

(Through the Bible) John 11-12

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon explores the raising of Lazarus as a profound demonstration of Jesus' power and the promise of eternal life for believers.

Duration: 1:24:25

Scripture: John 14:1

Topics: "Faith And Doubt", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the 14th chapter of the book of John in the Bible. He encourages the audience to memorize this chapter as it is rich and full of valuable teachings. The speaker also discusses the concept of patterned brain responses and how it can affect one's belief in Jesus Christ. He uses the example of the Pharisees who, despite witnessing undeniable evidence of Jesus' resurrection, were unable to believe due to their ingrained disbelief. The sermon concludes with a reminder that just as a caterpillar undergoes a metamorphosis to become a butterfly, believers will also experience a transformation in the future.

Transcript

So we turn now in our Bibles to the Gospel according to John chapter 11. Now we remember that John is carefully picking out certain incidents in the life of Jesus by which he might prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Bringing people to a faith in him as such, that through that faith they might have the life of Christ imparted to them.

And he testifies, there were many other things that Jesus did which he did not record. But these he recorded that you might believe. And so John is writing from a slant, trying to encourage faith.

At the end of the epistle he again declared that if all of the things were written that should be written, all of the libraries of the world cannot hold the books that should be written on the subject of Jesus Christ. So he is carefully choosing certain events and he has been pointing out different types of miracles that Jesus did. And in our last study we studied the miracle of the man who was born blind.

And the proof that it offered that no man can open the eyes of the blind except he is from God. Now he comes to one of the most powerful proofs of the deity of Jesus Christ and of his Messiahship as we come to the raising of Lazarus from the dead. So there was a certain man who was sick named Lazarus of Bethany.

Bethany is just a little village just over the top of the Mount of Olives on the eastern slope toward the Judean wilderness away from Jerusalem. It's just adjacent there to Jerusalem. And it is called here, interestingly enough, the town of Mary.

Which gives us just a little insight into Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Mary was a special kind of a person that when you think of Mary or you think of Bethany, you think of Mary. She is that kind of a sociable person.

So friendly, so sociable that everybody knew her and it was just her town. It was just the town that Mary just sort of had captivated, no doubt by her friendliness and sociability and all. It was just the town of Mary.

You say, oh Bethany, yeah, that's the town of Mary, you know. She was very devoted to Jesus. Was sitting at his feet just drinking in and learning.

When Martha, her sister, said, Lord, make her come and help me, you know. It's not fair. And Jesus said, she's chosen the better part, Martha.

You're always so busy wanting to make sure everything is set just right and everything is just so. But Mary's really chosen the better part. It will not be taken from her.

And, of course, then she was the one that anointed the feet of Jesus with the costly perfumes. So the town of Mary, very special. I'm looking forward to meeting Mary.

I'm certain that she's just a special kind of a person that you'll just like knowing. And her sister, Martha. Martha also was a very outstanding person, but a different temperament than was Mary.

And it was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. Whose brother Lazarus was sick. So John is telling us, identifying for us this Mary.

Because actually in the New Testament, there are probably four Mary's that involved around the story of Jesus. Of course, his mother and then Mary Magdalene and then Mary, the sister of Lazarus. And then there was a Mary who was the wife of Cleopas.

And there at the cross, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleopas. And so you have at least four Mary's in the New Testament record. And so John felt it necessary to identify that Mary.

Therefore, his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. It is interesting to me that they did not make any demands that Jesus heal him. All they did was inform him.

The one you love is sick. And they knew that Jesus would respond. Respond to the need because of that relationship they had with him.

And so they didn't feel it was necessary to tell him how to respond or to demand a response. Just to declare, Lord, the one you love is sick. So when Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Now, there was a purpose. God had allowed this sickness in order that God might demonstrate his power through Jesus Christ in the raising of Lazarus. Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

And when he heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode for two days still in the same place where he was. So John felt it was necessary to point out that Jesus really loved them. It wasn't a lack of concern, but there was a deliberate waiting of Jesus for two days.

Now, at this point, Jesus was down at the Jordan River, about 20 miles from Bethany. And in those days, you figured with traveling with a group that you make about 10 miles a day. And that was just an average day journey.

So just about every 10 miles along wherever you were going, you would come either to a village or if there were no villages in that span, then they would have the ends, the enclosures where you could stay. And in as much as it's pretty barren between Bethany and Jericho, no villages at all, about halfway there is an end. And this is what was quite common in those times.

If no villages, then the establishing of an end. So you make your 10 miles. Your goal is to get the 10 miles to the end where you go into the courtyard.

And an end isn't like a motel or a hotel, either one. All it is is a walled in area with a little house where the end keeper stays. And there is a well usually in the center of the courtyard.

But you could just get next to the wall and be sheltered from the wind. And it was just a place to spend the night, get water. They provided no food.

It's just a shelter was all that it was, not even a covered shelter. And so being at the Jordan River, he was a two day journey from Bethany. So they sent the message to Jesus.

