

**Hurst Green**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Apr 20**  
**Jesus prepares us.**  
**John 11:1-44**

Today we touch on another very familiar story – the raising of Lazarus.

I am sure most of you will have heard many sermons on this or have heard it told many times in Sunday School. There have been many slants taken on this story often focussing on why Jesus waited for two days before going to raise Lazarus.

He could have gone immediately and healed Lazarus and so saved Mary and Martha the grief of losing their brother.

We even know that he did not have to go – he could have just said the word and Lazarus would have been healed just like the Centurions daughter.

But I want to point out to you the reason for this story and it is very simple for Jesus himself tells us why this happens in Verse 4

**John 11:4 (ANIV)**

<sup>4</sup> *When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, **it is for God's glory** so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*

Just like last week and the man born blind this happened so that God's glory may be shown.

It's worth remembering that when we pray for miracles or hear of miracles happening. They will only ever happen for the Glory of God.

We can cry out of God's mercy and remind him of his many promises to us (actually he already remembers them and all we are doing is reminding ourselves) but in the end the miracle happens for God's Glory.

The Kingdom of Heaven touches Earth and amazing things happen and God's glory is shown.

And why is God's glory shown. That too is a subject that is speculated on over and over but the answer is really very simple and Jesus gives us the answer in verse 15

**John 11:15 (ANIV)**

<sup>15</sup> *and for your sake I am glad I was not there, **so that you may believe.** ~~But let us go to him.~~"*

All that God does on this earth is for that one purpose – so that you may believe. So that everyone may believe.

Way back in Isaiah after talking about creation it says

**Isaiah 41:20 (ANIV)**

<sup>20</sup> *so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.*

God shows his glory that Man might see and believe. From the little daisy to the mighty mountains – they are all there that man might see and know.

And all these miracles and the miracles that happen today are all there to show God's glory that man might believe.

And when you hear of things going on this is the test that you must apply to them to see if they are for real or if they are part of the devils attempts to deceive you and take you away from the truth. Are they showing God's glory or is man in the way claiming the glory?

Knowing that this is so that God's glory may be shown and so man may believe let's go back to Lazarus for there is more purpose in this miracle and more that we might learn about God.

Jesus wants to talk about resurrection. He has been and will be teaching his disciples about his need to die and be resurrected and now he has some lessons for Mary and Martha.

In talking to Martha Jesus says in verse 25

**John 11:25-26 (ANIV)**

<sup>25</sup> *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

Now that gets convoluted *will live even though he dies and will never die.*

To understand this you must recognise that there are two deaths.

One is our physical death here on earth that will come to almost all people – the exception being Elijah and those who are still here at the second coming.

Of course for a few who are raised from the dead they get a second physical death such as the Holy men who are raised at the same time as Jesus.

**Matthew 27:52-53 (ANIV)**

<sup>52</sup> *The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. <sup>53</sup> They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.*

The second death is the one spoken of in revelation 20 and 21 where all are judged and those whose names are not written in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire

**Revelation 20:14 (ANIV)**

<sup>14</sup> *Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.*

That second death is the one we do not have to worry about because we believe and our names are written in the book of life.

Now for Martha this revelation, even before Lazarus is raised, is enough.

**John 11:27 (ANIV)**

<sup>27</sup> *"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."*

And Jesus goes on to raise Lazarus but even before that there is a lesson for us.

Down in verse 39 Martha says that the stone should not be rolled away because there would be a bad odour.

Having accepted that Jesus is the resurrection she still does not have that belief firmly in her life and Jesus says

**John 11:40 (ANIV)**

<sup>40</sup> ~~Then Jesus said,~~ "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Then Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in front of all of those people and if you read on in Chapter 12 the word spread that Jesus had done this The crowd spread the word – they witnessed to what they had seen the same as we are called to do.

But in all of this story Jesus was doing something that shows his loving and caring side. Yes he has shown the Glory of God and many have believed because of it but he could have done that in many ways.

Jesus had been and will be teaching about his resurrection and he has now demonstrated to a large crowd God's power can raise people from the dead.

He is preparing his disciples for his death and resurrection by showing them that death can be defeated.

His love and care is shown in that he does not throw them in at the deep end but he prepares his people for what they are about to go through.

And God is unchanging and, even in these difficult times, God has not sent us in unprepared.

All the years we have been a Christian and all of the teaching we have heard, even the bits we have forgotten, have been to prepare us for this time and the good works we can do to show God's glory.

Our steadfast faith and hope in this situation, our rock solid belief in God, our certainty that he is in charge all are our witness to the world around us as they wallow in hopelessness and despair.

Jesus has prepared us for such a time as this.

We may have to dig deep but we are ready to proclaim the hope within us.

This Easter as we celebrate the resurrection, as we celebrate the defeat of satan, as we celebrate our eternal life we stand tall in our world.

This virus too will pass but our faith is certain and will go on for ever.