

John 11:1-46 NIV

Jesus Proceeds with Purpose, Courage, Clarity, Compassion, and Power!

Fifth Sunday in Lent, April 6, 2014 at 8:00 & 10:45

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today, as we focus on John chapter 11, we also focus on the topics of death and life! As we move thru the text, may the Holy Spirit enable us to see that Jesus proceeds with ♦purpose, ♦courage, ♦clarity, ♦compassion, and ♦power!

1. **Purpose:** ¹ Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair [John 12:1-8]. ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ⁴ 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." ⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ Yet when [Jesus] heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. // So Jesus was informed of the serious illness, yet "he stayed where he was two more days." Was that decision probably sad and confusing for Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? Yes! But did Jesus have a purpose? Yes! Even when we cannot understand the circumstances of life, God calls us to fully trust in Him!
2. **Courage:** ⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." ⁸ "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?" ⁹ Jesus answered [in the form of a parable], "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. ¹⁰ It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light." ¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." ¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been

speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then he [being God and knowing the whole situation with Lazarus] told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." // What was Jesus talking about in vv. 10-11 – about a man not stumbling when he walks by the light, but stumbling when it is night? With the thought of going back to Judea, Jesus' disciples were concerned for His safety but Jesus saw things differently! Dr. Kretzmann wrote: "While [Jesus'] day, as appointed...by the Father, lasted, He must continue to walk and to work, and no one could hinder and hurt Him. [Then he added:] This is true of all disciples of Jesus.... At the Lord's time, and not before, He will call His servants home." (NT 1:472) Pastor May is a good example of a Christian living *in danger* but *without fear*!

3. **Clarity:** ¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When 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. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and 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." // The death of a loved one can cause people to forget God's wonderful promises; so Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope." (1Th 4:13 NIV) Martha expressed hope, *certainty*, when she said: "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Even as we think about our loved ones who die in Jesus, let us

also be ♦*certain of God's promises* and ♦*at peace in Jesus!*
 Furthermore, let us also see – *with the eyes of faith* – that Jesus is literally “*the resurrection and the life.*” “*All life, and the giving and returning of life to men, is centered in Him.*” (Kretzmann, NT I:473) That is why ♦we grieve with *hope* and ♦the dead are blessed who *die in the Lord* (Rev 14:13)! “*...they fall asleep in the wounds of Jesus, and in the next moment they awake in heaven.*” (Ibid.)

4. **Compassion:** ²⁸ And after [Martha] had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” [Martha had received great comfort, so she wanted her sister to receive the same.] ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. ³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man [chapter 9] have kept this man from dying?” // Like Mary (v. 32), do we sometimes question the ways of the Lord? *Yes!* To question is not sinful, *but we must not accuse the Lord of wrongdoing.* Instead, we are called to trust – *even when we cannot understand!* So try to imagine the situation which caused Jesus to weep: The devil, who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14), had killed Lazarus and brought much sadness to his loved ones, including Jesus; therefore, even “*Jesus wept.*” May the Lord help us to be *sensitive and compassionate* toward others!

5. **Power:** ³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take

away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said [to Martha, somewhat scolding her], “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” [Since so many had rejected Jesus’ relationship with the Father, He took this occasion to publicly display that relationship.] ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. // Did you note the order of Jesus’ prayer? He thanked His Father for hearing Him *BEFORE* He even made His request! In other words, He prayed with total faith and confidence; *let us do the same!* Then Jesus called Lazarus back to life in his body! Jesus will do the same for us when He returns: see John 5:28-29. Finally, note the results: Many believed, but some rejected! Since – *by God’s grace* – we have life now and forever through Jesus, let us ♦*rejoice in God’s forgiveness* and ♦*share the good news!*

Some Ways for Us to Respond: Help me fill in the blanks:

1. Since Jesus lived unto God’s glory, let us do the s_____!
2. The dead are temporarily a_____; Jesus will w_____ them!
3. Thru Jesus we have s_____ life; He will also raise our b_____!
4. Jesus! Almighty, yet compassionate; let us show c_____!
5. *Thankful* for physical life, *grateful* for spiritual life, and *certain* that physical death is not the end, *let us live for J_____!* **Amen!**

For Much More: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
Having been saved thru Jesus, let us live for Him and share the good news!
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