

Faith Builder Series

THE
THE
GOSPEL
GOSPEL
OF JOHN

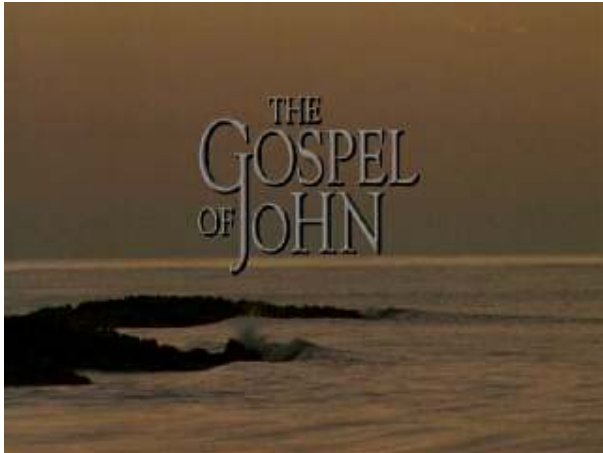


Life changing and impacting studies through the Gospel of John –
with the *soul* purpose of strengthening and building your faith and
trust in God!

14 – John chapter 11

Ps Roger Spackman
Entire series of Bible Workshops freely available from
www.TeAtatuBaptist.com

Slide # 1 - Video – Gospel of John chapter 11



As we start our Bible Workshop today, I want to offer you an assurance.

None of us knows what happens at the *point* of death –

...of the opportunities God may offer to His beloved humanity –

...weather Christian *or not*.

What I do know – and the Bible clearly teaches –

...is that God would rather descend into hell,

...than see any of His beloved creation be separated from Him for eternity.

And without stretching it too far, the verse from 1 Peter 4:6 comes to mind:

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

So – with all respect, can you describe to me a funeral of an unbeliever, compared to that of a believer.

Let's pray and ask God to speak into our hearts and lives, to meet us at our point of need today.

Slide # 2



Original Meaning
What it meant 2000 years ago!

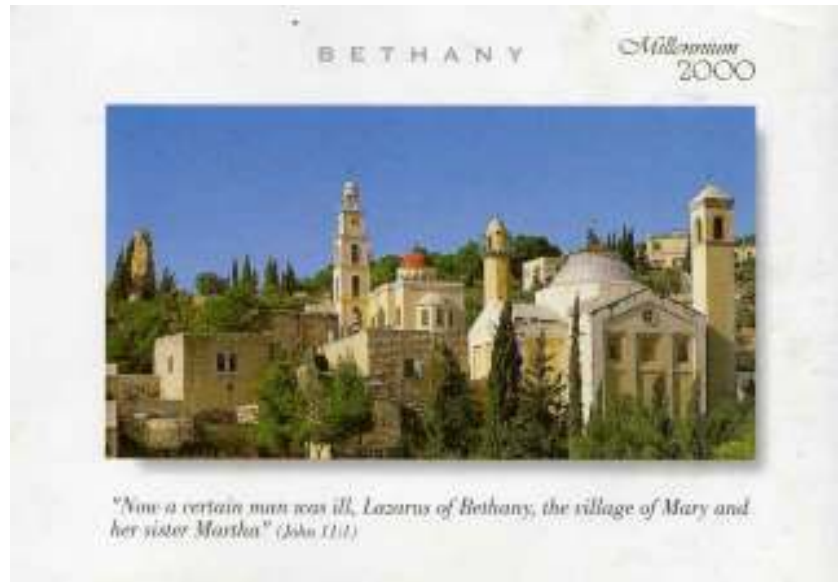
So – the setting of these events is Bethany – a cute little village east of Jerusalem – just over the Mount of Olives.

Today this village is known as El-Aziriyeh – translated into English as - *The Town of Lazarus*.

Slide # 3 – Photo of Bethany

This village and road is the most *common* way to travel from Jerusalem to Jericho.

And it is on this road that many other well known Bible stories take place –



...including Blind Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus the tax collector, and the Good Samaritan.

When Jesus visited Jerusalem, He *always* stayed in Bethany –

...and that is why so many of our gospel events also take place there.

And it was in this small village that a *family* lived – who were very dear to Jesus.

Mary was the oldest, and she lived with her sister Martha, and their brother Lazarus.

And upon hearing about Lazarus deathly illness, Jesus reacts in a way that seems totally out of character.

He refuses to come immediately, because God's agenda doesn't always fit into the busy schedule and expectations of humanity.

