



A PUBLIC PLOCLAMATION • Resurrection

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

John 11-12:3

Death

Death has plagued humanity ever since the Garden of Eden. It separates us from people we love and looms over our own lives like an intimidating spirit. In this chapter we'll see how Jesus reached out to a family struggling with the pain of death. He will show us why we need never fear death again.

The Story Begins

The movie *Mission Impossible III* starts with an intense scene. Tom Cruise is begging a man not to kill a girl. After that scene, the movie begins. Then, an hour and a half into the movie, we see that scene again. But now we understand it, because we know who is bound, who the bad guy is, and what's at stake.

John 11 starts with an intense scene as well. A woman named Mary is anointing Jesus' feet with fantastically expensive ointment and using her hair to dry them. We won't know who she is, or why she was there until John 12:3.

Verses 1-16 No-one Understands Jesus

The town of Bethany was only 1.7 miles from Jerusalem, and Jesus' disciples didn't want to go back there because of prior attempts on his life. They had no idea what Jesus was going to do.

When Jesus got news that Lazarus was sick, he immediately said, "This illness does not result in death" but then he waited two days. After those two days, he said "Let us go to Judea... Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep." Jesus waited until Lazarus was dead before beginning his trip. His disciples misunderstood him, even though he had already told them that Lazarus' illness would not end in death. That's reasonable, considering the fact that Lazarus was, in fact, dead.

Verses 17-32

Before Jesus got to the village, Martha came out to meet him. Notice how she greeted him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Then she called for her sister Mary. She greeted Jesus with the exact same words. They'd sent for Jesus. And he didn't come in time.

Notice how Jesus interacted with Martha and Mary. He was deeply moved in his spirit, and he wept. Even though he knew what he was going to do, he shared in their suffering.

What's the Big Idea?

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

What's the Problem?

We are often overwhelmed by tragedies.



Resurrection

When Jesus greeted Martha, he said, "Your brother will rise again." And this isn't the first time Jesus had talked about resurrection. In John 5:26-29 he taught:

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Moreover, Martha was Jewish, and Jews in the first century commonly believed in a future resurrection. But Jesus wasn't satisfied with Martha's response. He had more in store for her. He told her to focus on him, saying, "'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

"Lazarus, Come Out!"

Jesus went directly to the tomb. If you read the story carefully, you'll see that Jesus never even went to Mary and Martha's home. He went straight to the grave. Rabbis at this time taught that the spirit of a person hovered around his dead body for up to three days, trying to get back in, but departed permanently when the first sign of decomposition began. As Jesus approached the tomb that day, Lazarus' diseased, dead body had been entombed for four days. He paused for a short, public prayer. He wanted everyone there to understand that he is the Son of God. Then, with three words, he rose Lazarus from the dead.

The Aftermath

Verses 45-54 record the response of the Pharisees and Chief Priests. In a backroom they discussed the momentum for Jesus all over Judea. They felt threatened by Jesus, and they wanted him out of the way.

In contrast, (12:1-3), Jesus was enjoying a memorable meal with loved ones. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus finally got Jesus in their home. Martha served as Jesus talked with his friend Lazarus at the table. And Mary, moved to worship him, anointed his feet with perfume, and even wiped them with her hair.

What's Our Response?

You want to inspire your group with this story about Jesus' power over the grave, and encourage them to trust him in the midst of trials and temptations.

What Are the Questions?

John 11:12:3

LAUNCH

Have you ever had a family member or friend die? Did that death cause you to question God's love? Share if you can.

EXPLORE

Read 11:1-16.

1. How did Jesus respond when he learned that one of his friends was ill?
2. What prompted him to finally go to Bethany?
3. If Jesus loved Lazarus, why did he wait two days to help him?
4. What does verse 15 tell us about Jesus' purposes?

Read 11:17-27.

5. Did Martha have faith, doubt, or a mixture of both in this passage? How so?
6. Jesus said, "He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." What kind of life and death was Jesus referring to? How should Christ's statement alter our views of life and death?
7. How did Mary greet Jesus?
8. Do you see any evidence of Jesus' love for this family in this passage?

9. Jesus obviously knew what he was going to do, so why was he so deeply moved by Mary's grief?

10. What was the response of the crowd?

11. Where did all these events take place?

Read 11:38-44.

10. Imagine being at this scene. What would you think and feel?

11. If you were one of the disciples and you saw this happen, how do you think you would have reacted?

Read 11:45-55.

12. What are the various ways that people responded to this event?

Read John 12:1-3

13. In addition to the joy of having their brother back, what hope did this miracle give Mary and Martha? What hope does it give you and me?

14. Now consider question 3 again. Why do you think Jesus waited those two days?

APPLY

15. Have you ever felt abandoned by God in a great time of need?

16. Someone once said, "We don't always know all of God's purposes, but we can always take rest in His character." Do you agree? Why or why not?

17. Tombs were unclean places but Jesus went straight there and brought redemption. Where can he bring redemption to you?

18. How does knowing the power of Jesus to raise the dead impact the way you live your life?

What Are the Answers?

1. Jesus said, "This sickness will not lead to death." But then he waited until Lazarus died!
2. It appears that Jesus supernaturally knew when Lazarus died. As soon as that happened, he began to move toward the town of Bethany.
3. Discuss
4. Jesus wants those who follow him to believe in him and to trust in his power.
5. Martha had a mixture of faith and doubt. She believed in a future resurrection. She may have heard Jesus talk about that before. But she didn't expect Jesus to raise Lazarus on that day. She blamed him for being too late. And she warned him about the smell of the tomb.
6. There are two different Greek words for life. One is βίωσις. It implies existence and growth. We get the word biology from βίωσις. But the Greek word ζωή means more than that. It implies transcendent life. That's the word Jesus used here. It's the same word he uses in John 10:10. In this passage, Jesus is talking about eternal, meaningful life.
7. Mary and Martha both greeted Jesus in the same way. See vs. 21 and 32.
8. See vs. 5, 33-38, etc. Jesus loved them.
9. Jesus loved them, and he shared in their grief, even though he was about to bring great joy.
10. Discuss
11. Discuss
12. Martha and Mary rejoiced because of Jesus! Many Jews believed in Jesus. The Jewish leaders felt threatened by Jesus and determined to kill him.
13. This is an important question. Martha and Mary got Lazarus back, but they got much more too! They understood Jesus for Who He is. That's what Jesus was after all along.
14. Jesus didn't want to just heal Lazarus. He wanted to resurrect him from the dead. He wanted everyone to know his resurrection power.
15. Discuss
16. Discuss
17. Discuss
18. Discuss

Memorize

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." Do you believe this?

John 11:25-26