

When Jesus Came

John 11:17-27



Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe
731-845-6104

online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL (John 11:17-27 KJV) "Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. {18} Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: {19} And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. {20} Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. {21} Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. {22} But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. {23} Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. {24} Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. {25} Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: {26} And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? {27} She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

We Must Go To Jesus For Comfort

Today we are coming together because something happened that is *strange, shocking, and foreign* to each of you. For some of you this is the first time this strange thing has come so close. For others, you have been in its presence before, but you still feel its strangeness. The thing that brought many of you here is that phenomenon we call *death*. Many people came to Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus passed from this life. The Bible tells us:

FOCAL (John 11:19-20 KJV) "And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. {20} Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Many people came to comfort Mary and Martha, just as many loved ones came to comfort you in your grief. I don't want to take anything away from the loving response of family and friends at this time of grief. The Bible tells us to love one another, and recommends that we comfort one another when we sorrow. This is a good thing, and we praise God for every friend who said kind words and who loves us in this time of our loss. Friends came to Mary and Martha when Lazarus died, but these sisters came to Jesus to find real relief. What a friend may say to you in times like these is blessed if it come from a heart of love, but only Jesus can help us through this time in our lives.

Our Lord Jesus was well acquainted with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He had been to their house many times in His earthly ministry. He had eaten many meals with them, enjoyed teaching them, had perhaps slept under the cover of their roof.

"This affectionate trio were all lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and were frequently favored with His company. They kept open house whenever the Great Teacher came that way. Both for the Master and for the disciples there was always a table, a bed, and a candlestick in the prophet's chamber, and sometimes

sumptuous feasts were prepared for the whole company. They were very happy, and rejoiced much to think that they could be serviceable to the necessities of one so poor, and yet so honored as the Lord Jesus. "¹

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus believed in Jesus even when His own brothers doubted Him. They believed that He was - as His cousin John the Baptist stated - **the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world**². This was a sickness that no physician could cure. Mary and Martha just knew that Jesus would come, that He would heal their brother Lazarus. So they sent for Jesus, and prayed for their brother. Prayers - sincere prayers - went up to God that He would quickly send the Savior. Surely Jesus would come!

Then the unthinkable happened. Their brother Lazarus died, and a mourning family lay his body in the grave. It was all over, it was too late! Four days passed - then the sisters looked up to see Jesus coming.

Answering The Whys of Death

Why did Jesus wait to go and see His friend Lazarus? The Bible tells us that **Jerusalem and Bethany were a little less than two miles apart**³. Jesus and His

¹ C.H. Spurgeon, *A Mystery! Saints Sorrowing, and Jesus Glad*

² **John 1:29-30** New Living Translation Holy Bible. New Living Translation copyright © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust. "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Soon a man is coming who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before I did.'"

³ a furlong is between 1/8 to 1/10th of a mile. Fifteen furlongs was not very far

disciples were all strong men. They could have walked this distance in just a few hours. In fact, Jesus had proved many times in His earthly ministry that He did NOT need to go and touch someone to heal them.

Illustrate A *centurion*, an important military leader, once came to Jesus to have his servant healed⁴. Jesus quickly agreed to go and heal the servant, but the centurion told our Lord:

"... just say the word, and my servant will be healed .."⁵

and that was what Jesus did. He just *spoke* and that servant was healed - the Bible says - *that very hour*. Jesus didn't have to go to Bethany to heal Lazarus - He could have commanded his healing, just as He commanded many other healings, and Lazarus would not have met physical death. Yet Jesus stayed in Jerusalem - and Lazarus died. This thing did *not* happen because Jesus was powerless - for He had the power to heal, mighty power to heal. Yet our Lord *did not command* that Lazarus be healed. He allowed this man whom He called *friend* to meet physical death. He allowed Mary and Martha to grieve.

Why did this happen? Did Lazarus die because Jesus *didn't love him*? Did he die because Jesus *didn't care*? No, because the Bible tells us that Jesus ...

**"... loved Martha, and [Mary], and Lazarus."
(John 11:5 KJV)**

and Jesus knew the very moment that Lazarus died - for He told His disciples before they ever left Jerusalem that ...

**"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,
but I go to awaken him." (John 11:11)⁶**

In fact, the Bible records that one of the few times our Lord wept was when He viewed Lazarus' grave. In the smallest verse in the Bible, **John 11:35**, we read that **"Jesus wept"**. Our Lord loved Lazarus deeply, just as He loves each of you deeply (**John 11:36**). He did not allow Lazarus to die because of a lack of love, nor from an insensitivity to Lazarus and the life that he lived.

