



# His Final Steps... Led to a Tomb

Text: Selections from John 11:1-44 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Have you ever felt compelled to do something that you absolutely did NOT want to do? That was true of Jesus when He thought about †the horrible agony of the cross, †the bearing of our sins, and †the great anguish of God’s eternal wrath. Nevertheless, *out of great love for us and perfect obedience to the Father’s will*, He took many final steps toward the cross. In this sermon, Jesus’ steps led to a tomb – *the tomb of Lazarus*.

## 1. **The Death of Lazarus:**

- a. An Urgent Plea for Help: <sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany... <sup>3</sup> So the sisters [Mary and Martha] sent word to [Jesus], saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” ... // Jesus knew Lazarus and his sisters; *they trusted in Him*. When he became very ill, *they informed Jesus and urged Him to come quickly!* We should certainly ask, then say, “Your will be done.”
- b. Fear, then Courage: <sup>7</sup> Then... [Jesus] said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?” ... <sup>11</sup> ... “Our

friend Lazarus has fallen asleep [*he is dead*]; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.” ... <sup>15</sup> and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.” <sup>16</sup> Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to *his* fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.” // Why were the disciples concerned? As recorded in [John 8:59](#) and [10:31](#), the Jews had made recent attempts to stone Jesus. *The disciples probably feared for Jesus and for themselves.* Then Thomas, *because he knew Jesus is the Christ and trusted in Him* – he was willing to †go with Jesus and †even die with Jesus. Lord, *make us willing!*

## 2. **Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life:**

- a. The Situation in Bethany: <sup>17</sup> So when Jesus came [*from Perea, east of the Jordan*], He found that [*Lazarus*] had already been in the tomb four days.... <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning *their* brother. <sup>20</sup> Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. // Note *the four days in the tomb*. Earlier Jesus had raised the widow’s son ([Luke 7](#)) and Jairus’ daughter ([Luke 8](#)), but they had not been dead very long.
- b. Martha and Jesus: <sup>21</sup> Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you

believe this?” <sup>27</sup> She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even He who comes into the world.*” // Martha had much faith in Jesus – *believing He could even raise her brother that day.* Then Jesus gave assurance of the coming resurrection of all believers on the last day. Then He explained what it means that He is *the resurrection* and *the life*. Let us also rightly  
♦understand, ♦believe, and ♦rejoice!

### 3. **Jesus Wept:**

- a. Mary and Jesus: <sup>28</sup> [Martha] went away and called Mary her sister... <sup>31</sup> Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her... followed her... <sup>32</sup> ... when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” // Mary expressed her trust and confidence in Jesus – good. But think about this: God had a purpose in permitting Lazarus to die, *yet Mary seemed focused on her desire for Lazarus.*
- b. Sadness: <sup>33</sup> When Jesus... saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled... <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. // Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “[Jesus] was strongly agitated over the power which the enemy of mankind, death, was here exhibiting over human beings. For death had certainly shown himself in this instance as the king of terrors, in taking from these sisters their brother and protector...”

### 4. **Jesus Raises Lazarus:**

- a. Belief in Jesus Should Have No Limits: <sup>38</sup> So Jesus... came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was

lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Remove the stone."  
Martha... said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" // As Martha struggled to believe the seemingly impossible, *we are tempted to do the same*. But as God ✦spoke the world into existence, ✦has sustained it to this day, and ✦is almighty in power, *let us ALWAYS FULLY BELIEVE!*

- b. A Hint of Jesus' Resurrection: <sup>41</sup> So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "**Lazarus, come forth.**" <sup>44</sup> The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." // Jesus performed 37 specific miracles, as well as countless others. Raising Lazarus was number 33, *which points to closeness of Jesus' own suffering, death, and resurrection*. As Jesus raised Lazarus, *so the Father would raise Him*. Jesus knew all that was coming, *and knowing was so difficult, but love propelled His final steps to win our salvation!*

**Let Us Pray:** Dearest Jesus, keep us close, keep us thankful!

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