Yet what Jesus does say – is similar to chapter 9 about the man born blind.

This illness is for the *glory* of God.

When Jesus finally comes to Bethany, Lazarus had been *dead* four days.

Slide # 4

This is actually a really important fact, because historical documents reveal the Jewish belief-

... that the soul of a dead person remains close by the body for *three days* after death –

...hoping to *re-enter* it.

But – *after* three days – once decomposition began to set in – the soul would then depart.

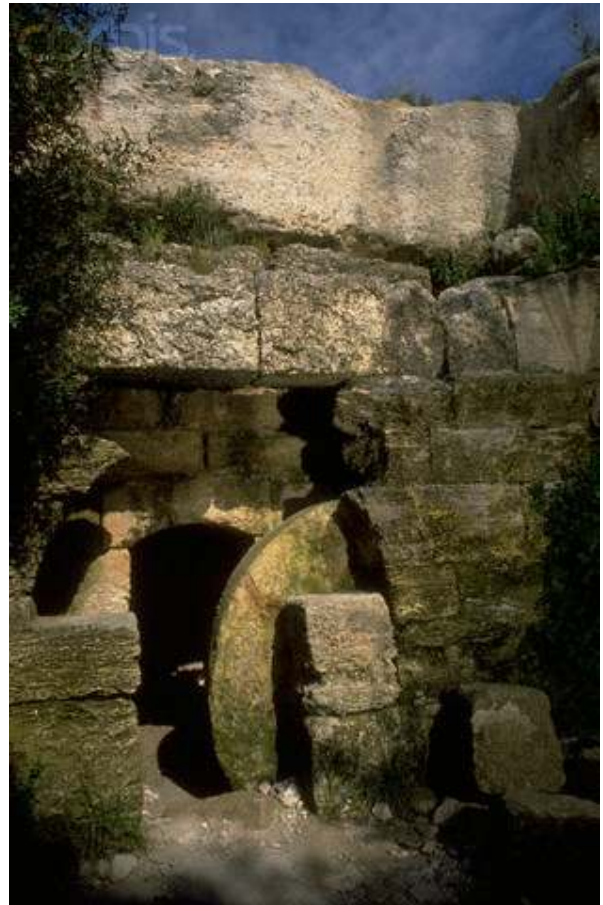
And knowing that fact might just enhance your understanding of why it was – that Jesus rose on the third day –

...and why the Bible prophesies twice in the Psalms – that the body of Jesus will not see decay, this is also mentioned *four* times in the book of Acts. (Psalm 16:10, 49:9. Acts 2:27, 2:31, 13:35, 13:37)

So – Jesus wanted to make sure that *everyone* knew that Lazarus was dead.

Grief and mourning are not private affairs in Palestine - 2000 years ago or today.

Slide # 5



Family members would hire professional mourners to add to the atmosphere of the ceremony.

Funeral services were formal and community events – always lasting *seven* days –

...where the body was buried on the following week, on the same day as the death.

The body was then placed inside a tomb –

...which was a cave six feet under the ground containing carved out benches upon which the body was placed and left to decay for a year –

...when the tomb was again opened and the bones placed in a limestone burial box.

In the midst of her grief – Martha rushes out of the village to find Jesus.

‘Lord – if you had been here – Lazarus would still be alive! --- And yet, I still believe in You, that God will give you anything you ask!’

Chapter 11 verse 33 says that ‘Jesus was *moved deeply* in His spirit.’

I suggest that the translation of ‘moved deeply’ does not express the true emotion of Jesus.

In classic Greek – the original words describe the snort of a horse that is charging in battle.



Jesus was *enraged* !

But – what exactly *was* it – that enraged Him?

Surely He *wasn't* angry at Mary or Martha, and certainly *not* at Lazarus!

If you have ever attended the funeral of unbelievers or those who have no eternal hope – you will know something of the grief Jesus saw in the *crowd* that day.

Slide # 6

Pitiful.

All hope lost.

A loved one gone forever.

Overcome in defeat.

Without hope.

And yet – here in their midst stands the One in whom eternal life, hope, joy and faith is found!

Jesus *only* interest now, is to locate the tomb and demonstrate His divine power over humanities deepest enemy.

His tears are *not* for Lazarus – for Jesus knows that only life and joy are awaiting Lazarus on the other side of death.

Jesus weeps for the crowds who have no hope – for whom death is the only outcome of sin and life.



