

John Ch 11:11-57

“A Wake Up Call”

In John Ch 11 we find a profound with practical picture of the principle found in Eph 5:14 which reads, “*Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.*” For in this Ch we have the renowned account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. with Because of the language that Jesus used in reference to Himself, the fact that He is the *resurrection* with the life, it naturally follows that people view the raising of Lazarus as a resurrection. But I want to split that hair today because what Lazarus experienced here, with what the widow of Nain’s son experienced, with Jairus’ daughter experienced was not a *resurrection*, but rather a *restoration* of life.

The reason I point that out is so that there’s no confusion concerning the resurrection. The bible is clear regarding the resurrection that the body, “...*is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*” 1 Cor 15:42-44 with So though these people *were* raised from the dead, they *weren’t* raised in incorruption, they *weren’t* raised in glorified bodies, they were still in corruptible bodies of weakness that would one day face death again. with That’s what distinguishes what happened with Christ, with what happened with these people whom Christ raised from the dead, that’s how the bible still accurately exalts Christ as the 1st fruits of them that sleep, His is the only *true* resurrection, “... *Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*” 1 Cor 15:23 Jesus Christ arose in His glorified, resurrection body; Lazarus didn’t, as we’ll see.

Well we resume our focus today on the front ½ of this Ch, which finds us in these difficult days, with tragic times in the lives of Mary with Martha, with Lazarus. Lazarus had fallen ill, with Mary with Martha sent word to Jesus regarding the seriousness of his sickness with we read in vs 4 (read). But you recall last week how if you do the simple math you realize that by the time the messenger got the message back to the sisters, Lazarus had already died, with so they find themselves perplexed no doubt, questions with confusion begins to set in. with with out taking the time to review in depth we recall that this was challenging them to walk by faith with not by sight, with for us as well how I’m to trust in the word of God regardless of the circumstances that surround my life.

It was a challenge to trust in the Lord with all their hearts, with lean not on their own understanding. “I don’t understand everything going on here, but I know that God is for me with not against me, I know that He’ll never leave me nor forsake me, with even though I can’t see how this is glorifying God *presently*, with can’t sense His presence *personally*, I know that His hand is in this ultimately, with that somehow it’ll work out for my good, with His glory.”

We discussed how there are those circumstances in our lives whereby the Lord seems to delay, He's not showing up the moment we cry out, but that delays aren't denials, He's preparing us for a deep work, He wants to increase our faith, give the Father greater glory, with though they can't understand it right now, in retrospect they'd never have it any other way. with In the end we'll all share the same testimony, that every trial, every tragedy, every heartache with heartbreak that entered our lives, though painful for the moment, served to take us to a place of closer intimacy *with* the Lord, further usability *by* the Lord, which gave a greater glory *to* the Lord with we wouldn't have it any other way.

There are certain lessons we can learn, only by experience, with it's because God loves us that He allows us to go through them, (Vs 3 underscores Jesus' love for this family, Vs5 emphasizes His love for this family) don't allow tough times to dictate doubt in your life regarding God's love for you. God loves you, with He's got a great plan for you, He wants to use your life as a witness to others of His power, with His faithfulness, with His great love for them, with that He can rescue *them* from death, just like He did you, just like He did Lazarus. Although our text picks up in vs 11, lets follow the flow beginning in vs 5 with carrying on from there.

Vs5-14

Now last week we observed how that often the Lord's methods of ministry brought about misunderstanding to the people around Him, with here we are in the midst of this series of misunderstandings that we have in this section of John Ch 11. They didn't understand 1st of all why Jesus would even want to go back to that region whereby He could be placing Himself in harms way. with So He reminded them of the necessity that we have to walk in the light of the will of the Father for our lives trusting that He is in control with when He places something on our hearts we do well to follow through with it, to obey is better than sacrifice. with So as the Father has prompted Him to go to Lazarus, He's going to obey the Father's leading.

This particular miracle is going to be the one that acts as the last straw for the Jewish leaders, with it will serve as the catalyst to get the ball rolling *towards* the events that culminate in the cross. with So this is all apart of the divine plan, the dominos have been being set this whole time, with this is what tips that 1st one that results in that chain reaction which will ultimately bring Jesus to the cross that He might lay down His life for the sins of the world. So it's kind of interesting how His giving *life* to this man, sort of ultimately resolves in His *death*, again God obviously orchestrating the whole thing, but it's kind of an ironic twist.

But vs 11 brings on another misunderstanding, He says, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." "I'm, going to go give him a wake up call." But the misunderstanding revolves around this word, "Sleeps." with Jesus was obviously in regards to his death, but they thought He was referring to literal sleep, with I don't want to just make them out to be a bunch of dummies, the Lord had told them in vs 4 that Lazarus' sickness wasn't unto death. with So they're not expecting him to die at all, not understanding that Jesus was saying, that it wouldn't all end in his death, but rather the glory of God.