Most of you just have a dim image, a small idea of how much the Lord loves you. We have all as children in Bible school said that wonderful and comforting Scripture found in **John 3:16**. That blessed verse says - say it with me if you can -

(John 3:16 KJV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

These are words of life, words of *eternal life*. Jesus loved Lazarus, loved him deeply, and yet He allowed that dear

away.

4 see **Matthew 8:5-13**

5 **Matthew 8:8** New International Version (NIV), Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society

6 English Standard Version (ESV), The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

man to meet physical death. It was *not lovelessness* that caused Jesus to wait until Lazarus met physical death. **It was not because He does not love you that death comes to us all, in time. His love for you is infinite. He gave Himself for you so that you can have eternal life. Eternal life cannot exist in this shell we call a human body, for this shell is temporary, fragile, subject to this thing we call physical death.** Unless God intervenes and removes you from this earth as He did with His prophet Elijah⁷, or with the Saint Enoch⁸, each and every one of us will meet *physical death*. It may seem strange, but it is a natural part of this life. This body must be left behind before we enter into eternity.

Notice that Martha - when she finally met Jesus - responded to her brother's death in the same way we all respond to death. **There is a tendency to blame oneself, or to blame God when we see physical death face to face.** All pastors have heard *many times* people saying the same thing that Martha said when she saw Jesus:

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died". John 11:21⁹

We question God when death comes. We ask "God,

7 **2 Kings 2:11** (New International Version) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society "As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind."

8 **Hebrews 11:5** (New Living Translation) copyright © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust. "It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying--"suddenly he disappeared because God took him." But before he was taken up, he was approved as pleasing to God."

9 Contemporary English Version (CEV), Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society

where were You? Why did this happen? Couldn't You have fixed this? Couldn't **I have done something to have stopped this?**" Please, do not blame yourselves for death. Physical death comes to us all because - quite frankly - this life is not all there is. Jesus reminded Martha, just as He reminds us today, that *this life* was never intended to be permanent. The Bible says in **James 4:14**:

"our life is a bit of smoke, a vapor, that appears and then quickly vanishes".

This life was not meant to be all there is. This life is temporary, fleeting, just like smoke from a campfire. But there is *another life beyond this life*, an *eternal life* that is offered to all who will believe in Jesus Christ - all who will come to Him and accept Him as Lord and Savior. Jesus told Martha as she grieved:

FOCAL **"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live."**
(John 11:25)¹⁰

Illustrate Not too long ago I met a man who was - according to him and his wife - around 103 years old. He and his wife had been married for *over 70 years*, and even now live together loving one another. Before I left his room that dear man looked at me and said that he *looked forward* to the day when he could leave this life and meet his Jesus. Unlike many people who do not know Jesus Christ, this dear man knew Him and is excited about meeting Him one day soon in eternity.

10 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 by Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville Tennessee.

Was Lazarus dead? He was *dead* in the sense that his body was without life. But that part of Lazarus that believed in Jesus lived on in a place we can only dream of. Here is the important part, Beloved. **Lazarus never died. That part of him that - even outside of the body - was Lazarus yet lived.** Jesus told Martha in **John 11:26:**

"Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die - ever. Do you believe this?"⁷

What Jesus said that day was a promise that applies to each and every person who believes on Jesus Christ for salvation. When death comes to us we are reminded that - in spite of all our pride, in spite of all our ingenuity, in spite of all we think we know - in truth we are unable to offer what Jesus Christ offers us. **We have never found the fountain of youth, nor have we ever developed a pill or a transplant that will make death go away. The only way we can defeat death is to rely on Jesus,** for Jesus Christ is the only Person who has proved to all that He has power over death. Jesus not only said **"Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die - ever"** - Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to prove that what He promised was and will ever be true.

