

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD

TEXT: JOHN 11:1-44

April 24, 2011

INTRODUCTION:

The most important reality in the whole universe is the glory of God. God's glory is the underlying reason for everything He God does. His glory is revealed in many different ways in Scripture.

For example, God's glory is revealed in the work of creation (Ps. 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God..."). God's glory is revealed in judging the unrighteous (e.g., Pharaoh, Ex. 14:4, 17-18, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host..."). A visible manifestation of God's glory appeared in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35) and in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10-11).

But, the fullest and final manifestation of God's glory came in "the Tabernacle" (i.e., Jesus Christ), "the Word became flesh and dwelt (ἐσκήνωσεν, "tabernacled") among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth..." (Jn. 1:14). Jesus is the true tabernacle/temple in which God dwells (cf. Ex. 25-30). John speaks of the glory that Isaiah saw in his vision of the Lord enthroned in the temple as the glory of Christ, "Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him" (12:41).

John 11:1-44 blazes with the glory of the Son of God. In John 11:1-44, John records the last of the seven miraculous signs performed by Jesus (cf. 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-17; 6:1-4; 6:15-21; 9:1-41). The restoration of Lazarus to life is the climactic and most dramatic of the seven signs that John records. Every aspect of this narrative aims to magnify the glory of the Son of God (vv. 4, 40) so that sinners would come to believe in Him (vv. 27, 42, 45). (Note: In John's gospel, "glory" is not so much the praise that is God's due but His self-disclosure, see Don Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 406).

Every aspect of this story reveals how God the Father (cf. vv. 9-10) sovereignly orchestrates the circumstances to perfectly fit His purposes (i.e., ensuring that this miracle would reveal the glory of the Son of God and sinners would believe!). In the restoration of Lazarus, we are given eight snapshots of the glory of the Son of God.

LESSON:

I. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS PURPOSE. VV. 1-4

John tells us two things draw Jesus to Bethany. The first thing that draws Him is His purpose in life (i.e., the revealing of the glory of God)! In response to Lazarus' sisters,

Jesus tells them, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (v. 4).

Jesus tells Mary and Martha that the ultimate end of Lazarus’ sickness would not be death but rather so that the Son of God may be glorified through it! Again, in 11:40, Jesus says to Martha, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”

Throughout John’s gospel, John shows how God’s self-disclosure of His glory takes place preeminently in His Son (cf. 1:14-18; 2:11; 12:41). Jesus most fully and clearly discloses the glory of God (John 1:14). He takes a general idea of glory and gives it concrete expression.

Further, John repeatedly shows in his gospel how the Father and Son are mutually committed to one another’s glory. For example, in John 5:23, John states that it is the purpose of the Father that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father (cf. 8:5, 17:1, 4-5). In John 17:4, Jesus prays, “I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” And, here in the miraculous restoration of Lazarus’ life, we see it is the purpose of the Father to glorify His Son.

What is the point of application? The Son’s purpose in seeking to reveal His glory is for our good (literally, for our life!). If it were not the Father’s purpose to glorify His Son, Lazarus would not have been restored to life! Lazarus was going to be restored to life so that the Son may be glorified through it! It is for our benefit that God’s seeks to reveal His glory through His Son!

Some may be tempted to think, “How unloving and selfish is this! How insensitive at a time of such great sorrow and grief.” But, John immediately dispels such a false notion. Look at what John says in vv. 5-6.

II. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS LOVE. VV. 5-6

The second reason Jesus is drawn to Bethany is because of His love for Mary, Martha and particularly His friend, Lazarus, (v. 5). Jesus had a special affection for Lazarus as He did John, who wrote this gospel (v. 3, cf. 13:23; 19:26).

The point John is making is that God’s love and glory are not at odds with one another but indivisibly united together. The love of God reveals an aspect of His glory. Calvin writes, “...where the love of God is, there deliverance is certain and at hand, because God cannot forsake him whom he loveth” (Calvin’s Comentararies, vol. 17, p. 425). John is telling us that in the face of grief and sorrow, God the Father’s purpose in seeking to glorify His Son is not an unloving act but rather entirely in keeping with Jesus’ love for this grieving family. The most loving thing God can do for us is to reveal His glory through His Son!

