

**Men's Sunday Night Live**  
**Lesson 11 - John 11:1-57**  
**Finding Identity and Purpose**  
**Lazarus Raised**

In this chapter is the seventh of the miracles John recorded. Here we see salvation pictured as resurrection from the dead. The unsaved person is not just sick; he or she is spiritually dead. When a person is physically dead, they don't respond to such things as food, temperature, or pain. When a person is spiritually dead, there is no response to spiritual things. There's no interest in God, the Bible, Christians, or church until the Holy Spirit begins to work in their heart. What sinner's dead to God's ways need is not education, medicine, morality, or religion; they need new life in Jesus Christ.

There are three resurrections recorded in the Gospels, apart from that of our Lord Himself. Christ raised a twelve-year-old girl who had died, a young man who had been dead several hours, and an older man who had been in the tomb four days. How did Christ give them life? By the power of His word. This is the way He raised all three dead people mentioned above. Why did Christ raise Lazarus? Because He loved him and because it brought glory to God. We deserve to die and go to hell, but because of His great love, He rescued us. Lazarus was bound hand and foot and so could not free himself. The believer is not to be bound by the grave clothes of the old life, but should walk in the freedom of the grace cloths which is the new life.

It is interesting to note that the entire family at Bethany demonstrates what the Christian life is like. Mary is always found at Jesus' feet, listening to His Word. Martha is a picture of service; she is found busily doing something for Christ. Lazarus speaks of testimony, a daily walk that leads others to Christ. These three practices must be in our Christian experience: worship (Mary), work (Martha), and walk (Lazarus).

The Jews hated Lazarus because he convinced others of Christ's deity. Many of the chief priests were Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, and Lazarus was living proof that the Sadducees were wrong. Had the priests not been overruled by God, they would have put an extra cross on Calvary for Lazarus. Satan always fights a living miracle that testifies on God's behalf.

**Read John chapter 11:1-57 and answer the following questions**

1. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha? Why, do you think John stresses Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters in this account? (See 11:3, 5, 36)

2. Despite His love for Lazarus, why doesn't Jesus go immediately when he learns that he is gravely ill? (See 11:4-6, 14-15, 25-26, 41-42)

3. Jesus' disciples warn Him that going to Bethany, less than 2 miles from Jerusalem is very dangerous. What does Jesus' response tell you about His character and priorities? (See 11:9-11)

4. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, how long had Lazarus been dead? Why is this important?

5. Why do you think Jesus was so deeply moved at the death of Lazarus and wept? (See 11:33-35)

6. When Martha hears that Jesus has arrived, what does she do? What does she say to Jesus? Is she blaming Jesus for his death?

7. The raising of Lazarus is the last and greatest of Jesus' signs before His own resurrection. What does it reveal about:

A. Jesus' character, personality and values? (See 11:14-15, 25-26, 33-35, 40-42)

B. Jesus' identity? (See 11:25-27, 41-44)

C. Jesus' mission?

8. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, how did the people respond? (See 11:45, 53, 57, 12:10)

9. If you were to see a man who had been dead for four days walk out of a tomb, how would you act? Would you believe it?

10. What purposes besides the obvious, did Lazarus' raising from the dead achieve?

11. Why did Jesus go to Ephraim instead of Jerusalem? (See 11:54)

### **I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

It was after the raising of Lazarus from the dead that the chief priests, Pharisees, and the other religious leaders finally determined to put Jesus to death. Until now, the conflict between them and the upstart Rabbi had been little more than a war of words. But the raising of Lazarus was an incredible miracle, witnessed by many. Jesus had raised at least two others, but those events had taken place in faraway Galilee. By contrast, Lazarus' resurrection occurred in Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem.

Not surprisingly, this miracle caused many to believe in Jesus. It provided undeniable proof that Jesus' bold claim must be true. "*I Am the resurrection and the life,*" and *whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" John 11:25. Indeed Lazarus became something of a curiosity drawing numerous onlookers who wanted to see for themselves the man who Jesus had brought back to life.

It was this kind of publicity that the leaders especially feared. Disputes over religious matters were one thing, a rapidly growing movement led by a popular Messiah figure was something else. It was bound to have political repercussions, as the Romans were ever on the lookout for signs of rebellion.

It was Caiaphas the high priest who saw the usefulness of that fact. Why sacrifice the entire nation for the sake of Jesus, when Jesus could be sacrificed for the sake of the nation. The religious leaders now began to scheme how they might bring Jesus before the Romans and hopefully have Him put away on a charge of rebellion. And even though Lazarus had just been brought back from the dead, they plotted to do away with him as well, as he was living evidence of Jesus' power.

The plan succeeded brilliantly except for one detail that Caiaphas and his fellow leaders overlooked or refused to believe. In arranging His death, they handed Him an opportunity to prove once and for all that He had spoken the truth when He said, "*I Am the resurrection and the life*"