

# *The Gospel of John*

## *11:17-37*

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.  
As with this study and all bible studies, remember to pray before you start.

Last week we started the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.  
This week we continue on with the story.

✎ **John 11:17-20** *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.*

Remember last week we read that after Jesus was told about Lazarus, that He waited two days before leaving. Now here it is four days after that, that Lazarus had been dead. If you think about it, if it took Jesus two days to reach Bethany, then it must have taken the messengers the same amount of time to reach Jesus. So by the time they reached Jesus and told Him about Lazarus' sickness, it's very possible that Lazarus had just died.

So even if Jesus did leave right away, like we discussed last week, Lazarus would have been dead for two days by the time Jesus got there.

✎ *And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

When I read this, the first thing I thought of is, I wonder if the Jews were really concerned about Martha and Mary, or did they know that they were friends of Jesus, and they were really waiting for Jesus to come to help them?

Also it was four days since Lazarus had died and people were still mourning. Actually for the Jews mourning happened for seven days, and friends would hire professional mourners to come and wail and cry for the person who was dead.

Another interesting note is, if the parable that Jesus told about Lazarus and the rich man is this actual story, then the rich man had just died as well. If the rich man had died, then why were there so many people mourning for a poor beggar named Lazarus? Once again because they knew that Jesus would show up, and they wanted to see what He would do.

It just goes to show you that if you have all the world's riches and die. No one cares. But if you have Jesus and you die (or fall asleep as it is for Christians), the memory of Jesus lingers on.

✠ *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.*

Martha hears that Jesus has shown up, and she leaves all her family and friends in the middle of their mourning for her brother, to go see Jesus. But Mary just waited there at home; I wonder what was going through Mary's mind at this time?

Was she upset with Jesus?

Was she going to give Him the silent treatment?

Has she given up on Jesus?

Maybe she thought that Jesus betrayed her. After all, she called for Him, but it seemed Jesus came to late.

*"God you're to late, I lost my car, my home, my family, my friends, my job, my marriage, my \_\_\_\_\_?"*

✠ **Mark 8:36** *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

But as we will see, God is never late, He comes through at just the right time so that He will be glorified and you will receive an even bigger blessing, like we talked about last week.

So Martha runs out to see Jesus and her first words are words of discouragement.

✠ **John 11:21** *Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."*

How many times have you become discouraged with the Lord? Maybe it seemed like He had forgotten about you, or had more important things to do then answer your prayers.

*"OK, Steve, I really don't want to hear this. You just don't know what I've been through. God has let me down. Why should I trust Him?"*

First off, you're right, I don't know what you are going through, but God does!

The only way God could have let anyone down is by taking Jesus away from this earth before He could die for our sins. But He didn't, God allowed His only Son, Jesus, to die for you and me and everyone else in the world. When we put our eyes on the physical things of this world, including people, we tend to think that God has let us down. When we don't get what we think we need or want, then we say that God has let us down.

Sure there are situations that I can't answer and only God can answer. But if you trust God for your eternity, why can't you trust Him for the present, regardless of what has happened or is going on right now?

So as I was saying, Martha runs out to see Jesus, and her first words are words of discouragement. You know what it's like when you are upset with someone, you run up to them, not with your head hung low, but rather looking them right in the eyes ready to

let them have it. That's what Martha was doing, but as she looks into the eyes of Jesus, she changes her tune, or should I say her heart was changed.

☞ **John 11:22** *"But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."*

When we look at the physical, we see the impossible, but when we look into the eyes of Jesus, we see the possible.

✠ **Matt 19:26** *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

So how do we look into the eyes of Jesus? By reading His word.

It seems Martha knew this by the words that she spoke to Jesus. She knew that Jesus as a man could do nothing, but Jesus as the Messiah and in God's will, could do anything. The only problem was that Martha was unsure of what God would do. After all, her brother had been dead now for four days. What could God possibly do?

☞ **John 11:23** *Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

Pretty straight answer if you ask me, but when would he rise again, that's what Martha wanted to know.

☞ **John 11:24** *Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

Remember last week and we saw when we first met Martha and Mary in the bible. Remember how Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to Him teach, but Martha was busy serving.

✠ **Luke 10:40-42** *But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

I wonder (and scripture doesn't tell us) if after this that Martha sat and listened to Jesus teach? I say this because of her response to Jesus *Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* She must have heard this from Jesus' teachings. So Jesus responded to these words of faith in the resurrection.

☞ **John 11:25-26** *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Other religions do not teach the resurrection or even life. They teach death and what you will have after you die. Christianity is all based on the resurrection and life, not death. The only death we should experience is the death of our old selves and a new life in Jesus Christ. Even throughout the New Testament, it refers to those believers who have fallen asleep, not died.

† **1 Cor 15:20** *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

*The firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*, not those who have died, because we will all be changed and live with Jesus in heaven, whether we have fallen asleep or if we are here when the rapture happens (Which would be awesome!!!).

