

DCF 310520 John 11:1-16 The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

We have no idea how old these 3 people were. There is no mention of their parents. They loved Jesus and Jesus obviously loved them. Not everyone is called to leave their home to follow Jesus. Some of us remain at home and witness to our neighbors. Bethany was within 8 km from Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It would have been wonderful for Jesus, the man, to know that there was a home in Bethany, where He could just relax.

The name Lazarus means 'God is my help' – the same as Eleazar. The sisters do not ask Jesus to come and heal Lazarus. It is enough, just that Jesus knows. They knew that he loved their brother – that was enough.

There are 2 words which are translated 'anoint'. This one is '*aleipo*' which is commonly used for medicinal anointing. So that its use in James 5:14, is to pray and use medicine for those who are sick. ¹⁴ ***Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.***

It is interesting that in praying for the sick we often sidestep the confession part. Confession requires humility which is essential for spiritual healing. The prime purpose of healing is not to get well, but to walk more closely with God. This is plainly repeated here in verses 4, 14 and 40, and in many other miracles of healing.

V4 ... that the Son of God may be glorified...

V14 ... that you may believe...

V40 ... if you would believe you would see the glory of God.

The other Greek word for anoint, is '*chrío*', which is used to describe sacramental anointing. It is of course root of the word '*christos*' which is the word Christ, or Messiah – the Anointed One.

The word for love here is '*phileo*', which signifies friendship, fondness, affection, delight and personal attachment. It is one of 4 Greek words for love, and is used when feeling is

emphasized. The word for friend in v11 is *philos*, which is related to it. Another word for love, used as a contrast in John 21 by Jesus is ‘*agape*’, which implies a duty and commitment. This is the unconditional love of God in John 3:16. In the John 21 passage, Jesus uses *agape* the first 2 times, then *phileo*. Peter replies with *phileo* each time. In that passage, Jesus asks Peter 3 times, **so that Peter would know, that Jesus knew, that Peter loved Him**. Satan would have bullied Peter, into believing that his denial was unforgiveable, and that it was proof that there was no real relationship – like Judas. But we worship a God who restores heart. A wonderful Father and friend. Christian forgiveness in a relationship goes beyond cancelling a transgression, if it is anointed by God, **it restores the relationship**.

John 11:4 ⁴ When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, 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 he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”

⁸ The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”

Some troubles are for the glory of God. Mary, Martha and Lazarus would have been very worried about this sickness. Our priority needs to be that God is glorified. Jesus actually lingers 2 more days, so that this happens. Peter teaches in ***1 Peter 1:6 ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.***

Troubles and trials are real. They cause much grief. But people rarely turn to God when things are going well. The genuineness of our faith is only ever tested by fire. Furthermore, the trials are rarely just a single trial. We are tested by various trials. Finance, sickness, family problems, things breaking down, sleepless nights, friends with problems can all distract us from our walk with God. Jesus has a good friend who is very sick. He has Mary and Martha, perhaps not understanding his lingering. He has the Jews in Judea wanting to kill Him. He has His disciple friends not understanding His priorities. These are major distractions, but His faith is genuine.

Peter finishes with this statement: ***the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls***. When we decide to follow Jesus, we are saved from hell. But the restoration of our soul continues while

we continue to live on this earth. Over and over, as we learn to walk with God, we experience a greater depth of His love.

When Jesus speaks of His glory – the ultimate glory is the death and resurrection at Calvary. John says in 12:16 that there were statements that the disciples did not understand until Jesus was glorified – meaning His death and resurrection. Jesus knew that what was to come was that the Jewish leaders would want to put Him to death. ***John 11:53*** ⁵³ ***Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.*** Conquering death was ultimate glory for Jesus.

We notice something about the character of Jesus. He was not intimidated by circumstance or people. He was entirely led by the Spirit of God. Back in John 2, He handles the wedding problem of no more wine, in His own manner. In John 7:3 His brothers want Him to go to Judea, but He goes when His timing is right – John 7:10. So too, even with the death of a good friend – He waits for God’s timing.

John 11:9 ⁹ ***Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”***

Time is a factor only God does not have to contend with. **2 Tim 1:10** teaches us that God is outside time. The word for time here is ‘*chronos*’ meaning a period of time, rather than a specific occasion or a length of time, but a span of unknown duration. ***...who has saved us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.***

Jesus is pointing out to His disciples two things about our life. Firstly, that we are all given time to achieve things for God. My first rule of Productivity is: Get started. In the classroom the first step in solving an equation was to pick up your pen. The tinniest start is a start. Too often we are paralyzed by the enemy to even begin a task for God. Prayer is vital – get started.

Secondly, Jesus is saying that the day does come to an end. Opportunities can be lost. We need to pray for words when we meet unsaved family or friends or strangers. The time will come when these opportunities will be gone.

But thirdly, Jesus is saying, our enlightenment by the Holy Spirit, needs to be acted on. If we walk in the light of spiritual understanding we will not stumble. But, if we walk in the darkness of no spiritual insight, we will stumble. The light of God has to be IN us.

1 John 1:5 ⁵ *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.* ⁶ *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* ⁷ *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

⁸ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

There are 2 strong indicators that a believer is walking in the light. Firstly, we will have fellowship with God and other believers. And secondly, we will confess our sins.

