

Lazarus – walking, living proof

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See service sheet online at [www.knbc.org](http://www.knbc.org)

Welcome:

Opening Scripture: Ps 100

Hymn: MP 33 And can it be that I should gain

Reading: Ps 66

Prayer of adoration and praise

Notices CT greetings, Tongue mp3, OAC,

Reading: John 11:1-44

Hymn: MP 402 Led like a lamb to the slaughter

Sermon: Lazarus – walking, living proof

Hymn: MP 458 Man of Sorrows what a name

Blessing:

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at [www.knbc.org](http://www.knbc.org).

The audio file is [21\\_05\\_09.mp3](#).



### *Welcome and pray*

There is a lady not far from here who, when I knocked her door to speak to her of Jesus said: "I am listening because I have seen such a radical change for good in my daughter I cannot explain it. She says Jesus has changed her.

- So in the city centre a couple of weeks ago someone said something similar about their friend, "she is really different now"
- When I was spoken to by Ken and Marcia Brown those years ago, I listened to what they said, but I saw something in them. They were different, it was not normal, it was very attractive and I wanted it.

For each one it was a work of Jesus – these are those Jesus met

### *Intro/Bio*

As we continue to look at people Jesus met we come to Lazarus. There are only two people called Lazarus in the Bible, one is fictitious (Lk 16), and this one here in John 11,12. Lazarus is the brother, probably the youngest, of Mary and Martha. They are from the town of Bethany just outside Jerusalem. We know nothing of him, except what is implied from Mary and Martha. But we know it was a family the Lord loved. Was Lazarus the rich young ruler? There are similar phrases employed, and his grave or sepulcher with a stone across the entrance would have been the reserve of the rich.

While Lazarus is understandably at the centre of this episode in John 11, the focus is on Jesus and who He is. John in his Gospel includes fewer events but gives more time and space to them. That is true here.

The scene starts with 3 **the sisters** [who] **sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."** x2. Jesus hears the news of Lazarus's sickness but stays where he is. Why? Because as we seen v4 says it is to reveal God's Glory and the Glory of the Son. He has something to teach his disciples through this.

Let us approach sickness in the same way, The Lord may well delay in acting. Ask the questions: what is the Lord doing? And what is the Lord saying? But don't expect an answer! - At least not straight away, for the message needs time. For His disciples it was later. (see john 12:16)

So it is with when Christians suffer – It is purposed for the glory of God, and as you go through it you will find His favour and sweet mercy. If you have trouble, if all looks dark and despairing, if there's sickness, loss, disappointment, here's the chance to know His great Grace & power.

So Lazarus, whom the lord loved, is sick and must die, so that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort us whom Christ also loves.

The sisters were saying to Jesus “*if you love Him come now*” – Is that your test of love? They impatiently expected him there – But Jesus took the contrary way to show his love: it is not: ‘He loved them and *yet* lingered’ but really ‘he loved them and *therefore* he lingered’. i.e. because He *loved them* He stayed where he was two more days (plus a two day journey) for he planned something greater for them. If Christ had come immediately and cured Lazarus of his sickness, he would have had done no more than he did for *many*; but, delaying his arrival, he could now do more for him than for *any*. **God has great intentions in seeming delays**, Isa 54:7-8; 49:14.

### ***Jesus speaks with Martha***

Let’s pick it up at v15 - **But let us go to him** When he does go he is met by sister Martha who comes out to meet him on the road. We tend to think of Mary being the hungrier to know of Jesus for she sat at his feet while Martha is bothered with preparing the meal, the practical arrangements. Lk 10:40-42. Here Mary stays at home while active Martha come out to Jesus. She is in the foreground and we can see her faith when she says <sup>21</sup> **“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.** Notice Mary repeats this, word for word, v32. This they had no doubt discussed, having seen and believed in Jesus’ power to heal. Here is faith, but weak faith, **if you had been here**, Christ does not need to ‘be there’. Nor is it ever helpful to dwell on what “might have been”. **my brother would not have died.**

Martha’s faith goes further; knowing that Lazarus is in the grave she steps out in faith saying: **But I know that even now x2 God will give you whatever you ask.**” Don’t know what to ask? Jesus does “Lord you know best...”

✚ **She believed that whatever Jesus asked of the father he would have.**

<sup>23</sup> **Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”** Yes, she believed that, she knew what the Bible says about a future life past the grave for the man and woman of God.

