

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

9-10-25

John 11

A Request Is Brought To Jesus – Verses 1-3

¹ Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

11:1 The village of Bethany was located about two miles east of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. It was near enough to Jerusalem for Jesus and the disciples to be in danger, but far enough away so as not to attract attention prematurely.

11:3 As their brother grew very sick, Mary and Martha turned to Jesus for help. They believed in his ability to help because they had seen his miracles. We, too, know of Jesus’ miracles, both from Scripture and through changed lives we have seen. When we need extraordinary help, Jesus offers extraordinary resources. We should not hesitate to ask him for assistance.

Jesus Responds With A Delay – Verses 4-7

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

11:4 Any trial a believer faces can ultimately bring glory to God because God can bring good out of any bad situation (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). When trouble comes, do you grumble, complain, and blame God, or do you see your problems as opportunities to honor him?

11:5-7 Jesus loved this family and often stayed with them. He knew their pain but did not respond immediately. His delay had a specific purpose. God’s timing, especially his delays, may make us think he is not answering or is not answering the way we want. But he will meet all our needs according to his perfect schedule and purpose (Philippians 4: 19). Patiently await his timing.

Jesus Courageously Decides To Go To Judea And Jerusalem – Verses 8-10

⁸ “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

11:8-10 “Daylight” symbolizes the knowledge of God’s will and reliance on his guidance, and “night,” the absence of this knowledge combined with self-reliance. When we move ahead in darkness, we will be likely to stumble.

Jesus Tells Them Plainly Of Lazarus' Death – Verses 11-15

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” ¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

11:11-15 If Jesus had been with Lazarus during the final moments of Lazarus's sickness, he might have healed him rather than let him die. But Lazarus died so that Jesus' power over death could be shown to his disciples and others. The raising of Lazarus was an essential display of his power, and the resurrection from the dead is a crucial belief of the Christian faith. Jesus not only raised himself from the dead (10:18), but he has the power to raise others.

Thomas' Bold Faith – Verse 16

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

11:16 We often remember Thomas as “the doubter,” because he doubted Jesus' resurrection (John 20:25). But here he demonstrated love and courage. The disciples knew the dangers of going with Jesus to Jerusalem, and they tried to talk him out of it. Thomas merely expressed what all of them felt. When their objections failed, they were willing to go, even though it appeared they might have to die with Jesus. They may not have understood why Jesus would be killed, but they were loyal. There are unknown dangers in doing God's work. It is wise to consider the high cost of being Jesus' disciple.

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus – Verses 17-22

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

11:17-21 He had already been in the tomb four days: Jesus waited four days because He knew the Jewish superstition of that day that said a soul stayed near the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body. Therefore, it was accepted that after four days there was absolutely no hope of resuscitation. Many of the Jews had joined the women around Mary and Martha: This was a large crowd, still present four days after Lazarus was buried. It was considered an important obligation to join with those who mourned the death of a near relative.

11:22 Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You: Martha was not confident that Jesus would raise her brother. Instead, she said that she would still trust Jesus despite this disappointment. This was a remarkable demonstration of faith, one that should be taken as an example.

I Am The Resurrection And The Life – Verses 23-27

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me

will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ **“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

11:23-26 Jesus has power over life and death as well as power to forgive sins. This is because he is the Creator of life (see 14:6). He who is life can surely restore life. Whoever believes in Christ has a spiritual life that death cannot conquer or diminish in any way. When we realize his power and how wonderful his offer to us really is, how can we not commit our lives to him? To those of us who believe, what wonderful assurance and certainty we have: “Because I live, you also will live” (14:19).

11:27 Martha is best known for being too busy to sit down and talk with Jesus (Luke 10: 38-42). But here we see her as a woman of deep faith. Her statement of faith is exactly the response that Jesus wants from us.

Mary’s Regret – Verses 28-32

²⁸ **After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”** ²⁹ **When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.** ³⁰ **Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.** ³¹ **When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.** ³² **When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”**

11:28-32 These verses open a window into a moment filled with hope and anticipation. Martha, one of Jesus’ devoted followers, has just had a profound conversation with Him about the resurrection and eternal life. After expressing her belief in Christ, she feels compelled to share the wonderful news with her sister Mary. The significance here is not just in the act of calling Mary but also in the message she brings. Martha recognizes that Jesus, the Master, has arrived and seeks Mary’s presence. This simple yet powerful statement indicates the importance of community, connection, and the desire to share transformative moments with those we love. Within a spiritual context, it signifies the need for us to reach out and share our revelations and encounters with Christ with others.

