



The Dynamic Gospel Study Guide – Book of John

Chapter 11

1 A man was sick - had been for a while. His name was Lazarus from the town of Bethany. His sisters Mary and Martha also lived there.

2 (The sister Mary was to be renowned as the one who poured expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus. Having used her own hair to wipe His feet clean, she poured out her love for Jesus. She shared that same spirit with her brother.)

3 So Mary and Martha sent for Jesus, saying “Lord! If You haven't heard yet, Your dear friend is gravely ill.”

4 Jesus didn't mistake the importance of the message but He gave a curious reply. “This sickness isn't the killing kind. But watch closely! God's going to get the honor He deserves through it! It will rub off on God's Son, too.”

5 It was obvious to all that Jesus loved these dear friends of His.

6 Even after discussing the severity of Lazarus' illness, Jesus remained where we was for two more days.

7 Finally He said to His disciples, “OK - it's time to get moving to Judea again.”

8 The disciples of Jesus looked at each other and asked “are You sure that's such a good idea? You know the followers of the other rabbis will stone You on sight! And still You want to go?”

9 “How long is the day?” Jesus asked them. “Twelve hours, maybe? Get going early, or you'll be stuck out in the dark stumbling around. With the Light of the World to go by, you'll never stub your toe.

10 “If you notice someone stubbornly banging his knee on every obstacle, it's obvious he's in the dark. Inside and out, he's truly blind.”

11 After that teaching moment, Jesus returned to the subject of Lazarus. “Our friend has been sleeping long enough. It's time for Me to wake him up.”

12 The disciples, still trying to convince Jesus not to go, said “If he's sleeping, he probably needs the rest. Maybe we should leave him alone.”

13 Jesus, of course, was speaking gently of the death of Lazarus, as the disciples were shortly to understand,

14 for Jesus put it plain enough that the dumbest among them would get it: “Lazarus is dead,” He told them.

15 “And, frankly, I'm thrilled I wasn't there before it happened because of what is about to happen to your faith. But enough talk, already. Let's go to Lazarus without anymore delay.”

16 Thomas (the twin) spoke up. “Fine! If we're all going to die together, let's get on with it!”

17 So 'got on with it' they did. By the time they arrived, Lazarus was in fact dead and buried four days.

18 Bethany was not far from Jerusalem, maybe two or three miles...

19 It was close enough that many of the 'official' Jews came from the Temple to offer condolences to Mary and Martha.

20 As soon as Martha heard Jesus was near, she bolted from the house to meet Him, leaving her sister behind.

21 She hadn't even caught up to Jesus before she berated Him. "Where **were** You?? If You had been here my brother would still be alive. And now it's too late!!"

22 Martha caught herself and lowered the rhetoric. "But, I suppose, You still get anything You want from God, right? Right?"

23 Jesus leaned in close. "Your brother will be on his feet in no time."

24 Martha replied, "I understand about the Resurrection and all, but the Last Day is still a long, long way off, isn't it?"

25 Jesus replied with these words of authority: "Even the dead will stand up because of Me. I am the Resurrection you hope for. You'll really live if you believe in Me and don't give up. Even the stiffest corpse is no match for this kind of life!"

26 "Live in Me. Believe in Me. Do that and you can't die! Do you understand what I'm saying? Do you accept it?"

27 Martha breathed deep and said slowly, "Yes, yes I do. You rule all of this. I believed in You from the beginning; I believe You now. You **are** the One God sent - the only One He **will** send."

28 Having made this confession, Martha withdrew quietly and went to her sister, saying "the Master has arrived and would like to see you."

29 Upon hearing the news, Mary rushed just as fast as Martha had to Jesus.

30 This all happened at the city gates. Jesus hadn't even made it into town, yet.

31 Seeing Mary's outpouring of emotion and hasty departure, all the official mourners in her house rose to follow, thinking she was rushing back to the grave of her brother to resume the traditional lament.

32 Instead, she ran straight to Jesus and threw herself at His feet, calling out the same complaint as her sister. "My brother would not have died if You had arrived in time!"

33 When Jesus saw all the outpouring of genuine agony, echoed by all the traditional mourners, it truly touched Jesus' heart. He wept right along with them.

