



SESSION 20

# JESUS BROUGHT A MAN BACK TO LIFE

John wrote about something amazing that happened in a village called Bethany. This village was very close to Jerusalem in Judea. It was on the Mount of Olives which is right next to Jerusalem. Two sisters and their brother lived there. Their names were Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Luke wrote about Mary and Martha before in God's story. They were close friends and followers of Jesus and so was their brother, Lazarus.

At that time, the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to stop teaching. They wanted to find him and kill him. Many people were following Jesus, and the Jewish leaders wanted that to stop.



JOHN 11:1-16

<sup>1</sup> A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. <sup>2</sup> This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. <sup>3</sup> So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." <sup>5</sup> So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> he stayed where he was for the next two days. <sup>7</sup> Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

<sup>8</sup> But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>

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But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.” 11 Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.”

12 The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” 13 They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

14 So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.”

16 Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go, too—and die with Jesus.”

Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus. They told him that their brother was sick. Jesus is God, so he knew what would happen. He said that this sickness happened “*for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.*” To give someone *glory* means that you see something amazing that they have done and you praise them for it. Jesus said that he would *receive glory*<sup>213</sup> through this sickness.

Jesus was in another place at that time. He got the message from Mary and Martha that Lazarus was sick. But then he stayed for two more days in the place where he was. After two days, he said to his disciples, “*Let’s go back to Judea.*” But the disciples did not want to go to Judea. Judea was a province<sup>214</sup> in Israel where the city of Jerusalem was. Jerusalem was where many Jewish religious leaders were. They wanted to arrest and kill Jesus. The disciples said to Jesus that if he returned to Jerusalem, the Jews might try to kill him.

Jesus said he wanted to go and *wake* Lazarus up. The disciples thought that Jesus meant that Lazarus was just asleep. So they said that it was good for Lazarus to sleep so he could get well. But Jesus told them clearly that Lazarus was dead. He said that he was glad he wasn’t there. He knew what was going to happen. Jesus knew that when the disciples saw what he would do, that they would believe he was the One sent from God.

One of the disciples called Thomas said, “*Let’s go too - and die with Jesus.*” Thomas wanted them all to go with Jesus. But he thought that the Jews would kill them all. So Jesus and the disciples went to Bethany.



JOHN 11:17-32

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. 18 Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, 19 and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.

20 When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”

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213. **glory** - for people to see who Jesus really was and to praise and worship him for it

214. **province** - an area at that time that had a Roman governor

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<sup>23</sup> Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

<sup>24</sup> “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” <sup>28</sup> Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” <sup>29</sup> So Mary immediately went to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. <sup>31</sup> When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there.

<sup>32</sup> When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Jesus and the disciples arrived in Bethany. But when they got there, Lazarus had already been put in a tomb.<sup>215</sup> His body had been in the tomb for four days. There were a lot of people there. Bethany was very close to Jerusalem, so many Jews were there too.

Martha went out of the house to meet Jesus. She said that if Jesus had been there before, Lazarus would not have died. But then she said that Jesus could ask God to help and that God would help. Jesus told Martha that her brother would *rise again*. Jesus meant that he would bring Lazarus back to life. But Martha thought Jesus was talking about a time far in the future. She said, “*he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.*” Martha knew that God’s story described the end of time when all people that have died will rise again. God will judge them at that time. But that is not what Jesus was talking about.

Jesus said to Martha “*I am the resurrection<sup>216</sup> and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.*” Jesus was saying that he was the One who brings people back to life. He said that anyone who believed in him would never die. Martha said that she believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, the One who was sent to the world by God.

Martha went into the house to get Mary. She told Mary that Jesus wanted to see her. Mary went to where Jesus was. The Jews who were there followed Mary. Mary was crying and she said, “*Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.*” Mary thought that it was too late, even for Jesus, to save her brother.



<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a

.....JOHN 11:33-37.....

