

Death Has Lost Its' Sting

John 11:17-22 (NIV)

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."

- **Death does have a sting.**

John 11:23-35 (NIV)

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."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."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.

- **Death leaves a mark.**

John 11:38-40 (NIV)

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?"

- **Death tries to put a period where God has put a comma.**

John 11:41-44 (NIV)

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."

- **Life is coming again.**

John 11:45 (NIV)

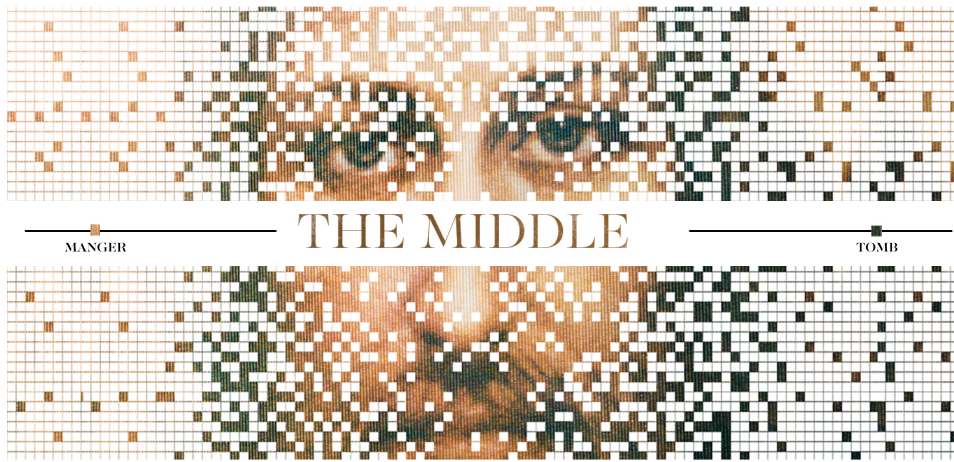
Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

I Corinthians 15:55-57 (NIV)

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:22-24 (NIV)

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.



HEALING OF LAZARUS

JOHN 11:1-49

#NVSTORYSHARE

CONNECT THE STORY

What happened in our last story? What key principles or truths did we discover through the story of the Sabbath? Can someone retell the story?

TELL THE STORY

Tell the story: as best as you can, do not stop and teach, try not to make points (Commentary), just tell the story.

REBUILD THE STORY

As a group: chronologically rebuild the story from memory. Ask questions if necessary. Like – “What happened first?”, “What happened next?”, “Did we leave out anything?” Finally, have participants look at their Bibles and see if anything was added or left out of the story as they go through it one more time.

ASK QUESTIONS

- **Where do you see yourself in this story?**
- **What do we learn about Jesus/God in this story?**
- **What do we learn about man in this story?**
- **What is Jesus teaching you personally through this story?**
- **What application/adjustment do you need to make in your life due to the truth discovered in this story?**

ADULTS

- Can you remember details of the first funeral you attended? What impressions did you have about funerals and death from that experience.
- Why would God use a tragic event like this to bring Glory to Himself?
- How would this event change Martha and Mary?
- Jesus said, “I am the Life”...why would He not say “I give life”...do you find that statement odd or does it have a deeper meaning?
- The fact that Jesus wept gives us *what* special insight to His character?
- Twice in this passage Jesus uses the word “believe” in reference to Him. How would you define that word?

COLLEGE

- Why would God use a tragic event like this to bring Glory to Himself?
- How would this event change Martha and Mary?
- Why was Jesus weeping?
- Jesus said, “I am the Life”...why would he not say “I give life”...do you find that statement odd or does it have a deeper meaning?

STUDENT

- How would you react if someone came back from the dead?
- Jesus waited two days to go see Lazarus, why do you think He did this?
- Why did Jesus weep? What does this say about Jesus?

CHILDREN

- Older Child – What does it mean to be dead?
- Older Child – How does Jesus bring us back to life?
- Younger Child – What are dead things like?
- Younger Child – How does Jesus bring us back to life?

KINDERGARTEN/PRESCHOOL

- Who was the man that died?
- Who were his sisters?
- Who did Martha say Jesus is?
- What did Jesus do outside the tomb?
- What did Lazarus do?
- Who will tell this week that Jesus is God’s Son?

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

MONDAY

READ JOHN 11:1-16.

Although Jesus said that the sickness would not end in death (v. 4), Lazarus still died. Did Jesus misspeak? What might He have meant about the ultimate eternal life we are promised in Him? The sisters probably expected Jesus to come by the end of the second day, instead they had to wait two more days, not knowing when or if He would come at all. What may have been going through their minds during those long days? What might they have questioned about Jesus? Jesus's raising of Lazarus strengthened people's faith in God, and in Jesus as the Son of God. Lazarus's death was not the end of the story. Instead, God received glory through the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Furthermore, Jesus's performance of this miracle led ultimately to Jesus's own death, followed by His resurrection and our opportunity to enter a restored relationship with the Father.

TUESDAY

READ JOHN 11:17-37.

What does Martha's response to Jesus's questions indicate about her understanding of His power over death? In what way was her understanding incomplete? Can you think of a time when God's plans and timing turned out to be better than your own? What are the dangers of expecting and demanding that God act according to our own understanding? How can we ensure our understanding of Jesus's teaching about life after death is complete?

WEDNESDAY

REREAD JOHN 11:17-37.

Why did Jesus ask Martha to believe in Him before He gave her a miraculous physical reason to believe? Jesus put Martha to the test by asking, "Do you believe this?" (v. 26). Her faith was steady and growing, but she may not have understood the full impact of Jesus's words. Her answer (v.27) shows that she believed Jesus was the Christ (the "Anointed One" or Messiah) and also the Son of God. While so many others denied His identity as the Messiah, Martha strongly confessed her faith in Him. While Martha engaged Jesus in a theological debate, Mary fell at his feet. What is the significance of that difference? What does it indicate about the way they saw and believed Jesus? Why do you think Jesus wept? Might He feel the same sorrow over the pain we experience today? Jesus had told His disciples (v. 4) and Mary (v. 23) that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead so that they would believe. But instead of going directly to the tomb, Jesus chose to seek out Mary and weep with her. This tells us something very important about Jesus and what He came to do. In weeping with Mary, Jesus demonstrated personal care for her. More importantly, He communicated to her that He too hates death and is going to do something about it.

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

THURSDAY

READ JOHN 11:38-44.

How did Jesus involve human obedience in raising Lazarus from the dead? How was being raised from the dead different than an eternal resurrection—a promise to never die? Jesus intentionally chose to involve those around Him in the miracle. Still bound by grave garments, Lazarus came out of the tomb. Jesus told the people to take off the grave clothes and let him go. Many of those who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus did and put their faith in Him. Jesus exercised power—not for His own glory, but that people might believe and be saved. What Jesus did was designed to cause people who observed the sign to place their faith in Him and receive the eternal and unending life only He can give. What proves Lazarus was really dead? How is this similar to the spiritual deadness all people are in *before* establishing a relationship with Christ? In what way do we all need a resurrection? How can we maintain hope in God's goodness, sovereignty, and love, even when our situations aren't so dramatically resolved on earth? How can God be glorified as we place this trust in Him?

FRIDAY

REREAD JOHN 11:1-44.

How does it impact you to know that the God of the universe personally identifies with your pain and hurt in this life? What can we learn from Jesus's example in terms of demonstrating love to those who are mourning? How does knowing that Jesus willingly chose to suffer for us challenge us to serve others? What, if any, limitations have you been placing on God's ability to work in your most difficult life situations?

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" John 11:40