It took two days for the messenger to get from Bethany to the Jordan River. And after he received the message, he stayed two more days at the Jordan River before he began his two day journey back to Bethany. So you have about six days involved here.

Or if the messenger say ran all the way in one day. The fact that he stayed an extra two days and then made the two day journey. You've got between five and six days from the time that the message went out to Jesus and Jesus arrival at Bethany.

But we noticed that it was a deliberate delay on the part of Jesus. And during this deliberate delay, Jesus knew exactly what was going on in Bethany. So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed for two days at the same place there at the Jordan River.

And after that, he said to his disciples, let us go into Judea again. That is into the area of Jerusalem. And his disciples said to him, Master, the last time you were there, the Jews sought to stone me.

You remember it was when Jesus was there and they said, tell us plainly if you're the Messiah. And Jesus said unto them that that he his relationship with the father. He again asserted and they took up stones to stone him.

So they said, Lord, the last time you were there, they tried to stone you. What do you want to go back for? And so Jesus said, are there not 12 hours in a day? That is 12 hours of light. And he's talking about what we call, well, you know, the daytime, 12 hours of light.

So just the daytime. If any man walk in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles because there is no light in him.

So it's I've got to do my work while it is yet day is what he is basically saying. And these things, he said after that, he said unto them, our friend Lazarus is sleeping. But if I go, I may awake him out of his sleep.

Now, what happens to a child of God is different from what happens to a person who is not a child of God in what we call death. And because there is a vast difference. The Bible did not use the term death to signify the departing of a believer's soul from his body.

They just called it sleep. You remember when Jesus went to heal Jairus daughter and when he got to the house, the people were all wailing because she had died. And Jesus said, she's not dead.

She's only sleeping. And they laughed him to scorn. And so he put them out.

Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, said now concerning those that are asleep in Christ, I write to you that you sorrow not as those who have no hope. And so it was a term that was used and yet not an accurate term because there are those who have taken the idea of sleep then and created a doctrine of soul sleep. Your soul is asleep until the resurrection according to the soul sleep doctrine.

But the Bible does not teach that. As we pointed out this morning, the Bible teaches that to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. So.

In order that we might distinguish, though, the difference between a believer and a nonbeliever. As far as death is concerned. To the believer, the term sleep was often used and Jesus used it here of Lazarus.

He said he is sleeping now. His disciples did not understand him and they thought sleeping like we think of sleeping. And so they said, well, if he's sleeping, he ought to be getting better.

And Jesus was speaking of his death. And so Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.

To the intent that you may believe. Now, as John said, these things that he recorded were recorded in order that they might believe. And so Jesus is now again calling upon his works as a witness to his deity.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me or else believe me for the very works sake. The works that I do, he said, they do testify of me. Now I'm glad for your sake I wasn't there.

Because had he been there, he would have healed him from his sickness. That would have been a glorious miracle, but he wanted even a more glorious miracle. He waited until Lazarus had died.

In fact, he waited until he was buried. And they usually buried a person the same day because they really didn't practice embalming in Israel to any great extent at all. And they would bury the person the same day that they died.

And so Jesus said, I'm glad for your sakes that I wasn't there that you might believe. When you see this miracle, you might really know and believe who I am. So nevertheless, let us go unto him.

Now Thomas probably didn't understand completely what was going on at this point and felt he had to say something. And usually when you say something not knowing really what to say, you say something stupid. Someone said it's better to keep your mouth shut and let people think that you're a fool than to open it and dispel all their doubts.

So Thomas, which is called Didymus, said unto his fellow disciples, let us go also that we may die with him. Now, he probably, you remember they said, Lord, why do you want to go back there? The last time you were there, they tried to stone you. And he's probably saying, Lord, it's foolhardy for you to go back there.

They're going to kill you. And so he's saying, well, if he wants to go back, let's all go back and die with him. In other words, we're heading towards our death, in a sense.

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the grave for four days already. Now, Bethany was near to Jerusalem, about 15 furlongs off. And a furlong is about an eighth of a mile, so it's just about two miles from Jerusalem over to Bethany.

And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house. Now, Bethany is up near the top of the Mount of Olives on the eastern slope.

And you can see from Bethany all the way down to the Dead Sea. And you can see the road coming from Jericho for miles as it winds on up the hill towards Jerusalem. So as you're looking out from Bethany, you can see them coming from a long distance.

And so they saw a company of people coming and they realized it must be Jesus and the disciples. And so Martha left the people that had gathered to mourn. And she came out on the path and met Jesus before he ever got to Bethany.

And then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if you have been here, my brother would not have died. Bitterness in her voice, no doubt. Disappointment at least.

Lord, where were you? Lord, why didn't you respond? It was really sort of a rebuke of Jesus. Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died. Why didn't you come, Lord, when we called you? Don't you realize it's been six days? But I know that even now whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it to you.

