

Journey of Faith

The Death of Death

John 11:1-44

Introduction: Dead Cat & Dying Words

A. Many are frightened by the word death itself.

Woody Allen-- "It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens."

B. Some Christians have difficulty with death theologically. (Do Christians mourn at the death of another Christian?)

C. John 11 is the final sign of the seven signs to prove Jesus' true identity:

1. Sign #1: Water to wine (John 2)
2. Sign #2: The heal of the Official's son (John 4)
3. Sign #3: Healing of the invalid at the pool of Bethesda (John 5)
4. Sign #4: Feeding the five thousand- (John 6)
5. Sign #5: Jesus walking on water- John 6)
6. Sign #6: Healing of the man born blind- (John 9)
7. Sign #7: Raising of Lazarus-(John 11)

(Read 11:1-16)

I. How Jesus Viewed Death

A. Jesus doesn't see the finality to death that many others do.

1. Yet, He doesn't rebuke the tears and wailing (In fact, he joins them)
 - Jesus illustrates His power over death
 - Jesus helps us understand the here-and-now of eternal life.

B. The common perception of death is: Satan's weapon of terror against human beings.
-**Hebrews 2:14,15**

Neil Simon-- who wrote *The Odd Couple* and *Barefoot in the Park*, was asked on the Dick Cavett Show whether making a lot of money concerned him. The studio went dead silent when Simon answered, "No...what does concern me is the fear of dying."

1. The sisters knew who to send for v.3
2. Jesus drags his feet
3. God will be glorified- v.4

II. Sleep

A. Some were uneasy about going back to the vicinity of Jerusalem- v.8

- Remember in John 5, the healing at Bethesda
- Remember in John 7, The Feast of Tabernacles
- Remember in John 8, Jesus claims to be God
- Remember in John 9, The healing of the blind man

But his hour was coming very near (He had no fear)

B. Jesus uses mystifying words: "Our friend Lazarus has **fallen asleep**; but I am going there to wake him up 11:11

1. When the disciples took that to mean that he was better and resting, he stated: "Lazarus is dead," he told them. "For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you might believe" 11:14-15

2. Thomas speaks up for the group and is prepared to die!

- This metaphor of sleep reminds me of the self-arranged funeral of **Sir Winston Churchill**

III. The Difference This Understanding Makes

A. When Jesus arrives on the scene He's met by Martha.

1. If only you had gotten here sooner-21-22

2. "Your brother will rise again" 11:23

3. Her response shows she thought he was referring to "the last day" rather than *that* day

B. The most critical part of this text:

1. "I am the resurrection and the life. 11:25-27

2. The story here? Jesus rather than Lazarus.

3. Lazarus' resurrection didn't depend on what Martha believed (Jesus already said he would raise him).

C. Jesus' question to Martha:

1. Do you believe in me?

2. Do you have faith that my power is greater than death?

3. Do you accept my lordship over all things?

D. Martha called her sister, Mary, and they went with Jesus to their brother's tomb.

1. Jesus was "greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved" by it (11:33).

a. He wasn't frightened by death

b. Lazarus became a victim of death

c. "Jesus weeps" (11:35)

d. His response is: Enough! No more!

2. In Jesus, Life wins over death

3. They go to the tomb

a. Jesus asked for the stone to be moved

b. Martha protested- 4 days had passed (11:39)

4. Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed- (Jesus does nothing without the Father)

a. They are calling people to life –

b. To a new life To a right-now life

c. Life with a quality it has never had before.

5. Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" (11:43)- It's good that Jesus remembered to be specific!

Conclusion

A. Death doesn't have the last word, life does.

1. Satan can't win- Death, where is your sting? Death, where is your victory?

• Before our story is finished, hear **Rev. 1:17,18**

2. It's like looking at the final scene first!

Remember: If you believe what Martha confessed, know that Christ's power is at work in you right now!

B. You're plugged into eternal life (purposeful)

1. Freed from the spiritual death that still holds people captive

2. The ones who haven't called upon the name of the Lord & haven't identified himself or herself as a Christian in the faith act of baptism need to know:

- The power that raised Lazarus can be present now to give -- **grace** sufficient for all your past, **strength** sufficient to all your current struggles, and **hope** sufficient for whatever may come.

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