

BIBLE STORY: THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

John 11:1-44

Central Thoughts

- God permits sickness to come into our lives to glorify His Son through it.
- God's glory shows forth His love for us, His victory over death, and that He is the source of life and salvation.
- The bodily resurrection of the dead will occur on the last day at Jesus' Second Coming.
- **Jesus is the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in Him will rise from the dead and live again, even though he dies.** (This is the central teaching of this miracle: John 11:25-26).
- Christians confess faith in Christ and the resurrection of the body when faced with death.
- It is not sinful to grieve the death of loved ones because death is an enemy that separates us from the ones we love.
- Jesus grieves with us and carries all of our sorrows in order that He might comfort us.

Discussion Questions

Who were Lazarus, Mary, and Martha?

They were a family of a brother and two sisters whom Jesus loved from the town of Bethany which was about two miles from Jerusalem.

What do we know about this Mary from the Gospels?

She is the Mary who sat at Jesus' feet listening to His Word (Luke 10) and who anointed Jesus with fragrant oil before His death (John 12).

What did Jesus say when He received the news about Lazarus's sickness?

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

What did the disciples know that many of the Jews wanted to do to Jesus?

The Jews who didn't believe in Jesus wanted to stone Him to death.

Why did Jesus delay going to Bethany?

He delayed so that Lazarus would die and so that everyone would clearly know that he was dead.

How did Jesus refer to Lazarus's death and what He would do, and what does this teach us?

"Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." By this Word we learn that Jesus has the power over death. To Jesus, raising the dead is like awakening a man from a deep sleep.

What does Thomas think will happen to them when they go with Jesus to Bethany?

He thinks that they will all die at the hands of the Jews.

How did Martha confess her faith in Jesus when He arrived in Bethany?

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

What did Jesus promise Martha and how did she respond to Him?

Jesus promised her, "Your brother will rise again" and Martha responded, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

What did Jesus teach Martha about Himself, the resurrection, and the promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him?

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:25-26)

What was Martha's beautiful confession of faith in Jesus?

"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

What did Mary do after Martha told her that Jesus had come?

She went quickly to meet Jesus and said much the same thing to Him that her sister did.

How did Jesus respond to Mary when He saw her and others who came with her weeping?

He felt their pain deeply. He groaned in His Spirit over the sorrow that death had brought into their lives. He asked where they had laid Lazarus' body. Jesus wept with Mary, for surely, He had come to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows caused by sin and death (Isaiah 53:4-6).

How did others respond to Jesus' weeping?

Some saw how much He loved Lazarus. Others wondered why the miracle worker could not have prevented Him from dying.

Why did Jesus allow Lazarus to die?

To show that He has the power over death; a power that He has by virtue of His suffering, death, and resurrection as the Son of God.

Why did Martha not want to take away the stone from the tomb?

Lazarus had been dead for four days; and there would be a terrible smell from his decaying body.

How did Jesus encourage Martha to believe in Him?

"Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

Why did Jesus pray to His Father after they had removed the stone from the tomb?

To give all honor and glory to His Father, and so that those who witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead would believe that Jesus was the Son of God sent from the Father.

How did Jesus raise Lazarus to life again?

He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" By the power of Jesus' Word Lazarus was raised to life again.

What does Jesus' Word, "Loose him, and let him go" remind us of?