Now there's a tremendous expression of faith, but I don't think that Martha was anticipating the resurrection of her brother. But yet here is a very remarkable statement of faith and maybe a hint, Lord. Maybe.

Who knows? Whatsoever you ask of the Father, I know he'll give it to you. And it may be that she is suggesting at this point that he raise him from the dead. However, when they came to the tomb and he said, roll back the stone, they said, oh, he's been there for four days.

He smells by now, you know. But it could be that Martha somehow had that kind of faith. Lord, I know that, you know, anything you ask the Father, he will give it to you.

And Jesus said unto her, your brother is going to rise again. And Martha said unto him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. And Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

And he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he who lives and believes in me shall never die. Believest thou this? A very radical statement that Jesus would not dare to make unless he were the son of God.

This statement is so radical, no man could dare make this statement without immediately being classified as a lunatic, a madman. For someone to stand before you and say, I'm the resurrection and the life. If you live and believe in me, you'll never die.

The guy's got to be deluded. Or he has to be the son of God. And in this case, he was the son of God.

And then Jesus said, believest thou this? Jesus always demanded a yes or a no. You could not be neutral. He said, he who is not for me is against me.

You're not neutral. If you don't have a positive attitude towards me, then you're against me. Now, when he said, do you believe this? You can either answer yes or no.

Yes, I believe that. No, I don't believe that. And you can't move to a middle position.

There is none. I either believe it or I don't believe it. It's a radical statement that marks him as the son of God or as a raving madman.

And you believe it or not. If you believe it, then you have the hope of eternal life. If you don't believe it, you have no hope for eternal life.

There is no other hope. There is no other way. And so, Jesus challenged Martha on her faith.

And she responded, yes, Lord, I believe. That thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which was to come into the world. Now, because of this statement of Jesus, we realize that he said in the previous chapter, concerning my sheep, hear my voice, verse 27, and I know them and they follow me.

And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Now, you see how inconsistent it would be to say that someone who had eternal life died. It's a total inconsistency of terms.

Oh, he has eternal life. Yes, he died yesterday. No, if you have eternal life, you can't die.

And this is the record that God has given unto us life. Eternal life. And this life is in the Son.

And he who has the Son has life. I am the resurrection and the life. So then, what happens to the child of God that we say died? What has happened is that he has his spirit, which is the real me, has moved out of the tent.

The temporary abode that God has made for my spirit into the house, the building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This tent in which I am living is only a temporary measure for me. You never think of a tent as a permanent residence.

It's always transient. We're moving on. It is interesting that in the Holy Land today, there are still the Bedouins and nomadic people who live still in their tents.

And they move their tents from place to place. And they keep their sheep and their goats and all. And they will let them sort of work out a pasture area and then they'll fold up their tents.

The ladies will. The men don't know how to handle tents. And they will move to another place where the ladies will set the tents up again.

And they are nomadic people. Now, it is also interesting that the Bedouins are some of them beginning to settle in areas. And when they start to settle in area, when you know that the Bedouins have decided this is where they're going to settle, they move from tents into little shacks that they make.

They start to build a house. And so, God has a new body for me. It's a body that is designed for the heavenly environment.

It is a body that is my eternal abode. It is a body that cannot and will not age. It is a body that cannot know pain or suffering.

It is a body that can't be incapacitated by a virus or disease or whatever. It is a body that won't get tired and won't have a bulge in the middle. The new body, the building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now, I am living in this body that is designed for the environment of the earth. God has a new body for me designed for the environmental conditions of heaven. For me to come into the heavenly scenes, I have to have a metamorphosis, the change of a body.

And we think of the little caterpillars which go through a metamorphosis. Their body is designed for the ground. They have all those little legs and they go crawling through the fields.

And as they get to the highways, they crawl across the highways. And you get into some places, there are so many caterpillars and all going across the highway, it's dangerous to drive, it gets slick. And as they are crossing those highways, the black asphalt, during the fall of the year, I can imagine a little caterpillar thinking to himself, Oh, it's rough having all these hot, dirty feet coming out of the field to the highway.

Oh, I wish I could fly. This is hot. If I could only fly.

But the poor little caterpillar, his body is not designed to fly. It's designed only to crawl on the ground. The aerodynamic design isn't there.

It's designed for the environment of just crawling on the ground, not for the environment of flying through the air. But one day that little caterpillar crawls up the wall of your house, exudes a little glue, sticks himself under your windowsill and spins a chrysalis around himself. And if you take that chrysalis and you pop it, you'll find just juices come shooting out.

But if you let that chrysalis go, after a period of time, you'll see the thing begin to wiggle a little bit. And you want to keep watching it. Because it'll begin to wiggle more and more.

And then get sort of convulsive kind of jerks. And then that chrysalis will pop open. And two beautiful golden black wings will emerge.

And the tiger's swallowtail butterfly will sit perched on the chrysalis for just a moment. As the wings just seem to expand and then it starts flying around the yard. Pretty soon it flies over the fence, across the fields, away.

