

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY
"The Gospel of John"
Pastor Jim Otte
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Lesson 47: John 11:28-12:11 "You Might Need Your Eyes Adjusted!"

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles^[c] 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.^[d] 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."

- a. "Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days." – Having already died, Lazarus' body would have been buried in a tomb, according to local customs. His body would have begun the deterioration process after 4 days. He was truly dead!
- b. "Martha said... 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'" – Martha is often given a bad rap, as the more obsessive of the two sisters – worried when Jesus came for lunch and angry that Mary wouldn't help her. Her faith in Jesus is strong, "*if you had been here.*"
 - a. In grief, we often ask the question: "If God really loves me, why did He let my loved one die?"
 - b. Jesus doesn't judge Martha in her grief.
 - c. He takes her eyes, beyond the immediate loss, to a greater promise: "*Your brother will rise again.*"
- c. "I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." – Martha's faith extended to understanding Jesus' relationship to His Father. A subtle, but clear request of faith, willing to submit her emotional wishes to whatever decision Jesus would make!
- d. "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection..." – Martha's understanding of death and resurrection is profound!
- e. "I am the resurrection and the life." – Jesus asserts His divinity: "I AM." He is the very power of the name of God to create new life out of nothing; or out of death!

- f. **“Whoever believes...though he die...he live...shall never die.”** – Jesus double-layers the meaning of “live/die” and “life/death.” Physical life and death are temporal and limited to this world.
 - a. The promise of eternal life is the last word, overcoming the fear that death is the end!
 - i. Eternal life gives new meaning, and a new comparison, when dealing with the struggles and losses of this life.
 - ii. ***Romans 8:18.*** *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*
- g. **“She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. I believe...’** – Martha’s profession of faith went beyond their friendship. She was a woman of great trust in Jesus!

²⁸ When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

- a. **“Mary...fell at His feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here...”** – Echoing Martha’s sentiments, Mary speaks in grief (what all of us have thought!)

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved^[e] in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

- a. **“He was deeply moved”** – Jesus’ human nature grieved at the death of His friend. Jesus’ grieving reminds you that grief, though painful, is good for us!
- b. **“Could not He...also have kept this man from dying?”** – There’s the question we all want to know...
 - a. Why does God allow bad things to happen to “good” people?
 - b. Is God selective as to whom He chooses to heal, and those who are not healed?
 - c. Is God’s sovereignty swayed by the goodness of the individual or of how faithful he/she is?
 - d. Does the amount of faith, or how strong it is, cause God to lean toward healing?

³⁸ 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. ⁴²I 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." ⁴³When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴The 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."

- a. "Did I not tell you, that if you believed, you would see...?" – Jesus is adjusting Martha's eyesight of faith. Martha undoubtedly believed she would see her brother at the resurrection on the last day – not that day!
- b. "on account of the people...that they may believe" – Jesus is clearly now performing signs which point to His divinity, not to prove anything to the Sanhedrin, but to prepare His disciples for the work they would do AFTER His ascension.
- c. "Unbind him, and let him go." – the wrappings of death were not appropriate garb for the living!