**Monday Evening Bible Study**

**March 20, 2023 – John 11:1-45**

**Immediate Context**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| John 7:1-9 The Unbelief of Jesus’ Brothers | John 10:22-42 Jesus is Rejected by the Jews |
| John 7:10-24 Jesus at the Festival of Booths | **John 11:1-45 The Death and Raising of Lazarus** |
| John 7:25-31 Is This the Christ? | John 11:45-57 The Plot to Kill Jesus |
| John 7:32-36 Officers Are Sent to Arrest Jesus | John 12:1-8 Mary Anoints Jesus |
| John 7:37-39 Rivers of Living Water | John 12:9-11 The Plot to Kill Lazarus |
| John 7:40-44 Divisions among the People | John 12:12-19 The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem |
| John 7:45-53 The Unbelief of Those in Authority | John 12:20-26 Some Greeks wish to see Jesus |
| John 8:1-11 The Woman Caught in Adultery | John 12:27-36 Jesus speaks about his death |
| John 8:12-20 Jesus the Light of the World | John 12:37-43 The unbelief of the people |
| John 8:21-30 Jesus Foretells His Death | John 12:44-50 Summary of Jesus’ teaching |
| John 8:31-38 True Disciples | John 13:1-20 Jesus washes the disciples’ feet |
| John 8:39-59 Jesus and Abraham | John 13:21-30 Jesus Foretells His Betrayal |
| John 9:1-41 A Man Born Blind Receives Sight | John 13:31-35 The New Commandment |
| John 10:1-21 Jesus the Good Shepherd | John 13:36-38 Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial |

As the context above shows, this story doesn’t end with verse 45. The story continues through verse 11 of chapter 12. And the ending of the story is critical to understanding the story as a whole as well as the lead in to the passion of Christ. In John’s gospel, this event is the “last straw” for the desire to kill Jesus. In the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), it is the cleansing of the temple (which in John occurs at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and immediately sets Jesus at odds with “some” of the religious leaders; not all). It is impossible to preach this text without referring to what happens as a result of it; without at least mentioning the events found in John 11:45-12:11.

**Summary of John 11:1-45**

Jesus hears news that Lazarus is sick while hiding out east of the Jordan from those who want to stone him in the temple. Jesus delays two days and then heads back to Judea where he greets the sisters, shares in their grief, and then raises Lazarus from the dead. The buildup to the event (where Jesus interprets this sign) is almost as significant as the event itself; which happens in only two verses.

**Suggested Course of Study**

* Read the whole story as found in John 10:1-12:11

**Helpful Scriptures**

**1 Kings 17:17–24 (NRSV)**

17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 She then said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!” 19 But he said to her, “Give me your son.” He took him from her bosom, carried him up into the upper chamber where he was lodging, and laid him on his own bed. 20 He cried out to the Lord, “O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?” 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried out to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” 22 The Lord listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother; then Elijah said, “See, your son is alive.” 24 So the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

**2 Kings 4:20–37 (NRSV)**

20 He carried him and brought him to his mother; the child sat on her lap until noon, and he died. 21 She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed the door on him, and left. 22 Then she called to her husband, and said, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.” 23 He said, “Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath.” She said, “It will be all right.” 24 Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Urge the animal on; do not hold back for me unless I tell you.” 25 So she set out, and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Look, there is the Shunammite woman; 26 run at once to meet her, and say to her, Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?” She answered, “It is all right.” 27 When she came to the man of God at the mountain, she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi approached to push her away. But the man of God said, “Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.” 28 Then she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, Do not mislead me?” 29 He said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, give no greeting, and if anyone greets you, do not answer; and lay my staff on the face of the child.” 30 Then the mother of the child said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave without you.” So he rose up and followed her. 31 Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. He came back to meet him and told him, “The child has not awakened.” 32 When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. 33 So he went in and closed the door on the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. 34 Then he got up on the bed and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and while he lay bent over him, the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He got down, walked once to and fro in the room, then got up again and bent over him; the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36 Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman.” So he called her. When she came to him, he said, “Take your son.” 37 She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took her son and left.

**2 Kings 13:14–21 (NRSV)**

14 Now when Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, King Joash of Israel went down to him, and wept before him, crying, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” 15 Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and arrows”; so he took a bow and arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, “Draw the bow”; and he drew it. Elisha laid his hands on the king’s hands. 17 Then he said, “Open the window eastward”; and he opened it. Elisha said, “Shoot”; and he shot. Then he said, “The Lord’s arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram! For you shall fight the Arameans in Aphek until you have made an end of them.” 18 He continued, “Take the arrows”; and he took them. He said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground with them”; he struck three times, and stopped. 19 Then the man of God was angry with him, and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Aram until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Aram only three times.” 20 So Elisha died, and they buried him. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year. 21 As a man was being buried, a marauding band was seen and the man was thrown into the grave of Elisha; as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he came to life and stood on his feet.