The life long mission of Jesus is to *completely* defeat death and sin –

...and yet here again – Jesus comes face-to-face with the pain these enemies can cause.

It's almost as if we can hear the heart beat of Jesus –

...so close to His death and victory –

...eager to complete His goal –

... and yet so far away –

...as His friend lays dead, and the people He created –

...suffering in anguish and grief.

The purpose of raising Lazarus from the dead was not for the sake of Lazarus, as Jesus knew he was in a better place!

The purpose of this miracle was to bring *comfort* to the people.

Not that they can avoid death, but by seeing the power Jesus has over death –

...they too can be *assured* of the power of His resurrection, and of eternal life!

And so – Jesus entered the tomb on the *fourth* day.

This time frame is important for *more* than what we learnt before about Jewish tradition and the soul of a person remaining close by for three days.

And it is quite similar to the practice in medieval England when struck by the Bubonic plague.

Remember what was placed inside the coffin in case the person revived?

That's right – a bell!

You see, in the days of Jesus, medical treatment was rather primitive.

Many times a person would lapse into a coma or other conditions that gave the *appearance* of death.

Sometimes people would be so diseased that even though not yet dead,

...they were *quarantined* to a tomb for three days to either die or recover naturally.

The time frame for this quarantine was – *three days*.

And so, what Jesus was doing, was not that unusual.

In fact, it was common. However, what was to happen next, was nothing like ordinary!

Bridge over time
Timeless Truths
Universal Principles

Slide # 7

Without a doubt – Jesus has entered history and left an *indelible* impression upon it.



Not only did Jesus *proclaim* to be the Light – He *proved* it by bringing sight to the blind.

Not only does He *claim* to be the resurrection and the life – He *proved* it by raising a man from the tomb.

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is the *seventh* and final miraculous sign Jesus gave as proof of His divinity.

It is no coincidence that Biblically, the number 7 is the number of perfection.

The events of the empty tomb – of both Lazarus and Jesus –

...assures humanity that forever, death is defeated and the grave has lost its sting!

There are just a few *main* points from this chapter that offer the greatest hope and confidence in the face of death –

...for all of humanity –

...for all of time.

And in doing so – we need to be aware of the *journey*, the *progression* Jesus always makes in people's lives.

This journey is from being a *believer* of God, into being a *disciple* of Christ.

Slide # 8



You see, the characters in our bible chapter from 2000 years ago,

... are not any different in this respect to every person in time and eternity –

... who has a spark of faith lit in their hearts – by the Spirit of God

Those to whom Jesus ministered were mainly Jews, who *already* believed in God.

The biblical and historic name given to them is, a God Fearer.

The church throughout history, and even *here today* – is full of God Fearers.

Those who believe in Creator God – but have yet to cross the line to become a disciple of Christ.

This is *so* important.

And for those of Jesus day, throughout history, and here today-

...the only way a person can cross over,

...is to be *taught* and to have this new *knowledge* fanned into fire by the Holy Spirit of God.

And for this reason, the main character and focus of John chapter 11 – is *not* Lazarus, but Jesus.

As amazing as the resurrection of Lazarus was concerned, Lazarus actually had *little choice* in the matter.

And anyway, as mentioned before – *despite* being healed – Lazarus eventually died and his body rotted.

But as for Jesus – He too died – but He rose again on the third day – never to die again.

And for that reason – we can *transition* from being somebody who *believes* in God – into somebody who is a *disciple* of Christ.

And in order to help us make this transition,

...as John wrote and prepared this gospel to preach to his church at Ephesus –

...he masterfully introduces a whole list of the names and titles belonging to Jesus.

And he did it in such a way, that neither his church – or people thereafter – would even realise they were being taught theology and doctrine.

We just think we are reading a story –

...but as we do –

...the Spirit of God takes the written word and once again breathes it into life in *our* hearts, in our *soul* and *spirit*.

In this one chapter –

...we are taught that Jesus is –

.. a *rabbi* and

...*teacher*,

...that He is *Lord*, the *Christ*,

...the *Son* coming into the world,

...and that He is the *Resurrection*

...and the *Life*.

Slide # 9

And we are not learning about an *idea* or a *program* –

...we are learning about a person –

...we are learning about God –

...who is Lord over life and over death!



But here's the thing.

Jesus doesn't want to *wait* for people to *die* – in order to resurrect them.

He wants to do it while we are living!

And that's where the role of the church comes in.