No more hot dirty feet. It has had a metamorphosis. It has now a new body designed for a new environment.

It can now exist where it used to not be able to exist. Had the little caterpillar tried to fly, he'd have had a real problem. If he'd climb up a tree and out on a twig and jump.

And wiggle himself as fast as he can. His body isn't designed for flight. It's only going to plop on the ground.

But once it has gone through the metamorphosis, now flight is very natural. We too, the Bible says, are to be changed. We too will experience a metamorphosis.

I look around and I see the world in which we live. I see the corruption. I see the hurt, the pain.

I see the child abuse. I see the threat of the Holocaust. And I say, God, I'm so tired of hot dirty feet.

I wish I could fly. And one day, there's going to be a metamorphosis. For we shall be changed in a moment.

In a twinkling of an eye. For this corruption must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality.

I'm going to get a new body. I'm not going to die. Oh, people may say, oh, Chuck Smith died.

No, not so. I've just moved into the new body. The building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

So, the metamorphosis, I have the new body. Now designed to exist in a whole new environment. And I dwell now, as David said, in the house of the Lord forever.

So, he who lives and believes in me, Jesus said, shall never die. They shall not perish. I have given to them eternal life.

Eternal life. And it is impossible that one with eternal life could die. Else, it isn't eternal life.

All it is, is a change. For the better, to be sure. From the tent to the house.

From the temporary to the permanent. From the restricted to the unrestricted. It'll be fascinating indeed.

For us to discover. What that new life and body will be like with Jesus. I have a brother who was a great tinkerer.

Who went to be with the Lord. I'm anxious to see him because I'm sure he's got a lot of things figured out that other people haven't yet. He was one who pressed his body to its limits.

He had no fears. And he was always pushing his body to its limits. And I'm just anxious to see what he can do in that new body of his.

Building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So, the glorious hope. Do you believe this? Jesus said, Martha said, yes Lord, I believe.

And so when she had said this. She went ahead and she called Mary, her sister. Secretly saying.

The Master has come and he's asked for you. So as soon as Mary heard that she arose quickly and came to Jesus. And Jesus was still at that place outside of the village where Martha had met him.

And the Jews which were with her in the house. Who were comforting her. When they saw Mary rise up hastily and going out.

They followed her saying, oh she's probably going to weep at the tomb. And then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him. She fell down at his feet saying unto him.

Lord. If thou has been here, my brother would not have died. So he's getting the accusation now from the other sister.

You see, Martha said the same thing. Lord, where were you? Lord, why didn't you respond? Lord, if you'd only have been here, things would have been different. And he's getting it again now from Mary.

And when Jesus therefore saw her weeping. He realized the grief, the pain. She had gone through and he loved her.

He loved Martha and he saw the pain. The pain of human limitations. Jesus groaned in his own spirit.

His trouble. It bothered him to see the pain. Of humanity.

And he said, where have you laid him? And they said, come and see. And Jesus wept. Now.

There are those who suppose that Jesus wept. They say because his friend Lazarus was dead. That's ridiculous.

Why would he weep because Lazarus was dead? He knew that he was going to raise him from the dead in a few minutes. Don't you remember? That Jesus said to his disciples down there at the Jordan River. That I must go to awake him out of his sleepness, out of his sleep.

And he said that this has happened that the Son of God may be glorified. And I go that I may awake him out of his sleep. And then he said, he's dead.

I'm going to raise him really, Jesus said, from the dead. So those commentators. Who say that Jesus was weeping because his friend was dead.

Haven't really read the whole text. He was weeping when he saw the pain and the sorrow of humanity. When he saw the pain that his friends Mary and Martha were experiencing as the result of death.

And he wept for their grief. Jesus is moved by our infirmities. We have such a great high priest.

Who is touched by our weaknesses. He sees us in our frailty. He sees us in our grief.

And he's touched by our feelings of grief and sorrow. By our weaknesses. He's just a loving, compassionate Lord.

And one who is moved by our own sorrow and grief. And so he wept for them. It is interesting that in death.

In reality, we usually weep not for the person who is gone, but for those that are left. When my father and brother were killed, I didn't weep for them. I wept for me.

I lost the greatest supporter any man could ever have when my dad was killed. And I just lost a fabulous brother when they were killed together. It was just, I experienced a tremendous loss.

And I wept for me. A little upset that they were going to get there so far ahead of me and get a head start. Envious for them.

But I've lost so much. Loving support. A companion with my brother.

One that, you know, we always had a great time together. We purchased boats together, skied together, and did everything together. And we had a great time together, though he was several years younger than me.

We just had a neat bond between us. And I knew I was going to miss them. I knew I was going to miss all their input.

And I wept for me. It was a selfish weeping. You dirty guys going on and leaving me here, you know.

Weeping, though, for me. Jesus wept not for Lazarus. You don't weep for the dead.

