



Closing the Belief Gap

John 11:1–6 (ESV)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” ⁴ But when Jesus heard it he said, “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.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

John 11:17-27 (ESV)

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “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?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

John 11:38-44 (ESV)

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

1. My Sunday School belief: God loves me!

- My daily belief: God is mostly disappointed in me. (John 11:5)
- Closing the gap: God’s love for you has nothing to do with your performance. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

2. My Sunday School belief: God is in control!

- My daily belief: God is punishing me for something in my past! (John 11:6)
- Closing the gap: You see one scene of the movie while God sees the end from the beginning.

3. My Sunday School belief: God’s way. My way.

- My daily belief: God’s will is too dangerous, too difficult, and simply, too boring! (John 11:7-10)
- Closing the gap: Are you currently “stumbling” or “strolling?”

4. My Sunday School belief: Christ has risen!

- My daily belief: There are dead things in my life beyond His reach! (John 11:25a)
- Closing the gap: Resurrection and life occur when our affections are redirected to the right Person!

5. My Sunday School belief: Jesus saves!

- My daily belief: I must behave. (John 11:25-26)
- Closing the gap: Complete trust in the one who closed the gap!