But because of the fact that what happens to a believer when his spirit leaves the body, vs what happens to a non-believer when they die is so radically different. The bible doesn't really ascribe what happens to the believer as death, but rather it pictures death for the believer as simply sleep, something peaceful with refreshing. You recall when Jesus was going to raise Jairus' daughter from the dead, with there was all that commotion going on over her death in the house, He said, "*Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.*" Mark 5:39 with They began to ridicule Him, with so He put them out, they didn't understand either. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said, "*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*" 1 Thess 4:13-14

So this is a term that is used in the bible to communicate the fact of believers who have physically died with out using the term death, because of the negative connotations that go along with the word death.

But yet because of the ambiguity of the term, there's been a lot of misunderstanding throughout the years, with doctrines formed teaching soul sleep with things of that nature. But the fact is that the sleep only signifies what happens to the body, it's never aimed at what happens to the spirit, to your soul. The bible is very clear regarding what happens to the believer upon their departure from this life. Paul said, "*We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*" 2 Cor 5:8 So for the believer, your confidence in being absent from this body, is to be present with the Lord. But so that we might distinguish the physical death of the believer vs the non-believer, the word "sleep" is often ascribed to the believer. with Jesus employed the term here, but they misunderstood, with so He said straight out, "Lazarus is dead."

Vs15

Now this is interesting, sadness in their hearts, gladness in His, why? Well, we need to notice that Jesus doesn't say that He's glad that Lazarus has died. But rather that He's glad that He wasn't there when he died, or else he wouldn't have died. No body ever died in the Lord's presence, but what we have here is the difference between the divine perspective with the human perspective. The disciples, with the sisters are functioning on a sphere of limited understanding, just like us, with so all they see is a despondent situation, but the Lord sees something altogether different. He's sees the end of all this, with He knows that in the end these guys are going to be lifted up in their faith, brought to a point of trust with belief in Him that otherwise would've been impossible. There faith is about to get an adrenaline boost so to speak, with Jesus is excited for them regarding the good things that are going to be worked out in their lives as a result of this.

So often it's the same way with us, we sense *despondency, desperation, disheartenment*, but the Lord sees it altogether *different*, with as to where we're caught up in the moment, He's focused on the end result. We see the individual bland ingredients; He sees the cake coming out of the oven. with Again we understand, "...*that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" Rom 8:18 with So though we so often are *fixated* on the sufferings, He's *focused* on the glory, with transforming you from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. We're focused on the temporal; He's fixated on the eternal, with working things out for our eternal best interest. with That's what's happening here, they're all suffering presently, but their present suffering, will pale in comparison to the glory that's about to be revealed in them, with for them. with We read here where captain confidence in the Lord makes this statement here.

Vs16

"Well boys, we can't change His mind, we may as well go with die with Him." Remember they tried to stone Jesus last time He was in the region, with even though Jesus said there's nothing to worry about in vs 9 with 10, again Thomas doubts what's happening here. But we notice that though Thomas was a man of many doubts, he was also a man of dedication with devotion. He struggled believing everything would be ok, but he resolved that come what may he would walk with the Lord, with accept his fate alongside the Lord come what may.

We notice that he was called, "The Twin" who was Thomas' twin? We don't know; it's possible that he literally had a twin brother whom the bible simply doesn't mention. Church tradition holds that Thomas looked strikingly like the Lord as far as *physical* appearance goes placing him at a higher risk for danger when it came to the hostility that was surfacing against the Lord. But as it's been said before, it's probably left ambiguous in the scriptures because at times we all find the twin of Thomas in ourselves as we doubt the Lord, or are skeptical of how something is going to turn out even though the Lord is evidently leading it. We so often falter in our faith, and question the veracity of what the Lord has said, with we find in ourselves the twin of Thomas.

Vs17-22

So we see Martha with Mary in their typical extreme opposite personalities as sisters, Mary just sitting in the house, beside herself with grief, thinking about her brother, mild mannered in her demeanor. But Martha, as soon as she hears the Lord is with in view perhaps a ½ mile outside of town or something, just like we would expect, she runs out to meet him. Like we said last week, she was the aggressive type, a woman of action, act 1st think later, just get the job done. Sort of the female counterpart to Peter, a bit spontaneous about the way she handles herself, but Mary is more like the counterpart of John, just leaning on the chest of the Lord, spending time in closer more contemplative communion with the Lord. with Jesus loved them both, with would use them both in ways that were befitting to their personality.