If they are in the Lord. If they're not in the Lord, then that's a different thing. Then we sorrow as those who have no hope.

Then said the Jews, oh, look how he loved him. They misunderstood completely his weeping, too. And some of them said, could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, referring to the last notable miracle there in Jerusalem, could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man would not have died? And Jesus, again, just groaning in himself, came to the grave.

And it was a cave. And there was a stone there upon it. And Jesus said, take away this stone.

Now, Martha, you remember, said, Lord, I know that anything you ask God, you know, he would do. And it was Martha who said, oh, Lord, by this time he stinks. He's been dead for four days.

And Jesus said unto her, didn't I tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God? And so they took away the stone from the place where the dead was raised. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. And I know that you always hear me.

But because of the people which stand by, I'm saying it, that they may believe that you have sent me. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, the Father in me? The works that I do, I do not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me or else believe for the works sake, Jesus said.

Now he's giving another great proof that the Father is in him and he is in the Father, that he is one with the Father. He's offering now another great proof. And so I'm only saying this, Father, not for my sake, but for the sake of the people that are here, that they may believe that you have sent me.

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. One commentator said that had he just called, come forth, the whole graveyard would have been resurrected. So he said, Lazarus, come forth.

And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes. And his face was bound with a napkin. And Jesus said unto them, loose him and let him go.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did believed on him. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. And so they're gathered, the chief priests and the Pharisees, a council.

And they said, what are we going to do? For this man is doing many miracles. And if we let him alone, all of the people will believe on him. And the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation.

Now, John gives us here a little bit of the insight to the conspiracy to put Jesus to death. It was that these religious leaders were fearing their position. You know, we won't be the big shots anymore.

We'll lose our jobs and we'll lose our position. What are we going to do? We've got to do something. If we don't, our jobs are threatened.

And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, you don't know anything at all. You know nothing at all. Nor consider that is expedient for us that one man should die for the people that the whole nation perish not.

Now, John is saying he didn't understand what he was saying fully. He was the high priest and because of that position, he was now prophesying that one man should die for the nation. A very interesting prophecy.

The high priest later offered a prophecy when Jesus was hanging on the cross. He said, others he saved, himself he cannot save. Very true.

If he saved himself, he couldn't save others. You can't do both in his position. Had Jesus come down off the cross, he could not save us.

So he said, others he saved, himself he cannot save. Very interesting statement and yet very true. Because he was a high priest speaking prophetically.

Here now, speaking prophetically as the high priest. Don't you realize it's necessary that one man die that the whole nation perish not. Die for the people in order that the whole nation perish not.

And so John points out that he was not really saying this of himself, but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but that also that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth, they took counsel together to put him to death.

And Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went from there unto the country, near to the wilderness, unto a city called Ephraim, and there he stayed with his disciples. So Jesus went back down towards the Jordan River, did not stay around Jerusalem after the raising of Lazarus. And the Jews Passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.

Now it was necessary to go through the purification rites in order to participate in the Passover. And you would go up to Jerusalem and you'd take a vow before the Lord and you'd go through these purification rites. You remember when Paul returned to Jerusalem, there was a feast coming that Paul was desiring to get to Jerusalem for this feast.

And so when he arrived, because he wanted to participate in the Jewish feast, he was going through the purification rites. And that's when someone from Asia spotted him and said, hey, isn't that the guy that's been preaching to the Gentiles everywhere? And they raised the big ruckus over Paul when they saw him in the temple going through purification rites. And so many of the Jews would go early in order that they might go through these purification rites in order that they might participate then in the feast.

And so they sought for Jesus, and they were talking among themselves as they were standing in the temple, and they said, do you think he's going to come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where he was, they should let them know that they might arrest him. And then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus, which had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. And they made him a supper, and Martha served, typical of Martha, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

And then took Mary, a pound of ointment of spikenard, very expensive, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment, typical of Mary. Worshipping, Martha working, it takes all types, and God has built into our characters these very qualities.

Martha, busy serving, Mary, busy worshipping. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why didn't they sell this perfume for 300 pence and give him the money to the poor? Actually, it was very expensive. 300 pence was a day's wage for a laboring man.

So you've got almost a year's wages involved here that this perfume could have been sold for. And this he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And he held the purse, and he was stealing out of the money in the purse.

It's unfortunate that in the portrayal of this whole scene in Jesus Christ Superstar, they try to make Jesus a very lavish kind of a person, living in opulence, no care for the poor. And Judas turns out the hero. He's the social reformer and the man who is concerned for the poor and all.

And they don't really do justice to the text. And that you have to assume is deliberate. Because it's right there.

Judas didn't really care for the poor. As he would be made out that marvelous man with social concern. He was a thief.

He was holding the purse and had been stealing the money out of the purse. That's the only reason why he wanted the money, the perfume sold and the money put in the purse. He was not that kind of a person that they try to portray him.