In fact, John tells us that Jesus loved this family so much, that when He was informed that Lazarus was sick, He intentionally delayed coming for two more days, “So, when He heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was” (v. 6).

How is that for pastoral care and sensitivity! How could Jesus’ two-day delay evidence His love? His delay seems to be inconsistent with His love for the Bethany family?

First, Jesus’ delay did not bring about Lazarus’ death. Jesus already knew Lazarus was dead (cf. vv. 11-14). Even if Jesus had left immediately, Lazarus would have been dead for two days (see Carson, *The Gospel According To John*, p. 408).

Jesus’ delay was deliberate and evidence His love for two reasons:

1. JESUS WAS FULLY SUBMITTED TO THE FATHER’S WILL.

Jesus’ delay was a deliberate refusal to be manipulated (cf. 2:4; ch. 7). He waited for His Father’s timing and will rather than acting upon the timing and will of man. He only did that which He saw His Father doing. In John 5:19, Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”

Jesus delayed going because His purpose was to fulfill the will of His Father and thereby honor the Father (vv. 4, 40). Again, we how every circumstance of this miracle was intended to magnify the glory of the Son of God. Jesus never moved an inch without it intending to advance the glory of God! Jesus was going to demonstrate in a powerful, stunning manner that He alone is the resurrection and the life (v.25)! He was not going to leave any room for this miracle to be interpreted as man having any thing to do with it.

But, this was not unloving but rather supremely loving. Calvin observes,

The power of God, which was displayed in the miracles of Christ, was not fitted to strike terror, but was kind and gentle. When He says that there is no danger of death, because He intends to display in it His own glory and the glory of His Father, we ought to enquire for what purpose, and with what intention, He was sent by the Father; which was, to save, and not to destroy” (Calvin’s Commentaries, vol. 17, p. 426).

2. JESUS’ DELAY ENSURED THAT LAZARUS’ DEATH COULDN’T BE MISINTERPRETED FOR A MERE RESUSCITATION (CF. 11:17).

Jesus knew that Lazarus was already dead but no one else did. In Jesus’ day, there were superstitions associated with resuscitations within 3 days. This is why John, in v. 17, mentions that Jesus arrived after Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days (cf. vv. 17, 39). Later Jewish sources reveal the rabbinic belief that the soul hovered over the body for three days, hoping to reenter it, but as soon as it sees that decomposition has set

in it departs and at this point death is irreversible (see Don Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 411).

The point John is showing is that Jesus didn't want there to be any doubts in anyone's mind that Lazarus was dead so that His glory might be revealed all the more! From vv. 6, 17, 39 John is showing us that everything God does for us is motivated by His love in order to maximize the revealing of His glory for our benefit! Verses 6, 17, 39 all serve to establish the awesome miracle that Jesus is about to perform. If Jesus had responded immediately to Mary and Martha's request for help, His miracle would not have benefited their faith or His disciples, which would be unloving!

Jesus was not indifferent to their suffering but rather He was waiting for His Father's timing in order to establish the faith of Mary, Martha and Lazarus and His disciples (v. 15) as well as lead others to initial faith in Him (v. 45). Because of His great love for Martha and the others, He was pointing all of them to the only source of spiritual and physical life, Himself!

III. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS OBEDIENCE. VV. 7-16

In vv. 7-16, we see the glory of the Son of God revealed in His obedience to His Father's will! John shows this in three different ways.

A. JESUS' ANNOUNCEMENT, VV. 7-8

In vv. 7-8, after His two-day delay, Jesus announces to His disciples His plans to return to Judea and He invites them to join Him. In response, His disciples are astounded, "The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again" (v. 8)? The disciples are thinking back to the Jews who had earlier sought to stone Jesus in Judea (10:31). The Jews sought to arrest Him but Jesus escaped to Bethany (10:39), which is his current location in ch. 11 (cf. v. 18).

Now, Jesus says to His disciples, He is going back! Jesus' disciples are completely shocked. They realize that the enmity against Him in Judea is so great that if He goes back, He would be signing His death warrant. But, what they didn't realize (and Jesus did!) was this was precisely why He was going back! The closeness of Jerusalem (1.72 miles from Jerusalem, v. 18) highlights the immense risk Jesus is taking and thus anticipates His death on the cross. His obedience also reveals that He loved His friend, Lazarus. Despite the consequences to Himself, Jesus went to Bethany to restore life to His friend. What love, what glory is revealed here!