34 When Jesus could speak again he asked "where is his tomb?" "We'll show You," they said, leading the way.

35 Jesus wept the whole way.

36 The other mourners could see it was no act - this Jesus really felt deeply for their friend.

37 "If only He had been here earlier," they lamented. "Maybe He could have saved Lazarus! He's a healer of the blind, after all!"

38 By the time they all reached the tomb, Jesus was sobbing. He approached the stone that sealed the mouth of the cave.

39 Jesus said to the crowd "Move the stone immediately!" They were all shocked. Martha, being practical said quietly "Lord! He's been in the tomb four days. I don't think we could bear the smell."

40 Jesus looked straight at her, all passion and fire. "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see God's glory with your own eyes?"

41 So they did as Jesus demanded, pushing the stone aside. Jesus raised his face to Heaven and prayed out loud. "Father, thank You that You hear Me.

42 "I know You always have and always will listen when I call. But I'll say this out loud for the benefit of those assembled so they'll understand that You sent Me."

43 Having prayed, Jesus faced the tomb and practically screamed "Lazarus! Come out of there!"

44 And out he came. Still bound in the wrappings of death, stood the one they never thought they'd see again. "Cut him loose!" Jesus called. "Get him away from this place of death."

45 The official mourners and religious types had no idea this was coming. They saw what Jesus did with their own eyes. Many began to believe in their own hearts.

46 Some of the witnesses quickly brought news of the latest Jesus miracle straight to the Fundamentalist religious thought police.

47 The Temple politicians and the Fundamentalists quickly gathered to discuss the developments. "What are we going to do? It seems the man is actually performing verifiable miracles!

48 "If we let Him get away with it, everyone will soon be following Him and Him alone! Then the Romans will throw us aside as useless. What will become of Israel then?"

49 No one spoke up until Caiaphas, who happened to be High Priest that year. "You just don't get it, do you?" He asked with disgust.

50 "You haven't considered the simplest answer of all, and the most expedient. Let one man die so everyone else doesn't have to. What's a single person compared to a nation?"

51 As High Priest, the spirit of prophecy was upon him and he told them exactly what was to happen; that Jesus would, in fact, die for all the people.

52 And not only for the nation called Israel, but for every last child of God, no matter how far or scattered. All could be gathered back into one people.

53 So the religious leaders locked it in their heads that murder was the only way to resolve the crisis. It was the final solution.

54 Jesus made it a point from then on to go about His work discreetly. He traveled to the remote area around the village of Ephraim and camped with His students there.

55 When the Passover celebration came around again, as usual people from every corner of the country headed to Jerusalem for the ritual purification ceremonies.

56 Every eye was peeled for Jesus. All the talk on the streets and in the Temple concerned whether Jesus would show up this time.

57 Both the Temple politicians and the religious police passed laws demanding that every citizen snitch on Jesus and his followers. It was now criminal to even keep one's mouth shut. The authorities intended to take Jesus at all costs.

Explain the Context:

From your reading provide a short answer to the following:

What is the theme of this chapter?	What is the BIG Idea?
What is something that surprised you?	What is this chapter <i>not</i> saying?

Take a moment to consider these questions:

- 1) If you're familiar with this story, read through the chapter slowly. What new insights can you see that you haven't seen before?
- 2) Jesus says that Lazarus has "fallen asleep" when referring to his friend's death. Does this description of death bring comfort to you? Why or why not?
- 3) Why do you think John thought it important to note the closeness of Bethany to Jerusalem?
- 4) Martha seems to believe that Jesus could have healed her brother – why do you think she struggled to believe that Jesus could raise him from the dead?
- 5) What is the significance of Lazarus being dead for 4 days?

- 6) In verse 33 John says that Jesus was angry in his spirit. What do you think angered Him?

- 7) John notes the complaints of the crowd. How does Jesus respond as He approached the tomb? Why do you think He reacted this way?

- 8) After hearing what Jesus did, why did the Pharisees think the Romans would remove them from power?

- 9) How did God use Caiaphas to bring about His plans?

- 10) Ephraim means “fruitful” in Hebrew. Do you see any significance for Jesus spending time there before His final Passover?

Apply the Scripture

Write the verse that stood out to you while reading [in this translation or your favorite].

How does this verse challenge you? Does it reveal an attribute of God's character?

For further study:

- Isaiah 53
- John 12:3
- John 8:12
- Matthew 5:14
- Exodus 11 & 12