Then said Jesus, and get off her case. Against the day of my bearing has she kept this. For the poor always you will have with you, but you will not always have me.

So he made Judas leave her alone. And many of the Jews therefore knew that he was there. And they came not only for Jesus sake, but they wanted to see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priest, and notice how evil men they are. They consulted how that they might put Lazarus to death also. Because by reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.

So they are going to try and destroy the evidence by killing Lazarus. Now the next day many people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. They took branches of the palm trees and they went forth to meet him and cried, Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord.

And so knowing that Jesus was going to be coming from Bethany. Having to come down from the Mount of Olives. They went over to the path that comes from Bethany down the Mount of Olives into the Kidron Valley to Jerusalem.

And as Jesus was coming they greeted him waving the palm branches. And so we have Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion. And they were crying the 118th Psalm, Hosanna, save now is what the word means in Hebrew.

Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord. And Jesus when he had found a young ass sat there on as it was written, Fear not daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt. And these things understood not his disciples at the first.

But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him. And that they had done these things unto him. Now, John is very honest and very frank here.

He said, you know, we didn't think about it until after he was glorified. And then we thought, oh, wow. Remember, you know, how we, you know, waved the palm branches and he was riding on a donkey.

Isn't that what Zachariah said? Rejoice greatly, daughters of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh to thee. But he is lowly sitting on a colt.

Wow. You know, in other words, he is saying we weren't trying to deliberately set the stage. We didn't say, now, what does the Bible say is supposed to happen next? Let's work it out this way.

It wasn't a deliberate conspiracy to set the stage. It was something they just did. And afterwards they realized, wow, we were fulfilling prophecy.

You know, and the realization came. But not until after Jesus was glorified. So it wasn't a deliberately staged event as far as the disciples were concerned.

And the people, therefore, that were with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead, they bear record. They were telling everybody about it. For this cause the people also met him.

For that they had heard that he had done a great miracle. I mean, it had really been buzzed, this miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. And so everybody was excited.

And the Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves, hey, do you realize how we're not prevailing? The whole world is going after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. They could worship from the court of the Gentiles.

They could not come in. And the same came, therefore, to Philip, who was of Bethsaida, of Galilee. And they desired him saying, sir, we would like to see Jesus.

And Philip came and told Andrew. And Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them saying, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. What a beautiful picture.

You have a little grain of wheat. You set that little grain of wheat here on the pulpit. And you can come back a year from now, and it's still one little grain of wheat sitting there in the pulpit.

Come back ten years from now, still one little grain of wheat sitting there in the pulpit. But if you put that little grain of wheat into the ground, it dies. But out of the death comes a new form, a new body.

Comes the stock. Comes the new kernel or corn of wheat, they call it. And many wheat seeds.

And the potential of one wheat seed is tremendous. I read somewhere that if you would take a kernel of corn and plant it. And then take all of the, you know, from that one kernel of corn, all of the seeds that came off of the kernels that grew from the one, plant them.

I think that in ten years it is, you'd have enough corn seed to plant every acre of ground on the face of the earth with corn. Just each year planting everything that came from the one. You see, when God created the plants and all, He said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth.

And surely the potential is there. And so Jesus is using a neat little illustration here, referring to His death. Look, unless it dies, it stays by itself.

But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. Talking of His death. Through His death, He was going to bring forth much fruit.

You included tonight. Part of the fruit. And he that loves his life shall lose it.

But he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. He had said earlier, he who seeks to save his life will lose it. He who loses his life for my sake, the same will find it or save it.

Much the same. Loving life. You're going to lose it anyhow.

But if you are looking forward to that new life, life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be.

If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. But now is my soul troubled. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

But for this cause came I unto this hour. You remember He kept saying, my hour has not yet come, my hour has not yet come. Now He's approaching the hour.

And as He's approaching the hour, He's beginning to go through this inner turmoil. My soul is troubled. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

He's already beginning to enter into some of the agony of the garden. These are the last days, He knows it. In the garden He prayed, Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, Thy will be done. Now, even before then, He's going through that turmoil. Father, save me from this hour.

Yet, it's for this hour that I came into the world. For this cause. That's why I'm here.

Father, glorify Thy name. Oh, this is just as powerful as the prayer in the garden. When He said, if it is possible, let this cup... Nevertheless, not my will, Thy will be done.

How glorious it is when we submit our ways to God. God, save me from this hour. But yet, not so Lord.

You just glorify Your name. And there came a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. And the people, therefore, that were standing around and heard it said that it thundered.

Others said, no, an angel spoke to Him. And Jesus said, this voice did not come for my sake, but for your sake. I don't need this kind of a spectacular demonstration to make me believe.

No, it wasn't for my sake that this voice came. It was for your sakes. But now is the judgment of this world.

Now shall the prince of the world be cast out. You see, they had just been saying, save now. And He says, no, it's the judgment of the world.

For the prince of the world himself is going to be cast out. He is to be despised and rejected of men. And I, if I be lifted up, the corn of wheat, die.

