

LAZARUS

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Key verses: John 11:1-12:19

Main points:

Here is the key to help unlock the entire passage. Jesus knew that for Him to raise Lazarus He had to die. For Lazarus to live, Jesus had to die. **That's** true for everybody. He knows He is going to Jerusalem to die. When He goes to Lazarus He set in motion the chain of events that's going to take Him to the cross. Jesus was going to need to fully entrust Himself into His Father's hands and to Holy Spirit. He is on a journey of complete surrender. They love Him and are leading Him towards that point and encouraging Him every step of the way.

He stands in the midst of the sorrow and speaks about being the resurrection and the life. When He stands in front of the tomb and says move the stone He is seeing in Lazarus what He will do for all men and women, everywhere. Lazarus is representative of everything that's to come. We're all Lazarus, every one of us.

He knew He would be hurriedly put in a tomb; there would be no time for anointing. Father sends Mary to anoint him. It's a dress rehearsal: He sees what He will go through and He receives that anointing now.

John knew everything was about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Four lessons from Lazarus:

1. Understand who you are.

You and I are Lazarus. We were all dead in our transgressions and sins. We brought nothing to the party. Jesus spoke the word that brought death to life: in the context of the new covenant it is the gospel. You once were dead, you're now alive. He called you by name. You were called from death to life. Jesus made sure that the stone was rolled away and He called you by name. You believed and trusted in His name and are alive in Christ.

2. Understand the will of God.

It's God's will to bring people out of tombs, not put people in tombs. He does not treat us as our sins deserve. The will of God is life! God has made up His mind about SA. All legitimate work is worship. It is bringing order out of chaos every day and it is worship. The story ends in a new heaven and new earth. We are prisoners of hope!

3. Understand evangelism and mission.

Evangelism: your witness to your neighbour and mission: going elsewhere with the gospel. Our job is to move away the stone and speak life. Evangelism is about raising the 'dead'. The gospel gives the gift of faith and brings the dead to life.

Don't expect the unbeliever to act like a believer. The rolling away of the stone is on us. We go to where they are and we remove every obstacle, every ounce of condemnation, hurt and confusion and speak with confidence in Jesus' name. The faith is in the power of the gospel and what it can do.

4. Understanding what it means to be the community of faith.

When Lazarus came out of the tomb he had his grave clothes on. Jesus said to those around to take off the grave clothes. They took off the smelly clothes and put decent ones on him. Then they celebrated Lazarus and his life at a dinner party.

From this you can understand what it means to be the community of faith. When we came out of the grave, we were clothed in our stinky grave clothes. We still had our addictions, racist attitudes, prejudices, offenses and our hurts and unbelief. It's the job of our brothers and sisters to take off the stinky clothes and get us clothed in the robes of righteousness and to create an environment when we can get together and celebrate life together. It takes a bit of work, money and serving.

Lazarus is alive!