215. **tomb** - a stone room where dead bodies are kept; a big stone is put at the door to close it

216. **resurrection** - to come to life again after being dead

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.<sup>34</sup> “Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.”<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus wept.

<sup>36</sup> The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!”

<sup>37</sup> But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

Jesus saw Mary crying and he saw the Jews crying. He was angry and very sad. Jesus was sad because God does not want people to die. God made people in the beginning to have a real relationship with him forever. Jesus was angry because many people there did not believe that he could save Lazarus from death. Jesus asked where they had put the body of Lazarus.



JOHN 11:38-44

<sup>38</sup> Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.<sup>39</sup> “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

<sup>40</sup> Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?”<sup>41</sup> So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.<sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.”<sup>43</sup> Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!”<sup>44</sup> And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

Jesus arrived at the tomb. It was in a cave<sup>217</sup> with a stone over the door. Jesus told them to move the stone away. Martha said that the body had already been there for four days and so it would smell terrible. Jesus told her to remember something that he had told her before. He said that if she believed, she would see the glory of God. He meant that she would see God do something amazing. And when she saw what God had done, she would worship God.

They took the stone away from the cave. Then Jesus spoke to God, his Father. He thanked his Father for listening to him. He said that so the crowd could hear him. He wanted the people to know that God had sent him. Then he shouted<sup>218</sup> in a loud voice, “*Lazarus, come out!*” After Jesus called out, Lazarus came out of the tomb. Lazarus was wrapped<sup>219</sup> up in cloth.<sup>220</sup> When the Jews put a dead body in a tomb, they wrapped it in cloth first. Jesus told them to take the cloth off Lazarus and let him go.

Lazarus had been dead and Jesus had brought Lazarus back to life. He showed the people who he really was. Before, Jesus said he is the *life* and that he is the *resurrection*. He is the one who brings people back to life from death.

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217. **cave** - a room inside a stone area under the ground or next to a cliff

218. **shouted** - he called out in a loud voice

219. **wrapped** - to put material or cloth all over and around something

220. **cloth** - material or fabric that clothes are made out of

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John wrote about what happened next. Many Jews who were there saw what Jesus had done. Many of them believed that God had sent Jesus. But other people went to tell the Jewish religious leaders about it.



JOHN 11:45-54

<sup>45</sup> Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. <sup>46</sup> But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

<sup>47</sup> Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. “What are we going to do?” they asked each other. “This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. <sup>48</sup> If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.”

<sup>49</sup> Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about! <sup>50</sup> You don’t realize that it’s better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.”

<sup>51</sup> He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. <sup>52</sup> And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

<sup>53</sup> So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus’ death. <sup>54</sup> As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

The leaders of the priests and the Pharisees met together. When they met together, their group was called the high council. This was the highest court of the Jews, where important things were talked about. They were very worried about Jesus. They thought that everyone would believe in him. They did not want that to happen. They thought that people would make Jesus the King of the Jews. The Romans already had a king. So the Jewish leaders thought that the Romans would get angry and take away all their freedom. They decided that Jesus should die. If Jesus were dead, then the Romans would not destroy the Jewish nation.

Jesus knew what the Jewish leaders were saying about him. He knew that they planned to kill him. So he left the area of Jerusalem. He knew that it was not yet time for him to die.

Instead, Jesus traveled to a different area to teach the people there. We can read in God’s story about some of the things that Jesus taught. Mark wrote about one day when some people brought their children to Jesus.



MARK 10:13-16

<sup>13</sup> One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him.

<sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God

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belongs to those who are like these children. <sup>15</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

<sup>16</sup> Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

At that time, people brought their children to religious teachers. They wanted these men to put their hands on the children's heads. They wanted them to ask God to help their children. So that is why some people brought their children to Jesus. They thought of him as a Rabbi or Jewish religious teacher. They wanted him to ask God to help their children.