**Ezekiel 37:1–14 (NRSV)**

1 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. 3 He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” 4 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.” 7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” 10 I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. 11 Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ 12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. 14 I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act,” says the Lord.

**Luke 7:11–16 (NRSV)**

11 Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. 12 As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. 13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 14 Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has looked favorably on his people!”

**Mark 5:35–43 (NRSV)**

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

**Matthew 27:51–53 (NRSV)**

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

**Acts 9:36–41 (NRSV)**

36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. 37 At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, “Please come to us without delay.” 39 So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.” Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. 41 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive.

**Acts 20:7–12 (NRSV)**

7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. 9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.” 11 Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. 12 Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.

**Key Words/Phrases**

**SIGNS** – While this word isn’t contained in this passage, it is very close. In verse 47, in response to what has happened, there is a meeting of the Sanhedrin called by the Pharisees and Chief Priests to decide what to do about Jesus. They are concerned because he is performing “so many signs”. So on that day, they plan to kill him. The gospel of John is the book of signs and this is the last and greatest sign of them all:

* Changing water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)
* The healing of the royal official's son at Cana (John 4:46-54)
* The healing of a paralytic in Jerusalem (John 5:1-9)
* The feeding of the five thousand in Galilee(John 6:1-14)
* Walking on water in Galilee (John 6:15-25)
* Giving sight to a man born blind in Jerusalem (John 9:1-12)
* The resurrection of Lazarus in Bethany (John 11:1-45)

**LAZARUS –** Lazarus is a form of the name Eleazar, which means "God is my help." This is *NOT* the same person who is mentioned in the parable in Luke 16. He only appears here and in chapter 12.

**BETHANY** – A town located on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, 3 kilometers east of Jerusalem. In the synoptic gospels it is the headquarters of Jesus during the final week of his life (see Mark 11:11, Matthew 21:17, and Luke 19:29). In Mark, prior to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus sends some of his disciples ahead of him to Bethany to secure a donkey that he can ride (see Mark 11:1). Bethany also shows up in Luke during the scene of Jesus’ ascension (see Luke 24:50).

**MARY AND MARTHA** – Mary and Martha appear in Luke 10:38-42. Mary will anoint Jesus’ feet and wipe them with her hair in John 12:1-8; though it is strangely mentioned in this text at verse 2. She is criticized by Judas for wasting the costly perfume. He thought it could have been sold so that the money could be given to the poor. But Jesus says, "Leave her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial." Why is it mentioned? Especially since it happens just a chapter later? My guess is that the gospel writer wants us to be thinking about the death of Jesus when we hear this story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. But wasn’t it Mary Magdalene who anointed Jesus’ feet? Hmmm…

**GLORY** – See Exodus 24:17; 33:20-23. Later in John’s gospel, the cross will be Christ's glorification (see John 12:23; 13:31-32).

**HE WHOM YOU LOVE** – In John 20:2, Mary Magdalene runs to Simon Peter and the other disciple, “the one whom Jesus loved”, and says “they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” And so the two go running, and this other disciple outruns Peter and reaches the tomb first. He bends down, looks in, sees the linen wrappings lying there, but he doesn’t go in. Peter, however, goes right in. And finally, the other disciple, follows him. He saw and believed. Then they returned to their homes. Could it have been Lazarus who had run to the tomb?

**THOUGH JESUS LOVED MARTHA AND HER SISTER AND LAZARUS** – Ahhh… to be loved by Jesus. Jesus loves his own (John 13:1, 34) and Jesus loves the Father (John 14:31). “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (see John 15:13). Jesus says this to his disciples after having washed their feet and having given them the new command to love one another (see John 13:35). Jesus’ love doesn’t protect them from pain or sadness.

**HE STAYED TWO DAYS LONGER IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS** – Where was Jesus? According to John 10:40, Jesus had crossed the Jordan River and gone to the place where John had been baptizing earlier because the Jews at the temple in Jerusalem had taken up stones to stone him. Why did he stay two days longer? This is a good question. He receives an urgent message from the sisters that the “one he loves” is sick. And yet, he remains across the Jordan about 15 miles away; an arduous day’s journey on foot especially considering Bethany is near Jerusalem which is 760 meters above sea level and the Dead Sea, near where John was baptizing, is 400 meters below sea level; a significant change in altitude.

**THE LIGHT IS NOT IN THEM** – Jesus talks more about the light of the world, but this time, the light is not inside them; so they stumble. His talk about walking while it is day reminds us of what Jesus says in the story of the man born blind in John 9.

