

John chapter 11 gives to us the last and most powerful of the seven miraculous signs in the Gospel of John. Lazarus, the good friend of Jesus had been dead for four days. Jesus enters the scene and raises Lazarus from the dead. Earlier Jesus had been notified that Lazarus was sick and the family requested Jesus to visit them in this time of need when Lazarus was alive but ill. Jesus said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (John 11:4).

The most important theme in the universe is the glory of God (Dr John MacArthur, John 1-11., pg 450). All of God's works bring glory to God. The creation itself speaks and sings of God's glory. Psalm 19:1, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God." Isaiah 6:3, "The whole earth is full of His glory. Rom 1:20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, God's eternal power, and divine nature are clearly seen so they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God." Yes, all of creation points to the God of glory and was created to bring glory to God as are we. Throughout the Bible God shows us his glory such as the time God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock and God's goodness and glory passed behind Moses. The glory of God led God's people in the wilderness. Jesus Himself was transfigured on the high mountain and His face shown like the sun and His garments became white as light. You and I were put on this earth to bring glory to God. We are here to live for God, love God, witness for God. Our lives are to be so caught up in God so that we will shine brightly for God. As we live for the glory of God, our lives take on new meaning and even our countenance becomes brighter for God's glory can shine through us as God sees fit. I know of some people who glow because God is so vibrant in their lives. Lazarus became sick and Jesus knew that the illness of Lazarus would bring great glory to God. Jesus is so amazing. He can take the worst of situations, the most painful of situations, and use them to bring glory to God for our God is a God of glory. God can take the worst of suffering and bring the most good out of it for God is good and there is no power greater than God's power. We are here on this earth to glorify

God and enjoy God forever and ever. Lazarus' resurrection brought glory to Jesus and the Father, strengthened the faith of the disciples, and formalized the religious leaders' decision to kill Jesus.

Let us pray. God of all glory and grace, may You shine brightly on us at this moment and speak Your truth into our lives. Your word tells us that You are working all things in our lives for our good and your greater glory. May the Light of Christ break through the darkness in our lives. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to come quickly and heal their brother because they did not want Lazarus to die. Jesus was in no hurry to get there for he knew what he was going to do upon his arrival.

This church receives phone calls, emails, texts and visits from people requesting prayer. The ministry of the prayer chain is an active ministry. Most of the requests revolve around health issues. In prayer we ask Jesus to visit the sick person and to bring healing. Yes, we all have stories that we can tell of people's health improving after there has been much prayer. We all believe Jesus can heal any person, but God may choose not to heal the person in this life. You and I cannot explain why God allows one to get better and another one to grow more ill and eventually die. I honestly believe God can bring great glory to Himself even in our illnesses as we yield everything over to Jesus. "Okay Jesus I don't like being this sick but please glorify yourself with my sickness." It hit me as I was writing this sermon that the people I have prayed the hardest for healing are with the Lord Jesus today (you may choose not to ask me to pray. I don't have a very good track record). Yes, the Lord healed them by bringing them into heaven. When they breathed their last, they were brought into the fullness of God's glory and in that God was glorified. God's resurrection power raised them into heaven and all for the glory of God. All of our suffering will one day give way to the glory of God. Paul writes, "Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will give us later" (Romans 8:18). Understanding this gives us

the ability to rejoice in our suffering now for in it, God will glorify Himself in ways that we do not comprehend but one day we will have full knowledge. The most difficult circumstance you face I know with absolute certainty God can bring the most good out of it to the glory of God.

The request for Jesus to visit came. Jesus patiently waited until He knew it was the proper time to visit. Jesus knew his friend Lazarus had died. It must be noted that the family of Lazarus as well as the disciples knew how dangerous it was for Jesus to travel to Bethany for the Jews were seeking to stone Jesus there. Thomas said, "Let us also go that we may die with Him" (John 11:16).

At great risk Jesus travels to be with his friends knowing full well Lazarus was dead.

John 11:17-27(NIV) ¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days." Friends, Jesus Himself would be laid into a tomb in a short time. I do think Jesus had his own imminent death in mind. Jesus knew that what He was about to do for Lazarus, God the Father would do for Jesus in even greater measure for Jesus would be raised from the dead never to die again. Jesus knew He would find his friends with intense sadness and grief at the death of their brother.