In vs 21 she makes this statement, but I hesitate to place an inflection into her words because it's impossible to know if these words were those of rebuke, or perhaps simply airing regret with remorse, I've got little doubt that she's a little disappointed to say the least. But she reaffirms to Jesus that even though things didn't play out like she would've preferred, or would've if she'd been the one in control, she's still going to place her confidence in Him, with not lose heart regarding Him. Of course the thing that we really wish we would've seen her get there in vs 22 is the fullness of who Jesus is. She says, "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God.." You want to say, "Martha don't you realize, He *is* God, He's sat in your home, drank your ice tea, ate your hamburgers, God incarnate, don't you see that yet?"

But we admire her resolve, "I know you told me this wasn't unto death, with that my brother has died, but that's not going to debunk my trusting you." Wow, would to God that we would all have that same resolve, no matter if I understand it, or not, if it goes how I thought it would or not, if it seems to fly in the face of everything you've assured me of Lord, I'm still going to trust you. "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.*" Job 13:15 Kind of a resolve, despite the disappointment Lord, I still believe in You.

Vs23-24

Another misunderstanding, the Lord gives her a promise personally with she slides into a discussion theologically. But He's not talking about a principle of the future, but rather a promise of the present. It always seems easier to believe for the future than it does for right now doesn't it? That's what Martha is doing, with Jesus doesn't say that there won't be a future resurrection, but He wants her to get her eyes off of the program of the future, with onto His person in the present.

Vs25-26

Obviously these vs need to be underlined in your bible. But, "We're not talking here about a lesson in *theology* Martha, we're talking about placing your faith in Me *personally*. Don't focus on the *program*, focus on My *person*." "*I am* the resurrection with the life." with He draws our attention to 2 groups of people with a common thread that weaves them both together. In vs 25 He speaks of those who physically expire, with in vs 26 He speaks of those who've not yet physically expired, but reality He's seeking to get us to glean here is that both groups are very much alive, regardless of their physical state. He's speaking of the eternal life that's found in Him. with Notice the prerequisite to being a partaker of this promise, in both examples be it vs 25 or 26, Jesus makes it clear that the promise of eternal life is to those who *believe* in Him.

The promise of Jesus Christ to the one who believes on Him is that they will never taste death, that is, they'll never be separated from the life of God that's in Christ Jesus. They just undergo a metamorphosis; it's from the caterpillar to the butterfly, the earthly to the heavenly, the weak to the strong, the corruptible to the incorruptible, the blemished to the perfect, the mortal unto immortality.

Paul wrote, “*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-*” 1 Cor 15:50-51 with That’s the quote unquote “death” experience for the believer, it’s that time of change, the shedding of this tent, with moving into that home prepared for me eternal in the heavens whose builder and maker is God. From the temporal to the eternal. But as a believer there’ll never be a moment in which you’re separated from God (which is the biblical understanding of death.) with Then Jesus brings us to decision time here, “Do *you* believe this?” Do you really believe that if you place your trust in the person of Jesus Christ that you’ll never die, you’ll never be separated from God?

This isn’t a point of debate, or even mental assent, it’s a “Yes” or “No” challenge, “Are you for Me, or against Me?” with It’s a personal question we’re all confronted with that carries with it eternal ramifications, it’s not “What do most people believe,” or “Do others believe this?” It’s “Do you believe this?”

Vs27

Good girl Martha, she has that realization much like Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Vs24 is her initial *expectation*, Vs 25-26 is Jesus’ personal *revelation*, with Vs27 we have this confession of her *realization* of who Jesus is, awesome stuff.

Vs28-29

Notice as soon as the Lord sent a message *to* her, with called out *for* her, she immediately took action with responded to His word. What’s the message that the Teacher has been sending *to* you, what’s the calling that He’s been placing *upon* you, with are you responding to His call?

Vs30-32

2 Things, #1 Every time we see Mary around Jesus in the scriptures it’s always at His feet, whether it be to receive of His word, to sorrow in her sadness, or worship in reverence of who Jesus is, she’s always at His feet. So no matter the situation, sadness, gladness, or worship with reverence, how proper it is to find ourselves at the feet of Jesus, it’s always the proper time to rest at His feet, with give of our lives to Him. 2^{ndly} did you notice that her words mirrored exactly those of her sister in vs 21? What’s the point, we will *become* like those whom we *befriend*, obviously they’re sisters, but the point remains with the bible is clear, “*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.*” Prov 12:26 Be careful of whom you befriend.

Vs33-36

Another misunderstanding, Jesus wasn't weeping for Lazarus, He knew Lazarus was about to be raised from the dead. with There in vs 33 where we read, "He groaned in the spirit with was troubled." That word, "groaned" speaks of how a horse would snort in anger, it's an indignant thing. with I think that gives us a clue regarding vs 35, not only does vs 35 reveal to us the humanity of Jesus, with how He's a man acquainted with sorrow, weeping with those who weep, with is able to sympathize with you in times of sadness with sorrow. But I believe it also reveals to us His indignation over sin, with the destruction with death with ruin that it brings into our lives, all this hurt, all this sorrow, all this weeping with wailing, desperation with despondency, is because of sin with it's impact on our lives.

