

# The Raising of Lazarus

by Welcome Detweiler

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*The story of Lazarus teaches us about Jesus' power over death and the importance of receiving eternal salvation, which brings both life and liberty.*

**Duration:** 8:54

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:25, John 3:16, John 11:41, John 11:45-46, John 11:54, Galatians 5:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Freedom", "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of serving God in perfect liberty. He quotes Galatians 5:1, urging believers to stand fast in the freedom that Christ has given them and not be entangled again in religious bondage. The preacher uses the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead to illustrate how believers should shed their old traditions and ideas that hinder their spiritual growth. He also addresses the issue of older individuals who have not yet accepted Christ, encouraging them not to lose hope and reminding them that God offers salvation to all, regardless of age.

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## Transcript

And now, as we turn to God's precious word, I want to continue the story of the raising of Lazarus, and I am reading from John's Gospel, chapter 11, verse 41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead were laid, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always. But because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

When he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith 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 things Jesus had done. Those who call in question the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures have the difficulty of explaining away or removing the miracles that Christ performed during his brief earthly ministry.

If the miracle of Jesus can be classified, then from the natural viewpoint the raising of Lazarus is the greatest. The Bible records three instances where Christ invades the territory of death and brings the dead to life, proving his mighty power and that he was the spotless Son of God. In the first instance, we have

the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum.

The child had just died, and Jesus said to her so tenderly, Arise, and she arose, giving to us a picture of how he calls those who are young by the gospel. It is indeed a wonderful privilege to point the boys and girls, the teenagers, to Christ. They seem to be so sincere, and have a desire to be saved as soon as they discover their lost condition.

I was saved when I was 14, and I thank God for it. I've had the privilege of leading many older ones to Christ, and it is so common to hear them say, My greatest regret is that I waited so long. Had I known how wonderful and how easy it was to be saved, I might have been saved in my teens, and by so doing I could have been spared from many heartaches.

Young people, take warning from these earnest testimonies, and come to Christ in the days of youth. The second instance of Christ raising the dead is in the city of Nain. A young man, the only son of a widow, is being carried to the cemetery.

Jesus stops the procession and gives life to the dead son, which brought joy to the bereaved mother. This man was dead a little longer than the girl in Capernaum, and I like to think of him representing those who are between 20 and 40 years of age. Here we have the same Christ who brings salvation to the youth, bringing life to those who have ignored his earlier offer of salvation, and as a direct result have found life rather empty and a disappointment.

Many young men and women, dead in trespasses and in sins, are causing grief to godly fathers and mothers. The pain is as great as if they were following their casket toward a cemetery. They are yearning for the day when Jesus Christ shall have the privilege of presenting to their sons and daughters eternal life.

The third instance of our Lord raising the dead is that of our reading in John Chapter 11. Here it is not a case of having just died, but he has been dead four days. Already his body is resting in the earth, and decay has begun, and all hope is entirely gone.

I like to think of Lazarus representing those who are past 40 years of age who have never received God's offer of salvation. From the natural point of view, these are almost hopeless cases. Statistics have many times proved that very few people are saved after they are 40 years of age.

I want to speak very directly to any of my radio listeners who are not sure of being saved and you are past 40 years of age. Do you realize that your chance of ever being saved is very slim? As far as God is concerned, you have the same chance of being saved as anyone else, but if during all these years you have turned down God's offer of salvation, there is not much reason to believe that you will ever change your mind and receive Christ who loved you and died for you. I put this before you as a challenge, and I trust that it will awaken you and cause you to say, I am going to be an exception to that general rule.

I'm going to receive Christ right now before another sunrise. I know that God can save those who are past 40. My dear parents were both saved past 40 years of age.

Although very religious and active in the work of the Lord, for many years they discovered that they were resting upon their own good works to merit heaven and had never received eternal life. One of the greatest modern miracles is when God saves a religious person advanced in years. When Lazarus was raised, he received life, but that was not all.

He also received liberty. In verse 44, we read, And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

The grave clothes represent the old ideas or traditions that man has picked up, things that sound reasonable, which are supposed to be in the Bible and are not. How sad it is to find some Christians bound by tradition still wearing their grave clothes. I remember a number of years ago attending a Bible conference in Seacliffe, New York, where we learned a little chorus, and the words were, Yes, Jesus died upon the tree to set the free, that all who will on him believe life and liberty shall receive.

Lazarus received life, and then he also received liberty. Loose him, and let him go. If you have a desire to serve the Lord, and find that you are bound, it is displeasing to God so to remain.

You cannot serve him acceptably unless it is in perfect liberty. Listen to Galatians 5.1 Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again by the yoke of bondage. Grave clothes belong to dead people, and when you pass from death into life, the grave clothes must be removed.

The traditions that bind belong to people who do not want to be saved, but like to be religious. They do not belong to saved people. John very carefully records the twofold effect of Christ's miracle.

That's in verse 45. 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.

The history of Lazarus closes with leaving him sitting at the table in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, his Savior. The lesson that every unsaved person should learn is that Christ is able to give life to those who are dead in sin. He offers eternal life, and when that offer is made, it must be received or it must be rejected.

If I have those in my radio audience who have never received eternal life, I want you to realize that just as he offered life to Lazarus many years ago, he offers life to you. He asks you to receive his son, and the moment you receive him as your Lord and Savior, believe that he died in your place to pure sins. God will give you everlasting life, and there will follow a new life, new desires.

You will have a desire to serve and to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust you will start by trusting that Savior this very hour.

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