

The Miracles of Jesus

Lesson Thirty-Four

Raising Lazarus from the Dead

Text: John 11

Introduction:

1. After healing a man with dropsy, Jesus taught the Jews about those who would enter into the Kingdom of the Messiah (Luke 14:1-24).
2. Then, He emphasized to the multitude the importance of counting the cost when choosing to follow Him (Luke 14:25-35).
3. When He began to teach even the publicans and sinners, the scribes and Pharisees complained.
4. Jesus answered them with three parables illustrating God's love for (and their hatred of) the lost (Luke 15).
5. He continued to teach both the disciples and the Pharisees (Luke 16:1 – 17:10) until word came to Him that Lazarus of Bethany was sick.

I. The Miracle

- A. The delay of the miracle (John 11:1-13)
 1. Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem.
 2. However, at the time of Lazarus' sickness, it seems that Jesus was still in Perea – probably about 20 - 30 miles away.
 3. However, it was not the distance that caused Jesus to arrive after Lazarus' death.
 4. Instead, He knew that this event would serve to glorify the Son of God.
 - a. He also knew that Lazarus' sickness was "not unto death."
 - b. This did not mean that Lazarus would not die, but that he would not be held under the power of death.
 - c. Thus, Jesus waited for two days before going into Judea.
 5. It is important to remember that Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus – in spite of how things might have appeared to them (cf. 11:21).
 6. Even though many of the Jews in Judea desired to kill Jesus, He did not allow their threats to stop Him from manifesting His power and revealing His identity.
 7. Jesus would go to Bethany and raise Lazarus from the dead.
- B. The details of the miracle (John 11:14-44)
 1. Lazarus died.
 - a. In Jewish tradition, the body was prepared on the day of one's death.
 - b. There were many witnesses to his death and burial.
 - c. Lazarus had lain in the tomb for four days.
 - d. The decay of the body had begun for they expected him to stink.
 - e. He wore grave clothes and his face was bound with a napkin.

2. The purpose of the miracle was to create faith in the witnesses.
 - a. Jesus raised Jairus' daughter while her body was still in her father's house (Mark 5:35-43).
 - b. Jesus raised the widow's son while his body was being carried to the place of burying (Luke 7:11-17).
 3. Jesus challenged Martha's frustration with Truth – He is the Messiah.
 4. Jesus groaned in the spirit and wept.
 - a. It is comforting to know that our Lord understands our sorrows.
 - b. However, Jesus may have been weeping for Lazarus who was to be called out of Paradise and back into a world of temptation and suffering.
 5. Jesus came to the grave, commanded the stone to be removed, prayed to the Father and then cried out, "Lazarus, come forth."
 6. Thus, Lazarus was resurrected from the dead.
- C. The discussion of the miracle (John 11:45-57)
1. Many believed on Jesus because of this miracle.
 2. But, the chief priests and Pharisees held a council to decide what to do to Jesus to stop His good works and hinder His popularity.
 3. The result of their meeting was a plot to kill Jesus.
 4. Soon thereafter, they plotted also to kill Lazarus (John 12:1-11).

II. The Manifestation

- A. Jesus demonstrated His great power.
 1. Mary and Martha were convinced of Jesus' power to heal the sick.
 2. However, they seemed to think it took more power to raise the dead.
- B. Jesus showed compassion and love.
- C. Jesus proved His deity – He is the resurrection and the life.

III. The Message

- A. Sickness and death come upon all – even the faithful.
- B. Even when prayers seem to go unanswered, God can still be glorified.
- C. Just because bad things may happen to us does not mean that God does not love us.
- D. God operates by His timetable and for His purposes, not ours (cf. Psalm 73:12, 17-19; 2 Peter 3:4-9).
- E. One's religion must not be practiced in secret – even in the face of persecution.
- F. Death is sleep for the child of God (cf. Acts 7:60; 1 Thes. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:42-44).
- G. Followers of Christ must be willing to die for their Lord.
- H. Jesus groaned and wept over death for God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9).
- I. Consider the power of the word of Christ.
- J. There is coming a day when the word of Christ will raise all from the grave (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff).
- K. It is sad that the dead will hear and obey the will of Christ while the living rebel and disobey the Word of God.