

Sermon Series: Book of John  
Sermon Title: The Raising of Lazarus  
Scripture Reading: John 11:1-44  
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church  
October 13, 2019  
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A small group of us from CBIBC will be headed to Japan on the weekend of October 25 to visit a ministry that we'd like to partner with in reaching the Japanese for Christ.

As I awoke on Friday morning, I looked at the weather and saw that massive Typhoon Hagibis was set to hit directly on the city of Nagoya and that it is forecasted to cause a lot of damage.

So, I decided I should pray for Japan and for this storm. I started out praying and my first thought was, *"Lord, show your love to the Japanese and make this storm go away from Japan."* That's a good thing to pray right. Well, yes...but then I realized something.

That's not the most loving thing that God can do for Japan.

The most loving thing that God could do for Japan, which is just barely 1% Christian, is to do whatever he has to do to show the Japanese their need for Jesus Christ. You see, the world over, what we all just really want is for trouble to go away. We all want a trouble free life, even if we die without Christ.

But as we will see today in the story of Lazarus, God is most loving to us, not when we have a trouble-free life, but when he shows us himself.

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I don't know if you have realized, but it seems that the miracles or signs that Jesus is doing in John seem to be intensifying. They are getting more difficult to do.

Last week we saw Jesus heal a man born blind and today we come to the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Is there anything more great than bringing someone back to life?

## **I. LAZARUS DIES.**

Why? Because he was ill, right?

Well, that is the means to his death but that is not the reason. What is the reason?

verse 4, "It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

So, everything in this story says that Lazarus is ill and going to die on purpose or for a purpose.

It is clear that Jesus loves this family. Several times it mentions that Jesus loves them.

verse 5-6

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.

He showed his love for them by NOT going to heal Lazarus.

He shows his love to them by letting Lazarus die so that they see his glory. What?

That's a strange way to love someone if you have the power to heal them.

We have to ask why this is good thing. How can this be love? We'd all say, *"Jesus, I'd feel more loved if you would just heal him of his illness and not let my brother die."*

In this sign of Jesus healing Lazarus, it is clear that Jesus thinks it is best for this family and best for his disciples for them to see his glory and for their belief in him to increase.

Look in [verse 14](#). "Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.'"

As RC Sproul once said, "*Gladness isn't the usual response to the death of a friend.*"

So, Jesus purposefully stays 2 more days where he is and lets Lazarus die....he loves them this way. And he is glad to not be there so that his disciples believe.

### **How can this be loving?**

Do you think that Lazarus, Martha and Mary feel more loved today than if this wouldn't have happened?

John Piper says this, "*Love is doing whatever you have to do to help people see and treasure the glory of God as their supreme joy.*"

So, Jesus lovingly waits a few days...lets Lazarus die on purpose in order that they may see just who Jesus is. Then, after Lazarus dies, he goes to Bethany near Jerusalem.

They've been in that area recently and when they did they almost got stoned to death. See chapter 10. The disciples aren't too excited about going back into a hornet's nest. That's why we see Thomas say in [verse 16](#), "[Let us also go, that we may die with him.](#)" As if to say, '*Great. Lazarus is dead and we will be, too.*'

When they get there the professional mourners, friends and family have all arrived it seems and rightfully so, they are all very sad. Their brother and friend has died.

Once Jesus arrives, both sisters come to Jesus at different times and say the same thing, "[Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.](#)"

Martha verse 21 and Mary verse 32.

We have no idea of the tone in which these ladies said this. What we do know is that what they say is true. Lazarus would not have died if Jesus would've been there. He healed multitudes of people with illnesses.

What we also know is that whatever tone they are saying this with and whatever faith they have.....they don't expect Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead... immediately.

Martha says, "I know...he will rise again in the resurrection of the dead." But not today! Lazarus is dead. And Jesus let it happen.

## **II. JESUS CRIES.**

Why?

We come to [verse 33](#) and we see something more perplexing than most of us realize on the surface.

["When Jesus saw her \[Mary\] weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept."](#)

Now most of us think that what is going on here is that Jesus is really upset because he loves Lazarus, which is true, and so he is heartbroken and weeps over his friend.

But, that's not what the original Greek says, nor does it fit the context.

