

Carey Baptist Church – 06th of Oct 2024

Today we are looking at the Gospel according to St: John Ch:11 V:17-27 – Raising of Lazarus. One of the last miracles performed by our Lord Jesus where only John records out of the 6 mentioned in his gospel.

There are lots of details in here, but let's take in little by little.

Let's look at the Word of God from verse 17 to 27 and see what the Lord is teaching us this morning.

“So, when Jesus came, HE found that he (Lazarus) had been in the tomb for four days already” (v. 17). There is a belief among the Jews that when someone dies the soul remains hovering the body for three days. The reason is the hope of re-joining the body. Then the belief is after 03 days when the body starts to decompose, the soul realises that the hope of re-joining is no more, and the person is dead and then departs. John records that Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days which tells us that there is no way of his soul re-joining his body. This is written in the Bible to confirm to the reader that Lazarus was dead for sure.

Also, worth noting when John states that Jesus *found* that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days, he does not mean that Jesus was surprised to hear that it had been four days as our Lord already knew that Lazarus was dead.

“Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away” (v. 18). That's about 1.7 miles (2.8 km) away from Jerusalem. This is not a far distance place from where the Lord was, but you begin to realise now why Lord Jesus stayed until three days have passed.

“Many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother” (v.19). This shows the love of the community for this family or for each other. I trust that we could learn the love of Christ in this verse that to be there for each other in their need. Not seen much funeral houses in this country, but when there is a funeral in Sri Lanka, there are loads of people in that house (even throughout the night) that the neighbours and the community keep providing food & drinks so that the grieving family would not need to worry but would have the time to grieve and receive the comfort from the rest.

“Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house” (v. 20). The fact that Martha

goes to meet Jesus and Mary stays at home with the mourners shows a similarity of Martha being an active role in Luke 10.

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died” (v. 21). The words Martha speaks here are quite scrutinized. Some scholars treat these words of rebuke. Is Martha reproaching Jesus for not leaving Jerusalem immediately or is she simply expressing her grieving heart? I trust it’s the latter. Why I say that is, that Martha does not ask the Lord why HE did not come but clearly states that if Jesus had been there. Shows the humble sadness.

Also (as noted above in the comments on verses 5-6), Lazarus died soon after the messenger departed to inform Jesus of his illness. Martha knows that Jesus could not have arrived in time to prevent Lazarus’ death, even if he had started his journey immediately upon receiving word of his friend’s illness.

“Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you” (v.22). Martha expresses faith that God will give Jesus whatever he asks, but in v.39 she will protest the removal of the stone because of the stench of death. Like most of us, she believes and fails to believe.

“Your brother will rise again” (v.23). Jesus tells Martha that Lazarus will rise again, but Martha hears this as a cliché (v.24). Kind of like, that, *“yes, yes we know that he will rise again in the resurrection, but the gruesome reality is that he is dead now.”*

“I am the resurrection and the life” (v.25). This *is* the crux of the matter this morning. Notwithstanding the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, it is much more importantly the revealing of our Lord Jesus **being** the resurrection and life. Isn’t it awesome that few days earlier this same Jesus said these amazing words after healing a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years at the Sheep Gate pool, The scripture records it in John 5: 25 & 28. Let me read that out to you – Jesus said, *“Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out”* Now Jesus provides the assurance to Martha of that promise which would be realised soon. Hearing the voice and the commandment of the Son of Man! I trust that was the reason Jesus said the name *“Lazarus, come out!”*. If HE had just said come out, then all the dead would have come out of the tombs,

not only in Bethany but everywhere. This is the power of the Lord who we serve.

When HE said “I am the resurrection” this is one of the many “I am” statements by Jesus in the Gospel of John. This reveals the true nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the bread of life (6:35) and the light of the world (9:5). When HE declared that HE is the resurrection, and the life, that is the top-notch point of the “I am” statements. “I AM,” of course, the Name of God which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. Therefore, at this specific scene, Jesus reveals that HE is God HIMSELF.

“He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” The response from Martha at this question is remarkable!

She says - **“Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”** (v.27). It’s a threefold statement of faith. Look at it very carefully, *one* - Jesus is the Messiah, *two* – Jesus is the Son of God and *three* -Jesus is the one coming into the world. This is **the** Gospel in a nutshell!

And I am pleased to declare this morning that, all of us or at least most of us have now know, through our experience / relationship with the Lord, that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus is the Son of God where we all await eagerly for the third and the final declaration of Martha, for the glorious appearing of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ coming in HIS Glory to rapture the HIS Church and we all will be caught up in the clouds.

Come Lord Jesus. Amen.