It pained Jesus to see the pain of sin, with yet it angered Him in a righteous way at the same time. He was grieving over this whole situation, the pain of the family, the impact of sin, perhaps he *was* weeping for Lazarus, he was in paradise, with Jesus was about to bring him out of that place of peace, back into this world of such sorrow with sadness, knowing that he would go through the frailty of humanity once again. with Notice the tact of some of these people.

Vs 37-39

Now don't phase out on me here, we're not too far from done. The Lord wanted to do a work here, but before He did His thing, He called for a transparency of the situation, the issue needed to be exposed, the stone needed to be rolled away. Now the wages of sin is death, with the sin that's in the cave of our hearts just stinks, with so often the Lord comes to us with just wanting to do a work in our lives, He'll say, "Roll away that stone, unveil the problem, I want total access to the situation." with We're all, "Lord, can't you just let that be, let's not deal with that now, I'm embarrassed about it, ashamed of it, the whole thing stinks." Now the promise had been given, but here's the prerequisite, "Roll away the stone." No doubt the stench of sin is lingering in there, but the Lord would say, "Let me deal with that, you just roll away the stone." Give Jesus access to that dark corner of your heart that you've kept a lid on for so long, I know it stinks but if you'll just roll away the stone, He'll do an awesome work in that part of your life.

Vs 40-44

Quickly, 1st of all notice the confidence Jesus had in what the Father was doing in His life, He cried with a *loud* voice, He didn't squeak it out real lightly just in case it didn't pan out, He took confidence in the work of the Father in His life. with We know He called out to Lazarus by name because if He'd have just cried out, "Come Forth!" He'd have emptied the whole graveyard. But finally we see here a real picture of what Jesus does in all of our lives, with how He calls us by name out of death with into life; this is the wake up call of the Lord. He calls out to the dead, with brings them into life. Again Paul writes, "*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*" Eph 2:1

Now when the *Lord* came out of the grave, He left the grave clothes behind, why? Glorified body, the 1st fruits of the resurrection, Lazarus is still bound; he was raised in the same corruptible body he died in. But we see here the balance between the divine work of life, with the human ministry of liberty. Jesus gave him life, but Lazarus still needed liberty, with so Jesus commended the privilege of freeing him from the things that formerly bound him to those around him. In our vernacular we'd call it discipleship. The Lord gives them life, but we're to be praying *for* them, sharing His word *with* them, with standing by to minister *to* them. We get to take them out of those old grave clothes, with watch them experience that liberty that they have in Christ from those things that formerly bound them, as they're loosed with let go.

Vs45-52

Isn't it interesting that God honored the office more than the man? Because Caiaphas was the high priest, God gave him the utterance unbeknownst to him, of the prophecy that Jesus would die for the nation. with Talk about knowing nothing, he didn't have a clue what he was saying, with the reality of what the things he was saying would entail. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary says this, "Here is a Balaam who would curse Jesus, but out of the prophecy comes the realization of the purpose of God that Christ should die for the nation in a redemptive, vicarious sense, and even for a larger group, that all the dispersed children of God (in a prospective sense) would be brought together (cf. John 10:16). How fitting it was that one who filled the office of high priest should unwittingly set forth the work of Christ as the Lamb who takes away sin!"

But you should also see that they thought that if they accepted Jesus it would bring about negative ramifications to their lives with their nation, but the fact is that in *rejecting* Him they brought on the very thing they were hoping to avoid. They didn't know in this their day the things that would make for their peace, let me encourage you not to make the same mistake in this your day. The things that make for your peace is cultivating that personal relationship with Jesus Christ, allowing Him to tuck you underneath the shadow of His wing with be your shelter with your security in the midst of the instabilities of this life.

Vs53-57

So the stage is set, 2.5 million Jews teeming the streets of Jerusalem, 250,000 lambs preparing to be slaughtered, with the high priest on the look out for the Lamb of God who's to be slain for the sins of the world.

If you're here today with the Lord has been dealing with you regarding the eternal life that He wants to give to you, with He's calling out to you by name to come forth, out of death

with into life, He's giving you a wake up call, you need to understand that it's a personal choice you make to accept or reject Jesus Christ He *is* the resurrection with the life, with He who believes in Him though he may die, he will live, with whoever lives and believes on Him will never die. The question is, do you believe it? If today your heart is responding in such a way as to say, "Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world." Then let me encourage you not to resist the Lord in this moment, but rather to receive Him, with He'll forgive you of your sin, with give you new life.