Yes, she had that hope and so **answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”**

For the body there is the promise of a glorious *resurrection*. Though the body be dead because of sin – and it will die - yet it *shall live again*.

Surely the sentence of death is just, the grip of death strong, and it appears nothing can break its bands. Yet even though the body is dead, buried, putrefied, and back to dust such that it cannot be recognized - there will be a day when it will be remade to *live* again - and raised a glorious body!

Martha would have said with Paul the Jew: **I have the same hope in God that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.** Ac 24:15 speak of that Day there is a Day to come it is The Day. **GOSPEL**

Then the bombshell: <sup>25</sup> **Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. ‘I am’ not I will be but ‘I am’ this is the profoundest of statements I am** Now That this future resurrection is bound up with Jesus she could see. But it is not he will ‘knows the way’ to it, it is not he will ‘point’ to it, it is not he will ‘bring’ it, but that He ‘is’ it. This resurrection IS him! It is IN Him Now **“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, 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.”** Joh 5:24-25

✚ **This is the first resurrection. (Rev 20:5)**

**You need the resurrection now - to be able to share in the resurrection then.**

This life is in Christ **He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.** 1Jo 5:12

How do you have the son? How do you join to Him? By faith **whoever hears my word and believes** - that is the way, being united to Christ by faith. He who does that lives - he shall *never die*.

Jesus said: **He who believes in me will live**, there’s the promise – there’s the invitation - **and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.**

The soul, being spiritual is immortal. So if by faith it lives it cannot die. So will the mortality of the body on that day be swallowed up by death? No but by life! He shall not die. And there is no interruption to this life, it will never be extinguished.

✚ **Entrust your life to Him and you will have an awakened, enlivened *soul* now; - and that is the promise of a renewed body to come.**

### ***The event***

Often in John’s gospel there is the event and then the lesson - here the lesson comes and then the impact of this most unforgettable event.

**“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.**

His deep sympathy found vent in tears in this shortest of verses: **“Jesus wept.”** He joins the mourners in the valley of tears! Our lives here are

sorrow upon sorrow. Jesus is about to show his divinity - here we see his humanity. Jesus, the man of sorrows could weep - and would weep in sympathy with their sorrow. - which He was instantly to relieve.

✚ we never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears.

36 **Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"**

38 **Jesus, once more deeply moved, (snorting as a horse) came to the tomb.**

At the sight of their weeping, he "groaned in spirit," Some think he *groaned* because they desired to bring Lazarus back into this sinful and troublesome world. Was it a kindness to Martha and Mary, to thrust him into the stormy sea of this life again who was newly arrived into a safe and quiet harbour?

When that Christian friend or family member we love departs for heaven do you wish them back here. Would you call them back if you could?

**Lazarus was in a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone.**

The Jesus prays – this is God’s work, no-one one else –and he will have the Glory Jesus looked up and said, **"Father, I thank you that you have heard me.**

Note past tense - believing prayer - Believe that you have it when you pray

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."**

*He lifted up his eyes*, as he lifted up his mind and heart, - why we look at the carpet when we pray I do not know – He is showing from whom he derived his power; - an example to us let us seek the Lord seated high on His throne.

✚ Let us too *lift up* our eyes, looking beyond the grave - overlooking all the difficulties – and fix our eyes upon divine power

### The call

43 **When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"** x2

The gates of death are stormed, death itself is charged “give up your dead”

The voice of God speaks - and it is, the voice that creates - and recreates.

Why a loud call? A loud call wasn’t necessary why? That all around may hear. It is the trumpet call of God – and the dead are raised 1thess 5

Crying out is the last thing Jesus did on the cross “**when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment x2 .... the tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.**” Mt 27:50-52

Jesus is calling Lazarus to life.

He calls him by name, ‘Lazarus’, as we call those by their names whom we would awake from being fast asleep. v11 Jesus tells his disciples **"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."**

Death for a believer is *sleep*. We should call death sleep that it be less *formidable* to us - for the death of a believer is the doorway into life.

Here Jesus, as he did with Jairus’ daughter, says ‘sleep’ because he is showing us - that for him – to bring to life is like that tap on a shoulder.

How easy it is for Jesus to raise the dead whether now or later. If he can do it now – he can do it later!

[Do you wear new clothes each new morning laid out ready?](#) We take off our clothes, our old body, to sleep – only to awake to put on the new, new body.

The grave of the cowardly and ungodly is a prison. For those without Christ the grave is the shackle as of a criminal reserved for execution.