²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home." ²¹"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Martha speaks words of faith to Jesus. ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She was not chewing Jesus out as we might think. In the midst of her horrendous grief she trusted in Jesus and knew whatever Jesus would do would be right. In her grief she trusted in her Lord. Martha knew the Lord could have healed him. Martha also knew they would be reunited on resurrection day. Her thinking was absolutely correct. On this All Saints Sunday it is so good to be reminded that one day we will be reunited with our loved ones who are now with Jesus. We will be together forever.

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ,[£] the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

In the sadness and grief that death brings, we all need to hear the words of eternal life. I see these words as some of the most important and encouraging words Jesus ever spoke. This is the reason why Jesus came, so we can have the gift of eternal life in the fullness of God's glory. Martha's was in the depths of pain. Jesus met her right where she was at, listened to her, and spoke the truth in love. When you see death from God's perspective it changes everything. The believer in Christ never dies. He or she breathes their last and then they are with the Lord Jesus. Death ushers you into the glory of God. After you breathe your last breath here you are more alive than ever there in heaven. There is no more sadness, only eternal bliss. God is never kinder than in death. The greatest moment of all is when the Lord takes you home. All the suffering and pain you experienced here is instantly forgotten. Actually, the more you suffer here the more will be your experience of God's glory there. The greater the suffering the greater the glory. It is so good to ponder death and eternal life from God's perspective. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Jesus is victorious over death and grants that victory to all who come to faith in Him.

When Mary comes to see Jesus, he sees her intense grief. Jesus sees the grief of the mourners. Jesus is the Son of God and God the Son. Jesus knows the glory of heaven and still he grieves with his friends and weeps with them. Weeping at death is not a lack of faith. Weeping and grieving takes place because we love the person who died so much, and it is a loss that words cannot express. Faith in Jesus does not take away the pain of death. Faith in Jesus gives us a foundation to stand upon with our pain.

Jesus knew what He was going to do and ordered the stone to be taken away from the tomb. Roll away the stone. Martha did not know what Jesus was going to do and warned him of the horrible smell from the body that had been dead four days. Jesus speaks to her kindly, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" The stone was taken away and Jesus spoke with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." Lazarus arose and came out still wrapped in the linen cloths.

John does not tell us about the reunion of Lazarus with his sisters. This miracle brought great glory to Jesus and the Father. Those that witnessed the miracle came to faith in Christ and the faith of the disciples was greatly strengthened.

I have a concluding comment on the All Saints weekend, especially as we think about the deaths of loved ones. Friends when someone we love so much dies it is possible for us to doubt God's love, mercy, and grace and even lose hope. When we trust in Christ we need never lose hope because Jesus, the source of our hope, is alive and lives to intercede for us. Because you belong to Jesus, Jesus will not turn against you but always pleads to the Father on your behalf. There is someone here right now who truly needs to hear what is being said. Please do not think God has turned against you in your loss. No, in your loss you have great things to be gained in Christ. His all sufficient grace is right there.

One more thought about grief before I conclude this sermon. I still grieve members of my family that died years ago. You think the grieving process is over and there it is again. I do not fault people in their grief, but I am learning that deep ache in the soul is not just missing the one that died. That deep ache in the soul is not just the loss of a loved one. We get tired of living in this sin-filled world and we are homesick for heaven. God has written eternity in our hearts and we long to be where our souls yearn to be, with Jesus.

Please look at the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ is the greatest symbol of hope. The best is still in front of us. The other side awaits us. Jesus is no longer on the cross. Yes, He

died on the cross for our sins. He redeemed us when He died. The price for our very salvation was paid in full by His death. His death means life eternal for all who are saved, born again into a living hope. The cross means there is life after death, resurrection, heaven, the fact that we will all be reunited because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. This is an absolute fact and Jesus' resurrection is all the proof we need. We have reason to hope. Hope is not unreasonable, some pie in the sky positive attitude. There is no reason for despair. Hope is something that we cling to and even rely on for our hope is Jesus. Jesus is worthy of us clinging to Him and relying on Him forever and ever and in Him we find hope eternal. Jesus is our hope for we will be together forever. Amen and Amen.