The Bible tells us:

(2 Corinthians 5:6-8) "We are sure of this. We know that while we are at home in this body we are not with the Lord. Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us. We are sure we will

be glad to be free of these bodies. It will be good to be at home with the Lord."¹¹

Today you grieve the loss of your mother, your wife, your grandmother, your aunt, or your friend. But **this dear lady told me that she accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior.**

FOCAL (John 11:26 KJV) "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Jesus tells us **"Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die - ever"**. This dear lady may not be with us now. She has left this life, but if she accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior then she lives on with Him in eternity. Her physical body is an object that was given to her for this time only, but she is now face to face in eternity with Jesus Christ. **And, dear Ones, if you ever want to see her again, then you must come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.** The Bible tells us that we are all imperfect - that we are all sinners. When Jesus our Lord walked on this earth He didn't stay around *self righteous* people. He didn't stay in the presence of the Pharisees and the rich. Jesus went where *common sinners were*, and told them that He loved them. More than that, He showed them that He loved them. One day some people asked Him why He spent so much time with regular, common people. Jesus said:

(Matthew 9:12) "When he heard this, Jesus replied,

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (New Life Version) Copyright © 1969 by Christian Literature International

"Healthy people don't need a doctor--sick people do."¹²

We're all born *temporary*, subject to physical death. We are also *all born sinners* - but Jesus has provided a remedy for us. Our remedy is to *turn to Jesus*. We read in **Romans 10:8-10¹³**:

"... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

This dear sister is not *gone*, but she is in another *place* outside of *time*. She is now in eternity with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We grieve her absence, but we do not believe her *gone forever*. This is not what Jesus has promised you, nor is it what He promised her. Again, **everyone** - and that includes her, you, and I - **who lives and believes in Jesus will never die**.

Jesus proved what He said by going to Lazarus' tomb and, with loving compassion He called Lazarus from that tomb. This brother had lay in the grave for four days. But now life was returned to him by the Giver of Life, Jesus Christ. By accepting the *amazing Grace* of God, by believing in Jesus for salvation, Fran is with our Savior today. She is not *dead*, but she is alive - more alive than she has ever been in this life. She is not *gone*, but she is

in *eternity* with the Savior. Do you wish one day to join her? Physical death is *certain*, my friends, but *eternal life* is also *certain* if you turn to Jesus.

Jesus calls for you. C.H. Spurgeon wrote:

"Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." "Whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." Calls he not for you, too, in this text, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"? Calls he not for you in this verse, where he bids all that labor and are heavy-laden come unto him, that they may rest; or in that other, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as snow." He calleth for thee. Do not disbelieve him. It is certainly matchless grace, but he is a God and none is like unto him. "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his thoughts above your thoughts." But does your heart say, "Why, if I thought Jesus called for me, I would come"? Then he does call thee; that speech of thine, "I would come," proves it; 'tis he that makes thee feel willing. Dost thou long for him? Oh! he is putting his hand in at the door of thy heart, and making thy bowels yearn for him. Does a tear drop on the floor, and do you say, "It cannot be that such a one as I should ever live and be saved, and be Christ's"? Why, thy very admiration at his grace shows that some of his grace is at work upon thee. Trust thou that that

¹² New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible. New Living Translation copyright © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust.

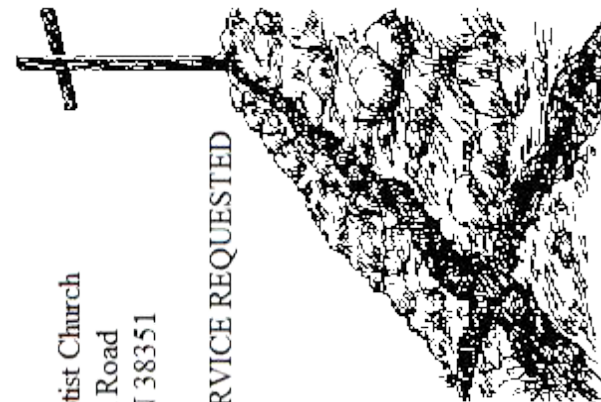
¹³ New American Standard Bible (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

arm can save; trust thou that that pierced hand can grasp thee; trust thou that that heart that was gashed with a spear can feel for thee. Trust thyself wholly to him. "Go thy way; thy sins which are many are forgiven thee." If thou hast trusted him, thou art saved. "

The Lord promises the family that:

Psalms 30:5 (KJV) "... weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

You will mourn our sister's passing - but if you allow Jesus fully into your life, your mourning will be shorted. He will step into that empty place where you now feel loss, and He will give you peace¹⁴. Come to Jesus - and He will give you rest! May God bless your heart with these words.



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, TN 38351

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

¹⁴ **2 Thessalonians 3:16** (Contemporary English Version) Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society, **"I pray that the Lord, who gives peace, will always bless you with peace. May the Lord be with all of you."**