But for those with Christ it is a bed. Once *corrupt*, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption.

[It is like putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage day, to which we will rise.](#) (See Isa 57:2, 1Th 4:14).

The Greeks called their burying-places *koimeteria*. - *dormitories*

**"Lazarus, come out!"** He does not say for him to ‘live’ for Lazarus cannot do that - only Christ can do that - he says ‘move’ ‘**come out**’ that he can do, that he can now do, *no sooner said than done*; 44 **The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.**

Yes that cloth shows he was really dead and now to make sure they would never forget - those around were to touch him, **Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."** (he will need them again! Unlike Jesus)

✚ **WOW what a sight, what a sight to behold.**

Lazaurs is an abbreviation of Eleazar, meaning the one ‘whom God helps’.

4 **Jesus had said, "This sickness will not end in death.** And surely it hadn’t.

Yes, it was a sickness, it was surely a death but it did not end there. 4 **"No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it."**

The crowds saw the Glory – “**the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.** 12:17 - there is the sure sign that they saw and understood.

Jesus had made it easy for them to join the dots and make the great discovery, they could now see who Jesus is. Soon they would see the wonder of Christ’s own resurrection after which many more would believe.. You are in church, you have heard, you have heard plenty – still doubting??

*The whole point is to believe*

15 **and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.**

42 Jesus prayed publically so **that they may believe that you sent me.**”

45 **many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.**

12:11 **on account of Lazarus many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.”**

They did, many millions through the centuries from across the world have – how about you? Or are you still shrouded in the cloud of unbelief? **many .... had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.**

Listen to one 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jew - Jesus Christ is to me the outstanding personality of all time, all history, both as Son of God and as Son of Man. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you can say of no other man, dead or alive. There is no easy middle ground to stroll upon. You either accept Jesus or reject him. – so says Sholem Asch a Polish-Jewish novelist, dramatist, and essayist (of the 20<sup>th</sup> C.)

**But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.**

45,46 12:10 **So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well**

Lazarus was a living witness of the power of the Son of God over death.

To rejects such clear evidence comes from a hard heart hostile to God, a hate-filled heart. We may not put the knife in – but nonetheless try to smother the evidence. **What you have done with that evidence? – you will one day you will have to give an account.**

Today a true believer is also a living witness of the power of the Son of God to raise the dead. That is why there is so much persecution.

While we are the fragrance of life to those being saved we are the smell of death to those destined for hell and despised. For this evidence of the resurrection is the confirmation of impending judgment.

25 **Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.** Yes now, Jesus is alive now.

Have you heard him call to you .... **Come forth x2** Has he called to you?

We all are born as sinners. And as such have a deadness to God. The one who sins is a slave to sin - but Christ has the power to bring you out of it, to make you alive from that deadness in sin.

For the Christian we are told **When you were dead in your sins,... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,** Col 2:13

So how it is connected with forgiveness. So seek forgiveness, confess “Lord I have ignored you, I have looked to myself first and to others but not you”. If that is you then turn away from self, forsake your sin and look to Christ.

Then you will walk free from that dark tomb into His glorious light. You will know it as Lazarus knew it – others will see and rejoice with you.

This is the first resurrection - It is a dramatic inner working in the heart of someone no less profound than a man walking out of the grave.

■ Let me introduce you to a young man of 23. A drunkard, a drug taker, idolizing pleasure, obsessed by music, lazy, unfaithful, still driving on multiple bans, dishonest, a thief, unreliable, unemployable, fickle. You have worked out who it is haven't you? How is that?

I am none of those things now. Actually the opposite – By God’s grace. His renewing, reforming grace – I know I will share in the resurrection ahead – why? Because I have already had that first resurrection within!

Now since Christ rose from the dead there are two types of people, the natural and separated from God – and those made alive and at peace with God. This is called the first resurrection – and it guarantees the second resurrection. – to follow Jesus in a resurrected Body to heaven.

Remember Jesus challenged Martha saying: **He who believes in me will live, ... Do you believe this?"**

✚ **How about you? - If you truly believe it – you will experience it!**

27 **"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."** Martha said *Yes, Lord,*

Faith is an echo to divine revelation, - it bounces back what it hears – it returns the same words, and resolves to abide by them: Yes, Lord.

■ Elizabeth I. **“As the word did make it - so I believe - and take it”.**

That is faith, simple faith, saving faith. Join with Martha who believed all of what Christ promised. She knew that Jesus truly is God come in the flesh. \*