is attentive to the prayers of the righteous (Ps 34:15-17)
- God is attentive to the needs of obedient servants (Isa 58:6-11)
- God is attentive to the righteous (1 Peter 3:12)

The Resurrection (John 11:43-44)

God's power over death (43)

- God's power over death for God's children (Luke 20:35-36)
- God's power over death in heaven (Rev 21:4)
- God's power over death because He is the only one who can destroy the soul (Matt 10:28)

Freedom and restoration (44)

- God restores into salvation (Ps 80:3)
- God renews and restores one's spirit into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
- God renews and restores the inner being (2 Cor 4:16)