It will bring forth much fruit. If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Now this, He said, signifying what death He should die.

When He said, if I be lifted up, He was talking about, I'm going to be lifted up on a cross. I'm going to die on the cross. And the lifting up was only signifying death on a cross.

Unfortunately, many ministers and Christians take this term, if I be lifted up, as meaning exalting Jesus. If we just hold Jesus up before people, if we just exalt Jesus, if we just lift Him up before people, He's going to draw everyone unto Him. So what we must be doing is exalting Jesus before the people and lifting up Jesus before the people so that all the people will be drawn to Him.

That's not what Jesus is saying. And there's even some chorus that is almost blasphemous if you think of it. And it's, let's lift Him higher, let's lift Him higher that all the world might see it.

Let's get the cross and let's put the cross. He's only talking about death on the cross. The corn of wheat falling into the ground that it might bring forth much fruit.

And not exalting Jesus or lifting Him up before the world. Not referring to that at all. And that's an unfortunate understanding that many people have taken because they didn't read the next verse.

They just take this statement of Jesus, if I be lifted up, I'll draw all men to Me. Oh, then let's lift Jesus up. No, He's talking about the cross.

If I say, well, let's lift Jesus up, I'm saying, well, let's put Jesus on the cross. So, this He said signifying what death He should die. And the people answered Him.

Now we've heard out of the law that the Messiah abides forever. And how come you are saying that you've got to be crucified? Who then is the Son of Man? Jesus said, I'm going to be crucified. Wait a minute.

The Scriptures say that the Messiah is going to abide forever. For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.

The government shall be upon His shoulders. And the name shall be called Wonderful Counselor. The Mighty God.

The Everlasting Father. The Prince of Peace. And of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end.

The Messiah abides forever. Upon the throne of David, to order it and establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth even forever. For the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.

How come you say you're going to be crucified if the Messiah abides forever? And Jesus said unto them, for a little while the light is with you. Walk while you have the light. Lest darkness come upon you.

For he that walks in darkness does not know where he's going. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may be the children of light. And these things faked Jesus and departed and did hide Himself from them.

Now the Pharisees are out to get Him for sure. But yet, He is in control of the events. The crucifixion must take place on Passover in order that He might fulfill in His sacrifice all of the symbolisms of the Passover.

The blood of the Lamb slain in Egypt on the doorpost bringing life for those condemned to die. So it was necessary that the crucifixion take place on Passover and thus He hid Himself. But though He had done so many miracles before them yet they did not believe on Him.

Now there is a common misconception that if a person could just see a miracle surely they would believe. Not so. They saw many miracles and they did not believe.

In fact, it was a little worse than that. We are told in verse 38 they could not believe. That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled which spake Lord who hath believed our report and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed then in 39.

Therefore they could not believe because Isaiah said again He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart and be converted and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. So Isaiah prophesied that he would be despised and rejected.

A man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Therefore they could not believe. Why could they not believe? That's an interesting statement.

Therefore they could not believe even though they saw the miracles they could not believe. Jesus warned in the other Gospels concerning the unpardonable sin. That of the continual rejection of the Holy Spirit's conviction upon your heart.

A person can reject Christ so many times that believing becomes an impossibility. There is a certain law of metaphysics. Our brains are an interesting instrument and we can create brain patterns so that a repeated action can create such a pattern in our brain that it's difficult and at times impossible to change the pattern that you've established there.

You watch a woman learn to knit and the needles just seem to go everywhere and it's slow, it's tedious. But as she continues to persist, you find that what's happening is you're patterning the brain. You're establishing grooves up here.

Until finally if you've worked with the needles long enough you see the needle's just flying. And she can be talking, watching television and the needle's just flying because the grooves have been so planted in the brain that she doesn't really have to think about it. She can just turn on the mode up there.

Knit one, purl two. And it just goes. And they don't even have to... The pattern is set.

And so with many things that a repeated action creates the pattern in the brain and it becomes a very simple thing. Now, that's why some of you old people have such a problem with Pac-Man. You know, you're just too old to get any new grooves going.

But you take these little kids. My little grandson. Man, is he a whiz at Pac-Man.

You know, he's just... Is there any man he can... And I won't even put a quarter in the thing for myself. I'll give him the quarter and watch him do it. But I'm lousy at that game.

But, I mean, his is just automatic response. That little guy comes... You know, the little guys come down and the little Pac-Man's going. I mean, he can turn that thing around and in.

I mean, he's just... The reflexes are tremendous. The brain has been patterned so well for that stuff. That it becomes... And you watch these kids.

It becomes almost an automatic kind of a response that they have. I mean, they just get into the machine almost. You know, into the whole thing.

And you can pattern your brain so that it gets established in a set. Now, unfortunately, a person can do that in regards to believing in Jesus Christ. You see, the first time you were faced with the claims of Jesus Christ and you thought, I wonder, could this be true? Could He really be the Son of God? Can I really have eternal life by believing? Well, I don't know.