B. JESUS' ANSWER, VV. 9-10

In vv. 9-10, Jesus answers the disciples question and tells them why He is determined to go back to Judea. The reason is because it is His Father's will. The 12-hour daylight period of His ministry (His obedience) wasn't finished. It would have been wrong

(disastrous!) for Jesus to give up at this point. He had to continue His obedience to His Father in order to achieve salvation for all whom He loves to be saved.

C. JESUS' MISSION, vv. 11-13

In vv. 11-13, Jesus gives a further reason why He is determined to go again to Judea (i.e., He was going to restore life to His friend!). Sleep is a common metaphor for death. The Bible often refers to death for the believer as sleep (Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13-14). The reason for this is because Jesus, Leon Morris writes, “has transformed death for the believer. For the one whose trust is in Jesus, death is no more than sleep” (*Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John*, p. 407).

The point John intends for his readers to grasp is that death for believers is not final. Because Jesus underwent the full horror of death, He defeated the finality of death by His death! In so doing, Jesus transformed death, so that for the believer it is no more than sleep so that all who are Jesus' friends now and die will one day be raised to life by Him who is the resurrection and the life (cf. vv. 11, 25-26)!

The amazing irony of this account in John's gospel is that Jesus' obedience to restore Lazarus' life was the very thing that sealed His death (cf. v. 53)! John is telling us how Jesus came to die on the cross for our salvation (i.e., it wasn't the will of Mary and Martha but rather His obedience to the will of His Father that led Him to Bethany!). From that day forward (i.e., the restoration of Lazarus' life), John says His enemies (the Sanhedrin) planned together to kill Him (cf. vv. 46-53).

By reversing Lazarus' funeral, He caused His own! The only way to restore Lazarus to life was to march toward His death! The glory of the Son of God is seen here in that He so loves His people that He is resolved to obey His Father's will and die in their place (substitution) so that they might live! Concerning Christ's obedient substitutionary death,

Leon Morris writes,

...if Christ is not my Substitute, I still occupy the place of a condemned sinner. If my sins and my guilt are not transferred to Him, if He did not take them upon Himself, then surely they remain with me. If He did not deal with my sins, I must face their consequences. If my penalty was not borne by Him, it still hangs over me. There is no other possibility (*The Cross in the NT*, p. 410).

Jesus' restoration of Lazarus was a step closer toward His crucifixion. He knew that by raising Lazarus from the dead, He would die! He knew that His obedience to His Father would be the sealing of His own death! Paul writes in Philippians 2:8b that Jesus was, “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

The point implied here by John is that His death would result in His glorification and thus the reason for why He came (cf. Jn. 12:23-33). John clearly shows in his gospel that His death on the cross is where God most displays His glory in Christ. In John 12, Jesus says

that when He is lifted up and hung on a cross, He will put God's glory on display, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (12:23). The cross is the brightest display of God's holiness, righteousness, grace and goodness.

In v. 15, we further see the glory of Jesus' obedience revealed in a stunning statement. Jesus says, "for your sake *I am glad* that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him" (emphasis mine). Jesus says to His disciples that He was glad (χαίρω, lit. "I rejoice") He was not present when Lazarus died. What kind of response is this?!

Jesus rejoiced because He knew what was best for His disciples ("for your sake"). In some measure, the disciples already believed. But, their faith needed to grow. We don't become Christians by initial belief in Christ and then stop believing! Jesus was doing what was best to strengthen and increase their faith. If He had given immediate assistance to Lazarus His glory would have been less wonderfully displayed, which would not have been for their faith's sake! The point being the more wonderfully Jesus reveals His glory to us the better it is for our faith! And this wonderful display of glory comes through His obedience to His Father!

IV. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS DECLARATION. VV. 17-27

By the time Jesus arrives at the tomb of Lazarus, everyone knows Lazarus is dead (v. 17, "four days"). John intends to tell us that every last hope was gone. Martha's words (v. 21) to Jesus are not to be understood as a rebuke (e.g., "You should have come earlier. If you would have been here this would not have happened."). Rather, her words are a mixture of grief and faith (e.g., "If only you could have been here this would not have happened.").

