

Remnant Life Church
April 25, 2021
“Supernatural: The Work of Jesus
The Raising of Lazarus”
Part 2
John 11:1-10

Chapter 11 of John’s Gospel marks a shift in the ministry of Jesus

- It signals the end of His public ministry and begins a brief time of private ministry leading into the final, or Holy Week
- Because of the power of Lazarus’ resurrection and the threat that He was to the religious leaders, Jesus could no longer move about in public

The first segment is **John 11:1-10**

Verse 1-2

- Introduce us to the Mary, Martha, and Lazarus
- They live in a town a little less than two miles east of Jerusalem called Bethany

Verse 3

- Tells us the problem – Lazarus is sick
- Yet, we know from the context of the passage that Lazarus is already dead before the servant arrives to tell Jesus

Verse 4

- Jesus tells the disciples that this is not about the death of a friend but the glory of God
- They do not understand

Verses 5-6

- These two verses present a problem for the reader
 - If Jesus loved this family, why would He delay the start of His return by two days?
 - There is an interpretive license here that causes the reader to read something that was not intended by the author
 - In the NIV – verse 6 begins with the word “Yet” which connects it to the preceding verse – there is no literary defense for this decision
 - By including the word “yet,” it changes verse 6 to begin, “In spite of this..”
 - John’s intent was that the love of Jesus for Mary, Martha, and Lazarus that motivated Him to wait two days before He set out for their home
 - We realize that the four days of Lazarus in the tomb means
 - Lazarus died on the day the servant left – day 1
 - Jesus delayed returning for two days – days 2 and 3
 - It took a full day to travel to Bethany – day 4

Verses 7-8

- Now, after Jesus announces His plans to go back to Judea the disciples begin to revert to the common sense of the natural
- The attempted stoning they are referring to occurred at the Feast of Dedication (**John 10:31,39**) when Jesus had announced “...*the Father is in Me, and I in the Father*” (**John 10:38**)
- They witnessed, yet again, Jesus’ escape the plans to kill Him, but still struggle to make sense of it

Verses 9-10

- Jesus tells His disciples some final words about His time of ministry
- Before the time of accurate timepieces, the Romans and Jews used the light of the sun as the primary method of dividing the day
 - Very simply, when the sun was shining it was day
 - When it was not, it was the night
 - This broke the day up into roughly 2 12-hour segments with variations brought by the changing seasons
 - In that time, when it was light you did your work. When it got dark, your work stopped
- Jesus was using the natural light and darkness to teach them about the supernatural light of His ministry
 - He refers to the “world’s light” which is the physical sun
 - But He is also talking about the light of His ministry
 - “*Why do you want to go back to Judea?*” The disciples ask Him
 - In response Jesus tells them that the light of day, the light of His ministry is the time for work which is the word of His Father
 - But His light was going to be going dark soon, at least for a little while
- It is the raising of Lazarus that cements in the mind of the religious leaders that Jesus must die
 - What we witness in the story of Lazarus is a microcosm of Jesus’ earthly ministry
 - The saving of Lazarus was to result in the forfeiting of His own life
 - **11:53** – *So from that day on they plotted to take His life.*
 - But it was by the forfeiting of His life that all of His Father’s creation would be saved

Jesus is carefully setting the stage for what is going to be the greatest and final earthly miracle of His ministry

READ – **John 11:11-16**

Verses 11-13

- These verses give us a broad look at the character of Jesus
- This is toward the end of the three years the disciples have been with Jesus
 - Yet, there is still a disconnect between Jesus and those closest to Him
 - This is perhaps the most common and persistent of problems for them as well as us today

- Do we ever really get what Jesus taught and is still teaching through His Word?
 - Jesus uses the often utilized euphemism of sleep for the word death or dead
 - This was common in that day and it is curious that the disciples did not pick up on this
 - There is an explanation
 - We can see it presented in verse 8 when they question Jesus as to His intent to go to such a dangerous place
 - The disciples' see a way to avoid the danger
 - If he is sleeping, he'll wake up!
 - They, like us, will gravitate to the easiest route
 - This is the on-going battle of the flesh and spirit dual-natures of man
 - Paul will later write extensively about this in His letters to the NT churches
 - Particularly in the book of Galatians
 - *Gal 5:17 - For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.*
 - He spells out the results very clearly
 - *Gal 6:8 - Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*
- This is what the disciples' are battling against – the weakness and fear of the flesh with the power of the Spirit
- But Jesus is patient with them
 - He then spells it out clearly

Verses 14-16

- Jesus finally lays it out – Lazarus is dead!
- Then He says something that, once again, without context, would be considered cold, unfeeling, and very inappropriate
 - *11:15 ...and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.*
- You must remember that we have the benefit of the whole story
 - The disciples did not know the out-come of what was going to happen
- Then, of all people, Thomas (doubting Thomas) speaks up and speaks a word of gloom
- *...that we may die with Him. (11:16b)*

Jesus is preparing Himself and His disciples for what is about to come

- It is the culmination of His earthly ministry
- It is a prelude to the most powerful and most important death scene in all of Scripture
- But at Jesus' arrival in Bethany, He confronts yet more unbelief
 - But He also encounters hearts that are willing to suspend the thinking of the natural and believe in the supernatural power of the Son of God