And it was a tough decision. I mean, it wasn't easy to say no to Jesus. It was a very hard decision for you to make.

But, ultimately, you said, well, no, I don't think so. Not tonight, anyhow. Now, the next time you were faced with it, you see, by your saying no, you started a groove.

You planted that in your brain and it becomes a permanent part. So, the next time you were faced, it was a little easier to say, oh, I don't think so, not tonight. The groove got a little deeper.

And every time you said no, the groove became deeper and deeper and deeper until you can be faced now with indisputable evidence, but you can't overcome that brain groove. This is the condition the Pharisees were in. Here's a man raised from the dead.

Evidence they can't deny. They might try and get rid of it by killing him, but they can't deny it. But, yet, they could not believe they had gone too far.

They couldn't reverse it at this point. It is extremely significant that nine-tenths of the decisions that are made for Jesus Christ are made when a person is a teenager. You see, before you get that groove set too deep, nine-tenths of the decisions are made during the teenage years.

As you get older, that old brain groove gets deeper and deeper until, actually, salvation, statistically, becomes an impossibility. But God is a God of grace, and so we see many times these eighty, ninety-year-old people coming to Jesus. That's a miracle.

Statistically, it's impossible, but God isn't bound by statistics. Mathematically, you can show the impossibility of a seventy-year-old person accepting Jesus Christ. But that happens.

What can you say? God's a God of miracles. Salvation's a miracle. But they could not believe.

Now, you remember when Pharaoh hardened his heart. Then, finally, God took over and he hardened his heart. God will confirm you in your position.

And so God confirmed them in their positions. They wanted to blind their eyes. They didn't want to see.

All right, then God blinded their eyes. They didn't want to believe. All right, then God made firm their decision.

He hardened their hearts that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts and be converted and that they should be healed. So these things said Isaiah when he saw his glory and he spoke of him. Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess, lest they should have been put out of the synagogue and here is a tragic verse of Scripture.

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. That has been the nemesis of many a person. What a tragedy when it is said of a person, well, he loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

You know, they might not understand me at the club if I spoke out for Jesus Christ. And they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. What a sad, sad commentary on many people's lives.

I'm more concerned with what people will think of me than I am what God will think of me. I'm more interested in man patting me on the back than I am God patting me on the back. I'm more interested that men should praise me than that God should praise me.

They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. That is a very sad case to be in. And Jesus cried and said, He that believes on me, believes not on me, but upon him who sent me.

And he that sees me, sees him that sent me. Philip said, Lord, just show us. The Father will be satisfied.

And Jesus said, Philip, have I been so long a time with you? Have you not seen me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, show us the Father? We'll get that next week. He that sees me, sees him that sent me, or sees the Father.

I am come, a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. Now Paul the Apostle said, you are not the children of darkness that the day of the Lord should take you as a thief by surprise. But you're children of the light.

Therefore, walk as children of the light. Making reference to the statement of Jesus here in John chapter 12. If any man hear my words and believe not, I do not judge him.

For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. How many times has he said this? He that believeth not is condemned already. I didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be saved.

Now he's referring again. That was at the beginning of his ministry to Nicodemus in John the 3rd chapter. God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. And he that believeth is not condemned. I didn't come to judge the world.

If a person doesn't believe in me, I don't judge him. I didn't come to judge. I came to save.

Oh, His glorious mission not to bring condemnation, not to bring judgment, but to bring salvation to man. Now, He is coming again and when He comes again, it will be to judge. But His first coming, the mission was salvation.

He that rejects me and receives not my words has one who judges him and it is the word which I have spoken. The same will judge him in the last day. When you are judged, you'll be judged by the word of God.

You're not believing it. That's what's going to judge you. God has given the witness.

You didn't believe it. So the word of God will judge you. Jesus said, I'm not going to judge you the word that I have spoken.

That's what's going to judge you. For I have not spoken of my own, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting and whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me so I speak.

So my words that I have spoken that come from God, they are going to be the things that judge you. I know they're true. I know that God has given to me life everlasting.

And that's what's going to judge you. You'll be judged by God's word. Next week we'll go on into chapters 13 and 14.

The 14th chapter in my estimation is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. Years ago when I was in seminary, I had a professor who said that the 14th chapter of John was perhaps one of the most important chapters in the Bible. He said you should all memorize it.

So I went home and memorized it. And it is an outstanding chapter and you should commit it to memory. And it's one that's just so full, so rich.

We'll be getting into that next week. And now may the hand of the Lord be upon your life to watch over you, to guide you, and to strengthen you for the things that you'll be facing this week. May you just again be open to the things of the Spirit that God might lead you in His way of righteousness and truth.

May the blessings of the Lord be upon you through all of your activities as you walk with Him in an ever-increasing faith, fellowship, and love. In Jesus' name.

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