Yet, even in her current grief, Martha has not lost confidence in Jesus, "But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you" (v. 22). Martha expresses confidence that the Father would give Jesus whatever He asked (Note: her words anticipate Jesus' prayer in vv. 41-42). Martha recognizes the obedience of Jesus and His intimate relationship with His Father that ensures His prayers are always answered.

Martha's response, however, is not in keeping with what Jesus was about to do (cf. v. 39). In her grief, she was just thinking in general terms such as, "If you had been here my brother would not have died because I know that your Father gives you whatever you ask." Jesus' response to Martha in her grief sets her up for a further revealing of His glory.

He says to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha, however, doesn't grasp the point Jesus is making. Jesus was not attempting to console Martha by reminding her that death will not have the last word for her brother. This is how Martha understands it. She says, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (v. 24). Martha was simply espousing the general belief in resurrection that was held among the Jews in her day. But, Jesus was promising something much greater than a general idea of a resurrection.

Thus, He makes this amazing, glorious declaration, “²⁵ I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Jesus directs Martha away from a general belief in resurrection to personalized faith in Him, who alone raises the dead and grants life! The gospel doesn't offer you some general idea of life in the future. The gospel offers you Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life! Jesus is the Resurrection who not only raises the dead but is also the Resurrection Himself! Jesus not only commences our life (resurrection) but is also our life (i.e., He preserves and completes what He has begun!). Calvin observes,

...He never permits the life which he has once bestowed to be lost, but preserves it to the end. For since flesh is so frail, what would become of men, if, after having oncen obtained life, they were afterwards left to themselves? The perpetuity of the life must, therefore, be founded on the power of Christ Himself, that He may complete what He has begun” (*Calvin's Commentaries, vol. 17, p. 436*).

Herein the glory of the Son of God is revealed in both the commencement and preservation of our salvation!

Further, this is an astounding declaration of deity. When God appeared to Moses and told him to go to Pharaoh and command Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go (Ex. 3:1-2), Moses asks God,

¹³ ...If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”
¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Jesus declares to Martha that He is the “I Am” who appeared to Moses. He was the Suzerain who obtained glory over Pharaoh and the Egyptian army (Ex. 14:4, 17-18)!

Just as Jesus, the sovereign Suzerain, has authority over all earthly powers, so He also has authority over life and death! Only God has the power to grant life and defeat death. Jesus states unequivocally that there is neither resurrection nor eternal life outside of Him! To possess Him is to possess eternal life and to be destined for resurrection. His restoration of Lazarus from the dead was a manifestation of His glory (v. 40). The Son of God's glory is revealed in that He is both the Resurrection and the Life!

Because Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life He hates death! And, so sixth we see:

V. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS OUTRAGE. vv. 28-33

Having spoken with Martha, Jesus now turns His attention to Mary, who responds to Jesus in grief and faith just like her sister (vv. 29-32). Mary, as was the custom of the

day, was accompanied by a group of professional Jewish mourners (vv. 28-33). So, there were both personal and professional mourners present at Lazarus' funeral.

When Jesus arrives and witnesses the grieving of Mary and the others, John says, "...He was outraged in spirit, and troubled." (for translation, see Don Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 415). Most English translations soften Jesus' response and translate it "deeply moved" "intensely moved." However, as Don Carson states this is without any linguistic justification (*The Gospel According to John*, p. 415).

The Greek word (ἐνεβριμήσατο) John uses can refer to the snorting of horses. When applied to humans, it suggests anger, outrage and emotional indignation. John is telling us that Jesus was angry!

Why and at what was Jesus angry?

Jesus wasn't angry at Mary, Martha and the mourners accompanying them. Jesus was angry against that which had brought Mary and Martha and the others to their outburst of grief (i.e., the death of Lazarus!). Jesus was angry at His enemy death!

John brings this out more clearly in v. 38, where it is not the weeping of the people but the tomb that evokes such outrage in Jesus ("Then Jesus, again outraged in spirit, came to the tomb...")! Herman Ridderbos writes, "The emotion is the revulsion of everything that is in Him against the power of death" (*The Gospel of John*, p. 402).