It is interesting that when Judas goes out to betray Jesus, John includes the information in **John 13:30 ... And it was night**. The window of opportunity does not stay open forever. Darkness will come. Just as the light of day comes to an end, so too, our chance to speak out for God may end. Their day from sunrise to sunset was divided into 12 equal divisions – so that a summer hour was longer than a winter hour. There were still 12 hours. But there was also only 12 hours. We must begin each day with an alertness to seize the moment for God.

John 11:12 ¹² *Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well.”* ¹³ *However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.*

¹⁴ *Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.* ¹⁵ *And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him.”*

One of the characteristics of the conversations recorded in John is that Jesus often says something which can be understood in the normal fleshly way, but has a hidden spiritual meaning.

John 2:19 *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*

John 3:3 *Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 4:14 *... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.*

John 6:35 *He who comes to Me shall never hunger.*

A fundamental theorem that God has taught me in understanding the spirit, is that **everything in the physical is given to us to understand the spiritual**. It is the principle behind parables. Over and over we have to ask ourselves, what is God trying to teach us? The disciples misunderstood that Lazarus had died.

Sleep is given to us to understand death. When Jesus goes to Jairus' daughter in Matt 9:24 He says ... ***the girl is not dead, but sleeping.*** Paul refers to believers who have died in 1 Cor 15:6 and 1 Thess 4:13,15 as ... ***those who have fallen asleep.*** The lesson is clear – we wake up in glory. Jesus has conquered death and the fear of death for us.

Heb 2:14¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

John 11:16¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Thomas has such a bad reputation amongst some people. He is labelled 'doubting Thomas' – as if we are superior to him. But here is a different side of him – he is a man of dedication and huge courage.

We must grow in faith. Thomas dies 20 years later serving God and spreading the gospel. The church is not a club. It is a collection of people who have pledged that Jesus is Lord. That means He has complete authority over our heart, our mind, our will and our actions. We live in perilous times. Throughout the world Christians are being persecuted. Even in Australia, policies are in place that are clearly against the will of God. Churches and people who attend church are choosing not to speak out for God, lest they offend the community.

Thomas sets the bar. Are we willing to die for God? Are we willing to sacrifice every second of our day for God? Do the things of God take priority over our money? Our time? Our hobbies? Our dreams? Our plans?

Let us pray that God will reveal to us, things in our life that we have not surrendered to Him.

PRAYER: Lord we thank You that You are our helper. We pray for our love for You to increase with boldness, to speak out for You. We pray that we will use these troubled times to draw even closer to You. We pray for our nation of Australia, that we will repent of the evil and idolatry that is so prevalent in our land. We pray for Your will to be done – not our will, and that Your will, will become our will. And we thank You that on the other side of death, is huge victory. We have this unshakeable hope, this conviction that we will spend eternity with You. Amen.

Here is a song I wrote a long time ago, after the Sydney Olympics.

You Don't have to give up Your Dreams

You don't have to give up your dreams, to walk with Jesus today,
'Cos my dream is to stand in the presence of God and to hear My Father say:
Well done my faithful one,
Well done my brave young man,
You've made yourself ready as a bride for My Son,
Come rise as an eagle and soar.

No, I'll never give up my dream
To be a prophet and speak out for the Lord,
To be one in whom the Father delights
A warrior with His Word as my sword.

To know the length and the breadth and the height and the depth of this love of God for me,
And to sing His praise both day and night
'cos My God has set me free.

No, I'll never give up my dreams
To walk with Jesus today,
'Cos my dream is to stand in the presence of God
And to hear my Father say:

Well done my Faithful son.
You don't have to give up your dreams.

Homework:

- Read John 21:15-19. How does Jesus restore Peter?

Jesus Restores Peter

¹⁵ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. ¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

- See how the death and resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate glory. John 12:16,23
- ***¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.***
- ...
- ***²³ But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal***

life. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

- See the independence of Jesus in John 2:4 and 7:3-10
2:4 ⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

7:3,10 ² Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

⁶ Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. ⁸ You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." ⁹ When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

¹⁰ But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

- Read a brief history of Thomas from Google. He may have even gone to China and Indonesia – who knows!

Thomas the Apostle ([Biblical Hebrew](#): תומא הקדוש; [Ancient Greek](#): Θωμάς; [Coptic](#): Θωμας; [Classical Syriac](#): ܬܘܡܐ ܫܠܝܗܐ *Taumā shliḥā* (*Thoma Sheliha*)), also called **Didymus** ("twin"), was one of the [Twelve Apostles](#) of [Jesus](#) according to the [New Testament](#). Thomas is commonly known as "[Doubting Thomas](#)" because he doubted [Jesus'](#) [resurrection](#) when first told of it (as related in the [Gospel of John](#) alone); later, he confessed his faith, "My Lord and my God," on seeing Jesus' crucifixion [wounds](#).

According to traditional accounts of the [Saint Thomas Christians](#) of modern-day [Kerala](#) in [India](#), Thomas is believed to have travelled outside the [Roman Empire](#) to preach the Gospel, travelling as far as the [Malabar Coast](#) which is in modern-day Kerala. According to their tradition, Thomas reached [Muziris](#) (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in the state of Kerala, India) in AD 52. In 1258, some of the relics were brought to [Ortona](#), in [Abruzzo](#), Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle. He is often regarded as the [patron saint](#) of India, and the name *Thomas* remains quite popular among Saint Thomas Christians of India.

He is thought to have died 53 AD in Madras India.