

1. Sickness, Death, and the Love of God (11:1-16)
  - a. A loving relationship (1-3)
    - i. (1) Lazarus, the sick man
    - ii. (1a-2) Mary and Martha, the actual focus of this passage
    - iii. (3) They appeal to the Lord based upon His loving relationship with their family (cf. 3:16).
  - b. The Lord delays His coming (4-10)
    - i. Jesus states the purpose of Lazarus' sickness: the glory of God – "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God" (4a).
    - ii. Lazarus' sickness is not about him, but about the Son of God – "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (4b; cf. 1:1; Heb 1:1-2).
    - iii. In spite of Jesus' great love for Martha, Mary and Lazarus, Jesus remained for 2 days (5-7).
    - iv. Jesus redirects the disciples concern for physical safety by pointing to their need for spiritual safety "in him" (8-10).
  - c. Jesus explains the harsh reality of Lazarus' situation and His purpose for allowing it (11-15).
  - d. Thomas exhorts the disciples to follow Jesus at all costs (16).
    - i. Sickness in the Christian life is for the ultimate glory of God.
    - ii. When God delays in answering our requests for healing it should not be interpreted as God withholding His love from us.
    - iii. Christians must learn to seek God's glory in all circumstances, especially when those circumstances run counter to what we want.
    - iv. Illustration: Ray Edwards has embraced Parkinson's Disease as God's means to make him more Christ-like and more focused on Christ's mission.
2. Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life (11:17-37)
  - a. Jesus travels to Bethany (17-19)
    - i. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the grave for 4 days (17).
    - ii. Jesus was now 2 miles from Jerusalem, the place of His own coming crucifixion, burial, and resurrection (18).
    - iii. Many Jews had come to comfort Mary and Martha; Judaism required that the deceased be buried on the day of death; then followed six days of mourning (19).
  - b. Jesus' interaction with Martha (20-31)
    - i. Martha hears that Jesus is coming and goes out to meet Him, a show of her devotion to Him (20).
    - ii. Martha indirectly rebukes Jesus for His delay (21).
    - iii. Martha's statement of faith reveals that she sees Jesus as a prophet, rather than God Himself (22).
    - iv. Martha misunderstands Jesus' statement as referring to the final resurrection (23-24).
    - v. Jesus clarifies that He is both the resurrection and the life, and those who believe in Him will have a new quality of life (25) and live eternally (26).
    - vi. Faced with this new revelation of Jesus' identity, Martha expresses her faith in Jesus as the Son of God (27).
    - vii. Martha leaves Jesus outside town and goes back to the house to get Mary secretly, but the Jews follow (28-31).
  - c. Jesus' interaction with Mary (32-37)
    - i. Mary indirectly rebukes Jesus for His delay (32).
    - ii. Jesus was moved by Mary's grief and he wept with her and for her (33-35; cf. Isaiah 53:4; Heb 4:15).
    - iii. The Jews marveled at Jesus love for Lazarus (36; cf. Romans 8:35-39).
    - iv. Tragically, some of the Jews maligned Jesus among themselves (37).

3. The Resurrection of Lazarus (11:38-44)
  - a. Jesus confronts their unbelief (38-40)
    - i. Jesus is greatly disturbed by the unbelief of the Jews (38).
    - ii. Martha confronts the Lord by reminding Him that Lazarus had been dead 4 days and was in a state of decay (39).
    - iii. Jesus reminds Martha that those who believe He is the resurrection and the life will see the glory of God (40).
  - b. Jesus demonstrates that He is the resurrection and the life (41-44)
    - i. Jesus thanks God for having already heard His prayer (41; Hebrews 7:25).
    - ii. Jesus thanks God for always hearing Him; since God always hear Christ, God always hears the prayers of those who are in Christ (42).
    - iii. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out (43).
    - iv. Lazarus came forth wrapped from head to toe in graveclothes (44).
4. The Plan of God (11:45-57)
  - a. Many believed on Jesus, but the Sanhedrin conspired to kill Him (45-53).
    - i. Many who witnessed Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead believed on Him (45).
    - ii. The chief priests and Pharisees saw Jesus as a threat to their political power (46-48).
    - iii. Caiaphas, unwittingly prophesied that Jesus would die on Israel's behalf & for the whole world (49-53).
      1. Isa 53:11 "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."
      2. John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
  - b. Jesus avoided the Jews from that time to wait until His appointed time (54-57).
    - i. Jesus did not need to go up to Jerusalem to be purified, because He did not need purification (54-55).
    - ii. As the Jews prepared for Passover, they could not help but look for Jesus' appearance (56).
    - iii. The chief priests and Pharisees had commanded the people to deliver Jesus to them if they knew where He was (57).

Conclusion:

1. Have you allowed sickness to shake your confidence in God's love for you?
2. Are you enjoying life in Christ?
3. Are you taking comfort that Jesus sympathizes with you (Hebrews 4:15)?
4. Are you resting in God's sovereign control of all things (Romans 8:28)?
5. Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?