The disciples of Jesus did not want the people to bring their children to Jesus. They thought he had more important things to do. The disciples told the people to take their children away. But Jesus reprimanded his disciples. He said they should let the little children come to him. He used the children as an example. He said that people should come to God just like little children. He said that if they did not come to God that way, then they could not come at all. But what did he mean?

Jesus meant that people should love and trust God because he is their Father. They should have faith in God, just like a little child has faith in his father and mother. They should listen to what God says and trust him to take care of them. A little child knows that they need someone to take care of them. So Jesus was saying that people should love and trust God just like that. God is the one who made people. So God has authority over people's lives. God loves people and they can trust him to take care of them. God wants a very close relationship with people, just like a Father has with his child.

Mark wrote that Jesus took each child in his arms. Then he put his hand on their head and blessed<sup>221</sup> each one.

Soon after, Jesus was leaving to go to Jerusalem. A man ran up to speak to him. He knelt<sup>222</sup> down in front of Jesus and said, "*Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit<sup>223</sup> eternal life?*"



MARK 10:17-24

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good. <sup>19</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.'"

<sup>20</sup> "Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

<sup>21</sup> Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you

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221. **blessed** - he asked God to take care of them

222. **knelt** - went down on his knees

223. **inherit** - to get money, property or something from someone else after they die

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haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" <sup>24</sup> This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God.

Jesus asked the man, "*Why do you call me good? Only God is truly good.*"

Jesus knew what this man was thinking. God always knows everything that people are thinking. This man was a rich man. He was also a man who tried to follow all of God's laws. Jesus wanted the man to know that people cannot follow all of God's laws. He wanted this man to understand the truth about himself and about God.

The man thought that Jesus was just a religious teacher. He didn't know that Jesus was the Son of God. So when the man called Jesus "*Good Teacher*" he was saying that he thought that people can be good. But Jesus told him that only God is good. He meant that only God is perfect and that people are never perfect. Jesus talked about some of God's laws – about not killing anyone, not committing adultery, not stealing, not lying, and showing honor to your father and mother. God gave those laws to show people that they can't be perfect all the time. It is impossible to follow God's perfect laws. Jesus wanted this man to understand that.

But the man said to Jesus that he had always obeyed all of God's laws. Jesus loved this man. He wanted him to understand that it is impossible for a person to be perfect. Only God is perfect. So Jesus told the man that he should give all his money and things to poor<sup>224</sup> people. Then Jesus said that the man should follow him. The man was a rich man, and he did not want to give away all his things. The man went away very sad.

Jesus had told the man to give away all his things. He wanted the man to see that he had not followed all of God's laws. He was a rich man and other people were poor. So he had not cared for other people as much as he had cared for himself. He had disobeyed one of God's laws.

A little bit later, Mark wrote about another time that Jesus talked about God's laws. Jesus was answering a question from some religious experts. Jesus talked about which are the most important of God's laws.



MARK 12:30,31

<sup>30</sup> And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

The man thought that by following all of God's laws he could save himself. Jesus wanted him to see that wasn't possible. So he told him to do something that he knew the man would find hard to do.

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224. **poor** - not having very much money to live

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

He wanted the man to know that God's laws are perfect and that people cannot follow them. The man could not do anything to save himself. Only God is perfect. The man needed to understand that he needed God to save him.

After the man left, Jesus said something to his disciples. He said it was very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus meant that many rich people feel very happy with themselves. They have money and they have power. They can decide what they want to do. They tell other people what to do. It is very hard for people like that to come to God like little children. To *enter the Kingdom of God* means to understand that God is the one who takes care of you. He is the one who has authority over you. He is the only one who can rescue you. Jesus said that it is hard for rich people to understand that they need God to save them and to take care of them.

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1. Why did the Jewish religious leaders want to kill Jesus?
2. Did Mary and Martha understand who Jesus really was?
3. What lesson did Jesus teach about when he was with the little children?
4. Why did Jesus say that it is hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God?



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