† **1 Thess 4:13-18** *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

I remember when my dad fell asleep over twenty years ago, sure I cried and was broken hearted, but I was also comforted in the knowledge that I would see him again in heaven. *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

The ultimate question is ***"And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

You may have read through all the studies here, through all the devotionals. Maybe you have read through the whole bible. Jesus is asking you ***"Do you believe this?"*** Speaking of His words. What will be your answer to Him?

✠ **John 11:27-31** *She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."  
And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."*

Martha was excited because Jesus was here, and she knew that something great was going to happen. Even if her brother Lazarus wasn't raised from the dead, she was still excited because Jesus was there.

We tend to think that people need so many things of this world to be happy, and we try to give them to them in the name of the Lord. I do understand that there are many needs out there, and we should be ministering to those needs. But sometimes people just need the comfort of a friend being there for them, or even more so, the comfort that the Lord is with them.

Some try to find comfort in shopping, some in alcohol or drugs, some in sex, some in work, some in money, some in TV or movies, some in books, some in social media, some even try to find comfort in religion. But they find out that it is all a temporary and false comfort that fades away quickly.

The only true comfort comes from the Lord. Jesus even told us that he would send us the Comforter or the Holy Spirit.

✠ **John 16:7** *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

And the comfort that the Holy Spirit gives is through the word of God.

✠ **Psalms 119:49-51** *Remember the word to Your servant,  
Upon which You have caused me to hope.  
This is my comfort in my affliction,  
For Your word has given me life.  
The proud have me in great derision,  
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.*

So Martha is all excited and goes and tells Mary.

✠ *And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."*

So if Martha was so excited, why did she call for Mary secretly?

I believe it was to protect Jesus, because as we learned the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, and the disciples were worried about Jesus returning because they feared for His life. Martha knew this also, so she didn't want others to know that Jesus was around.

So Mary now gets excited because Jesus was in town.

✠ *As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.*

So she goes and runs to where Jesus was, leaving everything behind, because she knew that she could find comfort in Jesus.

But she didn't leave alone, at least not by her own choice.

✎ *Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."*

The Jews didn't know at this point that Jesus was in town; they just assumed that Mary was going to the tomb to weep for her brother Lazarus.

✎ **John 11:32** *Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."*

When you read this you may think that Mary was just as discouraged as Martha was, in fact, they both said the very same thing the first time they saw Jesus.

✎ *Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*

But Mary's were not words of discouragement or anger, no they were words of a broken heart. How do we know this? By one thing different between the two accounts. Did you see it?

### *She fell down at His feet*

Remember Martha was ready to tell Jesus off as she ran up to Him all discouraged, but not Mary. She wasn't disappointed in Jesus, but was hurting because her brother was gone, and she wanted Jesus to make that hurt go away.

You can tell when someone is really hurting when they pray verses when they are making a show of their prayer.

† **Luke 18:9-14** *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

What has your prayer life been like lately? Have you been standing boldly before God making your demands and giving Him your shopping list? Have you been telling God all the great things you have been doing and how He should bless you because of them?

† **Heb 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

We quote this verse and say that we must come before God's throne boldly, but we seem to miss why, which is the second part of the verse.

† *That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

We don't come boldly asking for things and bragging on ourselves, that's what the Pharisee did. No, we should come boldly seeking God's grace and mercy just as the tax collector did.

☩ **John 11:33-34** *Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."*

When my little girl, was 18 months old, she was very compassionate (and she still is). If she saw another baby cry, she will start crying. That's kind of what was going on here. The word "groaned" means that the Lord was deeply moved. Also the word "troubled" means: "He troubled Himself;" referring probably to this visible difficulty of repressing His emotions. Just imagine the scene, Mary is there at Jesus' feet crying because she is broken hearted. All her friends show up and they are all crying. Jesus sees all of this and asks, "*Where have you laid him?*" So they take Jesus to where Lazarus is buried.

☩ **John 11:35** *Jesus wept.*

Remember that Jesus was God come in the flesh, but He was also a man. And being a man, Jesus had the same emotions that we have. Here Jesus' friend, Lazarus died, and even though Jesus was about to raise Him from the dead, He still cries. It's not a bad thing to cry, and men, if Jesus can do it, so can we. He wasn't ashamed of His tears or His emotions of love for a friend.

☩ **John 11:36-37** *Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"*

Don't we sound like these Jews sometimes?

*"Jesus, if you had been there, everything would have been all right."  
"Jesus You didn't give me the money, or the job, or the husband or wife, or the raise, or the food or the \_\_\_\_\_ that I needed. Now everything is messed up."*

But next week we will see that Jesus had something better in mind than just healing Lazarus, just as He has something better in mind for you.

Well that's it for this week; we'll just have to leave Lazarus there in the tomb for one more week.

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you not doubt what He is doing in your life, even though you may not understand it right now.