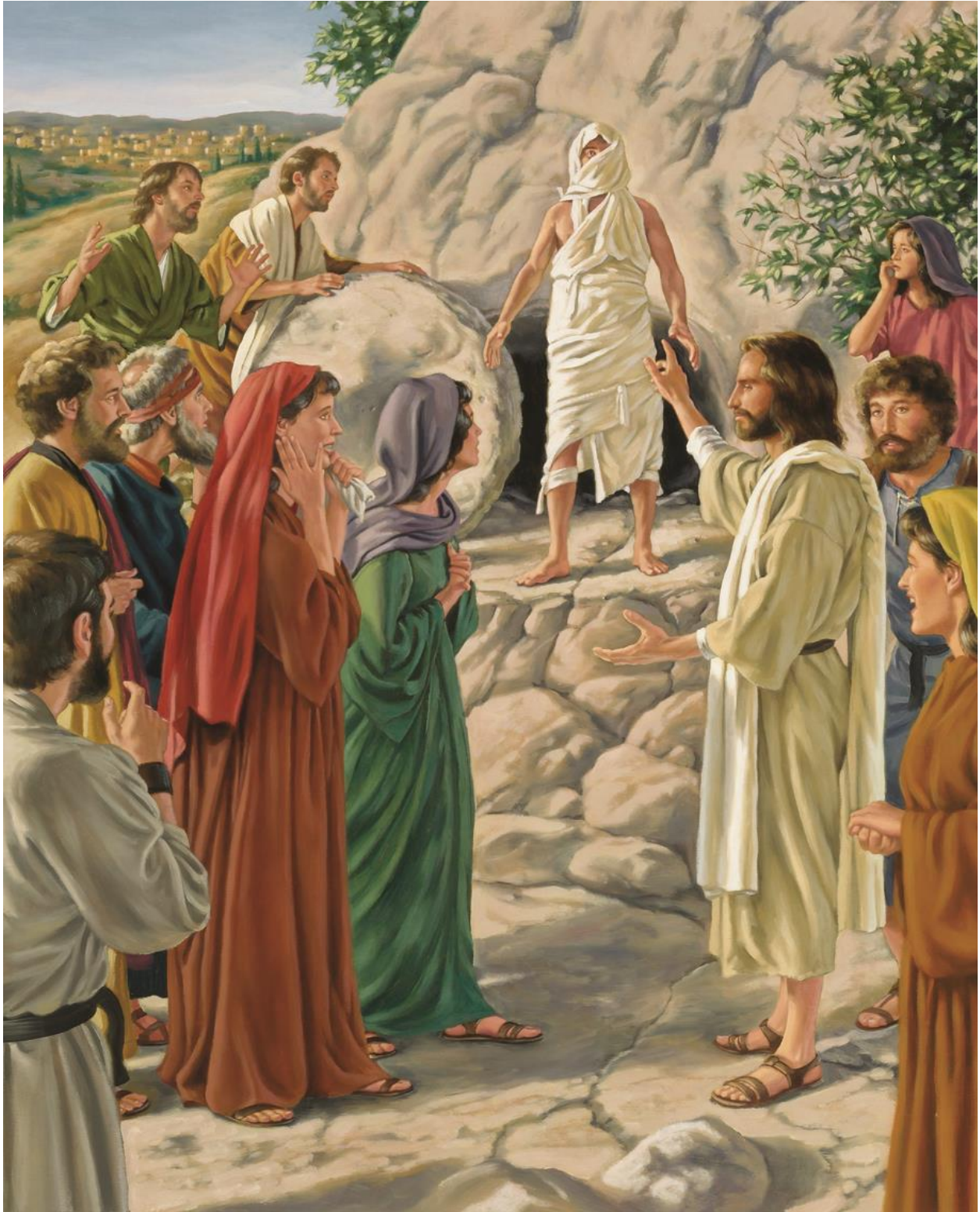
It reminds us of how Jesus' forgiveness in the absolution "looses us" from our sins and "sets us free." Jesus' forgiveness is what gives us victory over death and raises the dead.

Meditation on the Bible Story

The dramatic account of Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead illustrates, in advance, the power of Jesus' death and resurrection to redeem us from sin and conquer death. The miracle glorifies Jesus because it shows His love for us, how He knows our pain and suffering caused by the problem of sin, and how He grieves with us when we are deeply saddened over the death of a loved one. The miracle glorifies Jesus because it proclaims Him to be the Son of God and the Savior from sin and death. The miracle glorifies Jesus because it calls us to faith in Him in the face of suffering and the sorrow of death, because we know that we and our loved ones shall live again and be restored to communion with God and one another in the resurrection on the last day. When sorrow, grief, suffering, sickness, and death are permitted by God to come into our lives, we know that God intends to work through these things for our good and to glorify His Son in these things as we come to know and experience His love and the power of His Word to give us comfort and hope. As Christians, we grieve at the death of loved ones, but not as those who have no hope. Just like Mary and Martha, we know that our loved ones will rise again from the dead on the last day, because Jesus has conquered sin and death. By the power of His forgiveness we come to know and confess our faith in Jesus, just as Mary and Martha did. And by the power of His forgiveness, we have a foretaste of the resurrection which is yet to come. The lesson of this miracle is best described by Jesus' own words: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

Prayer on the Bible Story

Lord Jesus, as you showed Yourself to be our Savior from death by raising Lazarus from the dead and by comforting his sisters with Your Word in their time of grief, so give us comfort when we experience the death of loved ones. Teach us to believe with all our heart that You are the resurrection and the life, and that though we may die, yet shall we live again, for You have defeated sin and death for us, and You now live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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