Death is the final enemy of the believer (1 Cor. 15:26). Jesus is outraged at how sin has caused so much havoc and grief in His world. The wages of sin, which is death, stirs up His wrath! He is outraged at death because this is not the way things are supposed to be! And so the glory of the Son of God is revealed in His outrage against death.

VI. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS GRIEF. VV. 34-37

Jesus not only reveals His glory in His outrage toward death, but also in His solidarity with those who grieve. Jesus asks, "Where have you laid him" (v. 34)? When they showed Him, John says, "Jesus wept" (v. 35).

Jesus shows compassion and enters into man's world of grief and sorrow. Jesus' tears were not shed for Lazarus. In one sense, He was rejoicing (v. 15) because He knew He was about to restore Lazarus to life, which the Father had sent Him to do (cf. vv. 11). Rather, as He surveys the havoc created by sin, He is grieved by it (similar to when He grieved over the city of Jerusalem, cf. Matt. 23:37-39).

Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The glory of the Son of God is revealed in His entering into the grief of man. Again, Ridderbos writes, "As the Son of God, He does not come to redeem the world from imaginary grief or to make grief over death imaginary. Therefore, He joins the mourning procession for the friend whom He is to raise from the dead, and weeps" (*The Gospel of John*, p. 402).

Jesus weeps with those who are weeping! Unlike Allah, who is so transcendent that He is unable to sympathize and empathize with man in his pain, Jesus enters into the midst of human misery and experiences and participates in it.

The glory of the Son of God is revealed in this that

“having clothed Himself with our flesh, of His own accord clothed Himself also with human feelings, so that He did not differ at all from His brethren, sin only excepted. In this way we detract nothing from the glory of Christ, when we say that it was a voluntary submission, by which He was brought to resemble us in the feelings of the soul...in this respect He proved Himself to be our brother, in order to assure us, that we have a Mediator, who willingly pardons our infirmities, and who is ready to assist those infirmities which He has experienced in Himself” (*Calvin’s Commentaries, vol. 17, p. 440*).

Taken together, His glory is seen in the tension of His expressing anger at death and at the same time identifying with man in his grief and suffering.

VII. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS PRAYER. vv. 38-42

How does Jesus’ prayer reveal the glory of God?

Jesus’ prayer assumes that He had already asked His Father for the answer and that it had been granted (cf. vv. 11, 22-23)! This, as we saw, was already presupposed in Martha’s comments in v. 11. The Father always hears the prayers of His Son because of His obedience. The author of Hebrews writes, “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence” (Heb. 5:7).

By praying publicly, Jesus was giving His listeners a glimpse into the intimacy of His relationship with the Father. John says He prayed publicly so that the people standing around Him would come to saving faith (believe that the Father had sent Him, v. 42). Everyone present at Lazarus’ tomb was fully convinced of the finality of his death. All hope was gone. And then publicly so all could hear, Jesus the Son thanks His Father for having granted His request (no doubt because of the Son’s obedience to the Father’s will!). His effectual prayers reveal His glory and demonstrate why He is to be believed in! His effectual prayers direct the onlookers to the Father who sent Him.

The only time the Father closed His ears to His Son’s prayers was on the Cross! On the cross the Son of God was no longer the Beloved Son (Matt. 3:17) but rather the cursed Son (Gal. 3:13). And the irony is that as the cursed Son, His obedience had reached its pinnacle and His glory was most fully revealed. How Jesus could be cursed while at the pinnacle of His obedience is a mystery that is not to be understood but rather glory that is to be awed and humbled by and believed in!

Eighth and finally,

VIII. THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD IS REVEALED IN HIS AUTHORITY. vv. 43-44

In vv. 43-44, Jesus' glory is revealed in His power over death and authority to grant life.

John says Jesus shouted with a loud voice (φωνῆ μεγάλης ἐκράυασεν), "Lazarus, come out!" Jesus did so presumably so that everyone present could hear and have no doubt why Lazarus came out.