A Deeply Moved Jesus Comes To The Tomb – Verses 33-37

³³ **When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.** ³⁴ **“Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.** ³⁵ **Jesus wept.** ³⁶ **Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”** ³⁷ **But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”**

11:33-37 John stresses that we have a God who cares. When Jesus saw the weeping and wailing, he too wept openly. Perhaps he empathized with their grief, or perhaps he was troubled at their unbelief. In either case, Jesus showed that he cares enough for us to weep with us in our sorrow. This portrait contrasts with the Greek concept of God that was popular in that day— a God with no emotions and no messy involvement with humans. Here we see many of Jesus’ emotions— compassion, indignation, sorrow, even frustration. He often expressed deep emotion, and we must never be afraid to reveal our true feelings to him. He understands them, for he experienced them. Be honest, and don’t try to hide anything from your Savior. He cares.

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead – Verses 38-40

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

11:38 Tombs at this time were usually caves carved in the limestone rock of a hillside. A tomb was often large enough for people to walk inside. Several bodies would be placed in one tomb. After burial, a large stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb.

11:40 If you would believe you would see the glory of God: Jesus was fully capable of this miracle without the faith of Martha or Mary. But if they would not believe, then they would never see the glory of God. They could see the end result and be happy in that, but they would miss the glory of working together with God in the fulfillment of His plan.

Jesus Raises Lazarus From The Dead – Verses 41-44

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

11:41-43 He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” “The loud voice was not, of course, because a loud voice was needed to make the dead hear. Probably it was in part at least, so that the crowd could know that this was no work of magic, but the very power of God. Wizards mutter their incantations and spells (Isaiah 8:19). Not so the Son of God.”

11:44 Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go”: Jesus did not miraculously remove the grave-clothes from Lazarus, but He asked attendants to do so. Jesus did what only God could do, and then He looked for man’s cooperation for the completion of Lazarus’ deliverance.

The Worry of The Religious Leaders – Verses 45-48

⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

11:45-47 Even when confronted point-blank with the power of Jesus’ deity, some refused to believe. These eyewitnesses not only rejected Jesus; they plotted his murder. They were so hardened that they preferred to reject God’s Son rather than admit that they were wrong. They preferred “closure” instead of being open to God’s marvelous power. Beware of pride. If we allow it to grow, it can lead us into enormous sin.

11:48 The Jewish leaders knew that if they didn't stop Jesus, the Romans would lash out against all of them. Rome gave partial freedom to the Jews as long as they were quiet and obedient. Jesus' miracles often caused a disturbance. The leaders feared that Rome's displeasure would bring additional hardship to their nation.

The Counsel Of Caiaphas – Verses 49-52

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

11:49-50 It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish: Caiaphas thought logically but not morally. It was logical that one man should die for the people, but it was not moral to reject the Messiah and seek the death of an innocent Man.

11:52 Also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad: John explained that the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas was greater than he could have ever imagined. The death of Jesus would also gather together in one the sheep of another fold Jesus had previously spoken of John 10:16.

The Plot To Put Jesus To Death – Verses 53-54

⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take his life.⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

11:53-54 Then from that day on they plotted to put Him to death: Before it was mostly lesser religious officials who wanted Jesus dead. At this point the men with real political power decided to murder Jesus. The time was now short until the death of Jesus. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews: Again, Jesus did not do this out of fear, but because His hour had not yet come (as in John 7:30).

Looking For Jesus At The Passover Feast – Verses 55-57

⁵⁵ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover.⁵⁶ They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?" ⁵⁷ But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him.

11:55-57 In the springtime, the Passover was approaching and many Jews were traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. While the Jews were making sure they were ritually "clean" in order to participate in the Passover, they wondered whether Jesus would make an appearance at the feast. The Jewish authorities told the feast goers if anyone saw Jesus they were to report His whereabouts to them.