
THE BOOK OF JOHN

| Week Seventeen | The Journey

Day One : Jesus is Groaning to Himself

John 11:36-38 "Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it."

COMMENTARY: These seem to be words of genuine sorrow and sympathy. They thought it truly sad that even Jesus, in all His greatness, could do nothing for Lazarus at this point. "Suppose that Jesus is willing to open the eyes of the blind, and does open them; is he therefore bound to raise this particular dead man? If he does not see fit to do so, does that prove that he has not the power? If he lets Lazarus die, is it proven therefore that he could not have saved his life? May there not be some other reason? Does Omnipotence always exert its power? Does it ever exert all its power?" (Spurgeon)

Day Two: Jesus is Raising the Dead

John 11:39-44 "Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. 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 who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

COMMENTARY: Everybody thought this was a strange thing for Jesus to ask. After all, Martha knew Lord, by this time he stinketh (King James Version). People probably thought that Jesus was so taken with grief that He wanted one last look at His dear friend Lazarus. In any case, the condition of the body was an irrefutable confirmation of Lazarus' death. Jesus was fully capable of this miracle without the faith of Martha or Mary. But if they would not believe, then they would never see the glory of God. They could see the end result and be happy in that, but they would miss the glory of working together with God in the fulfillment of His plan. This was a definite and

Questions:

1. When it comes to what you think about when you think about God, what makes up your frame of reference? We encourage you to draw out the illustration from Sunday's message and help discover for yourself.
2. You heard the story of how God did something special for Darla, take a moment to think through some tough times in your life and see if you can't find moments where God did something special just for you to reveal that He was attached and near to you.

remarkable step of faith. Jesus compelled Martha and Mary to act on their faith and they did by obeying Jesus and His unusual request. We see that Jesus dealt with Martha according to steps deliberately intended to stretch and build her faith. Jesus likely had the traditional posture of prayer - hands raised, eyes open upwards as if looking towards heaven. Jesus was confident in His relationship with God the Father. The public nature of the prayer was for the sake of Mary, Martha, and the people who are standing by. The power of the prayer was rooted in the private prayer times of Jesus. Jesus simply called Lazarus out of the tomb. Others whom God used to raise dead bodies in the Scriptures often used far more elaborate procedures Jesus spoke to a dead body as if Lazarus were alive because He is God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. Jesus fought death at Lazarus' tomb, and plundered the grave. Jesus told death that He would soon completely conquer it completely. Lazarus was not resurrected, but resuscitated. He arose bound in grave-clothes, for he would need them again; Jesus left His grave-clothes behind in His tomb, never again having need of them. Jesus did not miraculously remove the grave-clothes from Lazarus, but He asked attendants to do so. Jesus did what only God could do, and then He looked for man's cooperation for the completion of Lazarus' deliverance.

Day Three: Jesus is Gaining Believers

John 11:45-48 "Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

COMMENTARY: Those who came to join in the sorrow of the grieving sisters did not expect that their reason for grief would be taken away. This was undeniably an impressive work of God,

and for many it helped them put their trust in who Jesus said He was by seeing what He did. John continues his persistent theme - that the words and works of Jesus divide humanity between those who believe and those who reject. There were some who saw both the power and sympathy of Jesus yet responded by working against Him. The religious leaders privately admitted that Jesus performed signs that authenticated His claim to be Messiah and God. As Jesus claimed, His works did bear witness of Him. Their opposition changed. First they opposed Jesus because they weren't convinced He was the Messiah. Now they opposed Jesus because they were convinced that He was the Messiah. They admitted the miracles, but look how they treated the Miracle-worker: The religious leaders knew the logical response to the witness of the works of Jesus was to believe in Him. They feared more and more would do so. There is a wonderful thought suggested by this phrase, if we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him - simply that left alone, Jesus shows forth His glory. As Jesus attracted more and more followers, the religious leaders feared that the Romans would regard it as a significant threat. Wanting especially to keep their power and prestige, they wondered how to deal with the problem of Jesus. Most commentators believe that our place refers to the temple. The religious leaders had made such an idol of the temple that they were willing to kill Jesus to preserve it.