**HAS FALLEN ASLEEP** – κεκοίμηται from κοιμάω meaning literally *sleep*, to *fall asleep* or figuratively or euphemistically (for dying) *fall asleep*, *die.*

**AWAKEN** – ἐξυπνίσω from ἐξυπνίζω meaning (of sleeping persons) to *cause to wake up* or *rouse*; (of dead people) to *awaken* or *cause to be alive again*. This word is made up of the prefix meaning “out of” and the root meaning “sleep”.

**HE WILL BE ALRIGHT** – σωθήσεται from σῴζω meaning to *save* or *deliver* or *make* *whole* or *preserve* *safe from danger.*

**SLEEP** – τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου; τῆς κοιμήσεως from κοίμησις meaning *the act of sleeping* or *taking rest in sleep*; ὕπνου from ὕπνος meaning literally *sleep* (notice we get our word hypnosis from this root).

**THOMAS, THE TWIN** – Θωμᾶς (Thomas), who is called Δίδυμος (Didymos; which means “twin”). He is first mentioned here, but then appears again in John 20:24-29 (where Jesus appears to the disciples after the resurrection) and John 21:2 (where several disciples were out fishing on the Sea of Tiberias—Sea of Galilee or Lake of Gennesaret—and Jesus tells them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. He shows great courage here being willing to go and die with Jesus.

**FOUR DAYS** – (See verses 17 and 39). This is the number of days Lazarus was in the tomb. It’s an unusual number considering that three days has so much significance in terms of Jesus’ death and resurrection. So why four days? Apparently Jewish people believed that the soul remained in the vicinity of the body for three days, hoping to rejoin the body. On the fourth day, the soul finally faces reality and departs. So the fact that Lazarus has been in the tomb four days means that there can be no possibility of his soul rejoining his body. Four days is shorthand for “hopeless”. The official period of mourning lasted seven days.

**LORD, IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE** – Are these words by Martha (and later Mary) a rebuke (reproach) or a regret? Is she saying “If you had been here (and you could have!), my brother wouldn’t have died”? Or is she saying “if only you had been here (but unfortunately you weren’t), my brother wouldn’t have died”? Remember how far away Jesus was. How long would it have taken the messenger to get to him? And how long would it have taken Jesus to come once he heard the message? The assumption is that Martha would know that Jesus probably couldn’t have arrived in time to prevent Jesus’ death.

**I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE** – This is another of the “I AM” (see the burning bush story in Exodus 3:14) statements in John’s gospel where Jesus reveals his true identity (not only as God incarnate but also portions of his character or nature). Here Jesus is saying that the resurrection and new life isn’t limited to the distant future (the end of days) as Martha assumes. Both words are important here: resurrection and life. Notice the footnote that says that other ancient authorities omit “and the life”. Is it redundant? What if it isn’t?!! What does new life in Jesus look like?

**THE ONE COMING INTO THE WORLD** – *Coming into the world* is a frequent phrase of importance for Jesus. It appears at (John 1:9, 6:14 3:19; 12:46; 16:28; 18:37). Martha’s confession of faith is significant. See also Peter’s statement in John 6:68-69 (don’t forget to see the footnote about what other ancient authorities say).

**WEEPING** – κλαίουσαν from κλαίω which means to *weep, wail, lament* (implying not only the shedding of tears, expressing strong internal emotions of grief). This is the loud demonstrative kind of weeping. The emphasis is on the noise accompanying the weeping.

**GREATLY DISTURBED** – ἐνεβριμήσατο from ἐμβριμάομαι meaning greatly disturbed, often associated with anger. To roar, storm with anger. To be enraged. To express indignation against someone. Why would Jesus be angry? Who has made Jesus angry?

**DEEPLY MOVED** – ἐτάραξεν from ταρασσω meaning to cause acute emotional distress, to stir up. This word shows up again in John 12:27 (the arrival of his hour) and 13:21 (mentioning he will be betrayed). Jesus uses this word in John 14:1 and 14:27 when talk about his departure. He tells the disciples not to let their hearts be troubled.

**JESUS BEGAN TO WEEP** – ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. ἐδάκρυσεν from δακρυον meaning to weep, with the clear implication of shedding tears; to cry. What if we translated it as “Jesus shed a tear”?

**TAKE AWAY THE STONE** – We lose the shocking nature of this command. This would be like someone showing up to the cemetery four days after the burial while the family is visiting and saying, “Hey guys! Grab a shovel and dig him up!”

**FATHER, I THANK YOU FOR HAVING HEARD ME** – In this prayer, which Jesus indicates is really for the benefit of others, he acknowledges a previous private/internal prayer which God has heard.

**LAZARUS, COME OUT** – Jesus calls Lazarus by name and Lazarus comes out. This has echoes of Jesus’ discussion of being the Good Shepherd from John 10. The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd who calls them by name (See John 10:3).