You see – it was Jesus who called this person out of the tomb – from darkness into light.

And yet – as he stood there – still wrapped in burial clothes – who was it who unwrapped him and set him free!

It was the people closest to Jesus – it is the church, it is you and it is me.

Slide # 10



Application to today!
What it means to you and
me – right now!

It has been said, that the body count for humanity – *is one per person.*

We live in a society that is afraid of death,

...that tries to prolong life – not just with makeup and vitamins,

...but also prolong life for those who are suffering and incapacitated.

And yet – sometimes we're not prolonging *life* –

...we are prolonging *death.*

And to a large degree – in our Western World –

...we have hidden death away –

...we have handed it over to professionals –

...to morticians and to the hospital system.

Many, if not most people today – have *never* seen a person die.

And when they do – they are laid *in what one person has called* –
...a casket that looks like a plush oversized jewellery box!

And it seems that our heartfelt motivation to do this,
...is to make death as *pleasant* as possible.

But I tell you the truth –

...all this actually does is *mask* a profound anxiety –
...that even the prettiest funeral service cannot disguise.

You see, the raw and naked truth –

...is that you and I – and all our loved ones and friends –
...each and every one of us here today - *will die*.

And the time to *think* about these things is today – not once it is too late.

And as Christians who love God – this is where you and I come into play.

When Martha came to Jesus,

...she proclaimed her faith and trust in God to raise Lazarus from the grave in the final resurrection –

...at some time in the *distant future*.

And while this is true, Jesus corrects Martha –

...and helps her to see that His resurrection power and life is not something waiting for us in the future –

...at the end times, or at the final resurrection.

Slide # 11

This same resurrection power – of both Lazarus and Jesus –



...is available for you and for me – today, right now!

And it isn't a blind faith that tires to minimize or brush the grief of death away.

It is a life of *hope*, a life of *faith* and a life of *purpose*!

Let me attempt to describe to you what this resurrection life would look like.

But to do so – the Bible is asking us to step into the shoes of a dead man –

...and see life from his perspective.

You see, this gospel story isn't just the story of Lazarus.

It is a story about you – and a story about me.

How do you think Lazarus's life would have been *changed* after that resurrection day?

Honestly!

How do you think he would have viewed life,

...viewed God,

...viewed service and sacrifice for Christ?

How do you think he would have reacted over the death of his loved ones and friends *from that day forward*?

And, finally laying on his own – and second death bed many years later –

...how scared do you think he would have been?

The gospels make it clear,

...that as we place our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ –

...that in affect,

...we have died with Him –

...and we have been resurrected with Him as well!

If, like Lazarus – you and I have *already* died and risen again with Christ –

...what affect do you think this should have on our lives?

How do you think this will affect our mood, our actions and our reactions?

How can this offer comfort and peace in the face of the death of a loved one, even a child?

The main point of today's Bible Workshop –

...is that the same resurrection knowledge, power and liberty that Lazarus walked in –

...this same confidence –

...can be yours –

...and can be mine-

today!

Let's pray together.

Faith Builder Series



- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Introduction | Magic Eye pictures! |
| 2. John 1:1-18 | God with skin on |
| 3. John 1:19-51 | Learning to love God |
| 4. John 2:1-25 | Party time |
| 5. John 3:1-36 | New birth |
| 6. John 4:1-54 | Eternally satisfied |
| 7. John 5:1-47 | Ministry to the suffering |
| 8. John 6:1-71 | Bread of heaven |
| 9. John 7:1-52 | Standing up for Jesus |
| 10. John 7:53 – 8:11 | Caught in the act! |
| 11. John 8:12-59 | Caught in tradition |
| 12. John 9:1-41 | Now I can see |
| 13. John 10:1-42 | The Good Shepherd |
| 14. John 11:1-57 | Come forth! |
| 15. John 12:1-50 | The hour has come |
| 16. John 13:1-38 | Getting ready to leave |
| 17. John 14:1-31 | I won't leave you alone |
| 18. John 15:1 – 16:4a | Staying connected |
| 19. John 16:4b – 33 | Led by the Spirit |
| 20. John 17:1-26 | Inspirational prayer |
| 21. John 18:1 – 19:16a | The Passion! |
| 22. John 19:16b – 42 | Golgotha and Glory |
| 23. John 20:1-31 | Unless I can touch Him... |
| 24. John 21:1-25 | Breakfast on the beach! |

Part One
The Book of
SIGNS

Part Two
The Book of
GLORY