*First*, We've already seen that Jesus has already determined what he would do.

Why would he cry if he planned to raise Lazarus from the dead? It was his idea!

He even said that he was 'glad' that he wasn't there and he wants them to see his glory. It doesn't make sense for us to read this as he is sorrowful.

*Secondly*, the Greek word here '*Embrimaomai*' means the snorting of a horse. It means outrage, anger and indignation.

You should read it like this: *'When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was angry and greatly troubled.. and tears flowed down his cheeks.'*

Why is he crying?

He's crying because they don't get it.

They don't understand fully who he is.

He's been communicating to them who he is...and he wants them to see his glory....he's told Martha...I am the Resurrection!

Jesus is angry because there is still unbelief in their hearts.

They're mourning as those who have no hope.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13**, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

They don't see who he is, they don't understand his power and glory and he loves them **SO** much....that it breaks his heart.

So, to summarize up to this point.....Jesus purposefully let's Lazarus die to display his glory to his followers, but his followers still don't fully believe that he can do THIS. So, he will raise Lazarus up now.

### **III. LAZARUS IS RAISED.**

How?

By the spoken word of Jesus. By the power of Jesus. He called Lazarus by name. Many have said that if he had simply said, "Come out", without saying Lazarus's name....who knows what would have happened!

Interestingly, Jesus already has the power to raise the dead...-pre-cross and before his own resurrection.

So, let's ask a hard question.

**Then why did he have to die on a cross...if he already has the power to raise people to life???**



Couldn't he just go around giving people life.  
Raise Lazarus. Raise Martha. Raise John.  
Kind of....an ongoing ministry of healing and raising and  
then they would just all keep living and be trouble free  
and happy.

Well, Lazarus will get sick again and die again and he'd  
get sick and die again but forever live in his sin. The sin  
barrier would still be there for all!

Jesus can't just travel around and raise people up,  
though he has that power.

Jesus will need to pay for sin so that Lazarus and  
everyone else can be forgiven and have access to God.  
How would he do that?

Lazarus raising from the dead is a SIGN. We've said that  
these signs point us somewhere.

What does it point to? Another resurrection.

#### **IV. JESUS IS RAISED.**

John 11 is the beginning of a section in John and here  
we have this resurrection. The other bookend is John 20.  
Jesus will die for sinners on the cross.  
He will trade places with Lazarus.

He will die. He will be wrapped up. He will be put in a cave. He will have a stone rolled on the door. He will rise again.

What's the application for us in this story?

What does this sign point **us** to?

*First*, we are to find our hope in the one who said that he is the Resurrection and the life. We will all go the way of Lazarus. One out of every one of us will get ill and we will die. What will be our hope then?

verse 25-26

“Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

That's the most important question that you will ever answer!

Do you believe that you are a sinner and that Jesus Christ paid for your sin on the cross and that he rose from the dead....to provide for you eternal life?

Where you spend eternity hinges on whether you believe this truth. Death is humanity's biggest problem and Jesus Christ solved that problem.

Let me read John 5:19-29

19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and

those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

*Second*, you may be going through some real difficulty right now and you may wonder if God loves you or not, because he obviously knows about your situation but he hasn't done anything about it.

He has stayed 2 more days and he hasn't come!  
He hasn't made the trouble go away.

Oh, but he has and is doing something else that is much more loving than making it go away.

**He is loving you by showing you who he is.**

If you are praying more, loving more, trusting more and leaning on him more, reading your Bible more....then he is loving you. What you are going through will pass someday, but the love you have for Jesus will remain.

And in 40 billion years when you are enjoying God in the heavenly city with so much joy that you are on the verge of bursting continually, this trial you're in will be seen NOT as a barrier to happiness, but a road sign that pointed you to it!

Let me close with a poem that I hope will help you understand the raising of Lazarus.

Jesus raises La-za-rus  
that glory be revealed to us.  
Behold! That glory's mostly seen  
when He expired upon the tree  
and made a way for Lazarus  
to rise again victorious,  
not once, not twice, but n'er again  
to be wrapped up in stink and sin.  
He tradeth places with the man  
and all who joineth in the band  
will hear Him say, "Take 'way the stone!",  
for by His power He rose...alone!