

#### 44. Jesus Told Mary Lazarus Would Rise Again

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus took time to tell Martha that He is the resurrection and the life and that this message caused Martha to be encouraged because it reminded her that she would see her brother again. In our topic today, we are going to see that Mary said the same thing that Martha had said when she first saw Jesus. However, Jesus knew that she needed to be ministered to in a different way than He had ministered to Martha.

We saw in our last topic that Martha had told Mary privately that Jesus had arrived at their town. Mary then left the home and went quickly to the place where Martha had met Jesus. John 11:31-32 says, “Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, ‘She is going to the tomb to weep there.’ Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” Here, we see that the Jews at the home of Mary quickly followed her when she left the home.

However, the Jews did not know what Martha had told Mary because she had told her privately that Jesus had come. As a result, they did not know why Mary had suddenly gotten up and left. They had come to comfort Mary and were concerned when she quickly left the home without explaining where she was going. This group of comforters may have included some professional mourners as the Jewish custom was to have three or more mourners, including at least two flute players and a wailing woman. These people followed Mary because they assumed that she was going to the tomb to weep and they wanted to be with her to comfort her.

Mary quickly hurried to the place where Martha had met Jesus because she also wanted to see Him. When she came to the place where Jesus was, she fell at His feet. Then, she said exactly the same thing that Martha had said to Jesus a short time before. She said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” Mary also recognized that Jesus had the power to heal and knew that He would have healed Lazarus if He had arrived before the death of Lazarus. Jesus also saw that the large group of comforters was following Mary as she came to Him.

The word translated “comforters” means *to speak words to encourage or console* and is used four times in the New Testament. It is used in verses 19 and 31 in this chapter and then twice in the book of 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 says, “You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” Here, we see that Paul, Silas and Timothy encouraged the new Christians in Thessalonica just as a father encourages his children. Then, 1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” First, In this verse, we see that we are to encourage those who are easily discouraged.

John 11:33-36 says, “Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’”

They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’” Jesus saw the sorrow and grief of Mary and the many friends that were following her. We see the response of Jesus to this grief and sorrow. Jesus did three things. First, we see that He groaned in the spirit. The word translated “groaned” comes from the word meaning to “to snort with anger”. In the spirit, Jesus groaned as He saw the consequences of original sin in the sorrow that sin and death brings.

Second, we see that Jesus was troubled. The word translated “troubled” means *to agitate, to cause a person to be anxious or distressed or to take away calmness of mind*. This word was used of Jesus in John 13:21 where we read, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’” Here, we see that Jesus was troubled in spirit because He knew that Judas was going to betray Him because the heart of Judas was controlled by sin. However, Jesus then told the rest of the disciples in John 14:1, “‘Let not your heart be troubled...’” Then, John 14:27 says, “‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’” Sin and the consequences of sin troubled Jesus but Jesus wanted His disciples to experience inner peace because He would defeat sin at the cross.

Third, we see that Jesus wept. Romans 12:15 says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Jesus saw Mary and the people who came with her all weeping. Jesus asked where the body of Lazarus had been laid. They just said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept with those who wept as they walked together to the tomb where the body of Lazarus had been placed. Jesus showed His love by weeping with them in their sorrow. Matthew 9:36 says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Jesus had this same compassion as He saw Mary and the friends of Lazarus as they mourned the death of Lazarus.

The Jews who were with Mary saw the tears of Jesus as He wept. Their response was, “See how He loved him!” The fact that Jesus showed His love for Lazarus and his sisters was recognized by the people who were with Mary. That was why the people spoke of the great love that Jesus had for Lazarus. This is an important lesson for every Christian to learn. If we are controlled by the love of Jesus, others will also recognize that love. That is why Jesus gave the new commandment in John 13:34-35 where we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” These people saw the love of Jesus, and people today will also see our love when we show the love of Jesus to those who are hurting.

That genuine love will be the result of getting to really know God. 1 John 4:7-8 says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” The new Christians in the city of Thessalonica had learned to love. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 says, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” Here, we see that those who get to know God are taught by God to love one another. We see how God teaches us to love in Romans 5:5 which says, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the

love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” We see that the love of God is poured out in our hearts as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. As we yield to the Holy Spirit a greater percentage of the time, the world around us will also see the love of God flowing from our lives.

Some of the Jews with Jesus and Mary did not really notice how much Jesus loved Lazarus. As a result, they had a question that they asked one another. John 11:37-38 says, “And some of them said, ‘Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?’” Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.” These people knew about the miracle that Jesus had done a few weeks earlier when He healed the man who was born blind. They realized that miracle had been a great miracle, especially because of the fact that the man had been born blind.

As a result, this group of people asked the question, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” Here, we see that they recognized that Jesus could probably have kept Lazarus from dying. However, they had no thought of the possibility that Jesus could also raise the dead. Jesus had earlier told Martha in John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’” Martha had understood that Jesus would raise Lazarus in the future resurrection and that had comforted her. However, we are going to see that Jesus could also choose to raise a person back to physical life. This group of friends was going to have the opportunity to see Jesus do just that a few minutes later.

Jesus, Mary, and the group of comforters following them continued on their way until they came to the tomb where Lazarus had been buried. Jesus again groaned as He saw the consequences of original sin and how that affects people, especially in times of sorrow and death. The tomb where Lazarus was buried was actually a cave. A few weeks later, Jesus Himself would be buried in a similar tomb. Since the tomb was a cave, it was common to roll a stone against the mouth of the cave so that wild animals could not enter the tomb and destroy the body. The stone also helped to prevent the odor that was present as a body decayed to escape from the tomb. We see that such a stone had been placed against the opening into this cave. We will see what happened in our next topic.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the greatness of the love and compassion that Jesus showed as He walked with Mary and those who followed to the cave where the body of Lazarus had been placed. We want to show our children by our example that we also want to show the love of Jesus to those who are in sorrow, especially the sorrow of the death of a family member. As we minister to others in sorrow, our children will see how they can also comfort others. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to comfort others in their sorrow.