In one brief command issued by Christ, John says, "The man who had died came forth..." Here we see the authority of Jesus in restoring Lazarus to life. The Son of God's word is powerful. It always accomplishes that which God purposes (Isa. 55:11). God spoke, "Let there be light and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Ezekiel proclaimed the Word of the Lord and the dry bones lived (Ezek. 37:4-5). In 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul writes, "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." God's Word is powerful and effective and always accomplishes its purpose. As sacramental word, the law kills (2 Cor. 3:6a) and the gospel gives life (2 Cor. 3:6b). God in His word brings about that which is actually spoken!

The amazing thing about John's account is that he doesn't record the reaction of Lazarus or anyone present. He only records the fact that "many of the Jews ... believed in Him" as a result of seeing this miracle (v. 45; 12:9-11). The reason for this is because throughout this whole account, John is focusing on the glory of the Son of God, not Lazarus, Mary, Martha or the Jewish crowd.

This sign revealed the glory of the Son of God by attesting to the fact that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. It is a sign pointing to the great hope of the gospel (i.e., the resurrection to immortal life on the last day). In just a short while after this sign, Jesus Himself would rise from the dead (Jn. 20:1-10) and death would forever be swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:54)!

Because of Jesus' resurrection, all who believe (including Lazarus) will also be raised never to die again. It has been often said that Jesus' authority is so great, had He not specified Lazarus, all the dead would have come out of their tombs!

One day in the future this is precisely what will happen! Jesus gives this promise in John 5:25-26, "²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself."

Jesus' restoration of Lazarus' life was a preview of coming attractions. There is a day coming, when Jesus, on the last day, will shout with a loud voice to all of His friends, "Come out!" And, all who are Jesus' friends now will hear His voice then and come out just like Lazarus but this time never to die again!

The enemy death will be swallowed up in victory because of the divine power of the One who declares, "I Am the resurrection and the Life!" On that day, all who believe now will hear His voice then and awaken to the most spectacular display of glory ever imagined!

CONCLUSION:

In this account, we have come face to face with the glory of the Son of God. We have seen His glory revealed in His:

Purpose
Love
Obedience
Declaration
Outrage
Grief
Prayer and
Authority.

When confronted with such an overwhelming depiction of glory, you cannot remain indifferent. Listen to Jesus' two questions to Martha:

"Do you believe this" (v. 26)?

"Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God" (v. 40)?

Jesus' miracle wasn't dependant on Martha's faith. This was no "name-it, claim-it" "believe-it-into-existence-power-of-positive-thinking" invitation. Jesus would have restored Lazarus to life, regardless of Martha's belief or unbelief because the whole miracle was designed to reveal His glory by putting His resurrection power on display! Leon Morris writes,

For Him (Jesus-J.F.) the glory of God was the one important thing. The real meaning of what He would do is accessible only to faith. All there, believing or not, would see the miracle. But Jesus is promising Martha a sight of the glory. The crowd would see the miracle, but only believers would see its real significance, the glory (*The Gospel According To John*, NICNT, p. 560).

The issue was this: Everyone present saw the unmistakable miracle but only those who had faith would see the glory of God. This is the issue facing you today. The question facing every one of you this morning is the question Jesus asks Martha: "Do you believe this?" This is the most important question you will ever face.

Not, do you believe in some general, vague concept of a future resurrection? Not, do you just see a miraculous work that took place at some point in the past. But, do you see the glory of the Son of God revealed? It is not enough to see a miracle. You have to see glory of the Son of God!

But do you believe Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life? Do you believe He can give you life and preserve it? Do you see His glory and believe it?

Do you, like Martha, respond, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” Martha’s response is a firm conviction that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). Martha believed that Jesus was the Messiah to whom all of the Old Testament saints were eagerly longing for (cf. Lk. 1:46-55, 67-79; 12:29-32).

Like Martha and all the Old Testament saints, do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who is coming into the world? Do you believe Jesus is the fulfillment of the promised coming Messiah of the Old Testament? Do you believe Jesus is the goal and fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises? Do you believe that Jesus is the fullest and final expression of the glory of God? Do you believe He is the full embodiment of the truth of God?

Do you believe that He is the resurrection and life and that even in the face of death, He is to be trusted because He will always do that which displays the glory of God for your benefit (cf. Jn. 11:15)!

Martha’s affirmation of faith anticipates the purpose of John’s gospel, “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (Jn. 20:31).

Do you believe this?

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