

# Lazarus and God's Glory

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 May 2026

Preacher: John Howard

[ 0 : 00 ] John 11.

Ooh. You get to hear me. All right, John 11. And I'm just going to tell you right up front, if you haven't read your devotional this week on the chapters, the sections that dealt with John 11, you're on your own.

I got to working on John 11, and I'm going, the whole story is about Lazarus, obviously Lazarus. But the part that I'm going to talk about is verse 4, basically.

I mean, I'm going to refer to the other parts of it, but we're not going to read the whole chapter. And I'm not even going to present it in exactly the order that it comes in the chapter. We're going to move around. So hopefully you all got in your mind the story of Lazarus.

You know, he got sick, he died, Jesus delayed. Show him up there. He's in the grave four days. He tells them to, he has an encounter with Martha and Mary, his sisters.

[ 1 : 03 ] He says a very famous line, I'm the resurrection and the life. He tells them to roll the stone away. They complain that he stinketh, according to King James. And he probably did. And he calls him out, and he's resurrected.

And then the Jewish leaders decide they want to kill him because he's doing too many miracles, and they don't like it. So here we are, starting with John 11. And I am going to start with the first couple of verses, just to set the tone.

And there it is. And it says, Now a certain man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, which, by the way, is just a few miles outside of Jerusalem.

And Jesus has already been avoiding Jerusalem at this particular time because the last time he was there, he really infuriated the Jewish leaders, and they wanted to arrest him and execute him. So he goes back to, you know, Bethany's that close to Jerusalem, as you'll see here in a second. The village where Mary and his sister Martha lived.

[ 2 : 03 ] Now it was Mary who anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and wiped his feet dry with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. So the sister sent a message to Jesus, Look, Lord, the one you love is sick.

When Jesus heard this, he said, That this sickness will not lead to death, but to God's glory, so that the Son of Man may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. There's a lot in that paragraph. I mean, we could spend the rest of the day talking about what's going on in that paragraph. But one thing we know, that Lazarus and his sisters are not just incidental people that Jesus has met, like the man at the pool of Bethsaida or Bethesda that he just walked up to and said, Do you want to walk?

Someone he didn't know particularly out of any, all the other people. He knew these. These were people he deeply loved. And his sisters send a word to him that Lazarus is sick.

Now they wouldn't do that if he just had a cold. They know that this is a sickness that could lead to death. This is a serious illness. And they want Jesus to come.

[ 3 : 19 ] You know, they're thinking, Jesus, if he comes, he can, in fact, they tell him that. If he comes, he can heal them. He can keep them from dying, from getting worse. And Jesus responds to his disciples, not to anyone.

He's with his disciples. He says, Lazarus is sick, but it isn't going to lead to death. But it's going to lead to God's glory. Now, if I heard that, I'd get worried. Because just exactly what's going to happen here.

So let's read a little further. All right. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he remained in the place where he was for two more days.

Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. And the disciples replied, Rabbi, the Jewish leaders were just now trying to stone you to death.

Are you going there again? And Jesus replied, again, one of these cryptic remarks, right? Here he comes. Are there not 12 hours in a day?

[ 4 : 30 ] If anyone walks around in daytime, he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world. But if anyone walks around at night, he stumbles because the night, the light is not with him or in him.

So he delays two days. Now, that had to be a hard two days for his sisters. And I think even for Jesus to say, I've got to wait.

I know what's going to happen. I'm just, I'm going to wait two days before I go. And then he finally says to the disciples, let's go. Now, they're the ones that are worried. Don't you want to go back to Judea?

You know that's only a few miles from Jerusalem? You know what happened the last time we were there? They tried to kill you. And Jesus says that.

Cryptic remark. Are there not 12 hours in a day? If anyone walks around in daylight, or daytime, he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world.

[ 5 : 33 ] But if anyone walks around at night, he stumbles because the light is not in him. And you go, well, that makes perfect sense. But I haven't got a clue what he's talking about.

It seems that Jesus was probably referring to his mission, the reason he was in the world. And I was also struck, you know that he said earlier, he says, I am the light of the world.

But here he's probably referring to his mission to do the works that the Father had given him. Back in chapter 9, he says, as long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me.

Night is coming when no man can work. He's saying, look, there's 12 hours in the day, and we've got to finish our work before it gets dark. You've got to do this.

In fact, if you want to know, this is the seventh miracle in John's gospel. That's significant. That's the last miracle in John's gospel.

[ 6 : 41 ] Seven being complete or fullness. This is the last thing that John is going to give as evidence to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, God in the flesh. And Jesus is saying, look, the end is, what he's saying is, night's coming.

It's almost over with. Yeah, I know, they're going to kill me, but we've got to get this done before that happens. See, he was resolute concerning his duty to do what the Father had given him to do, and he was committed to that purpose.

And what was that purpose? I think the answer is in verse 4, and that's the part that really struck me when I read this. Out of all the things in there, it's a nice story. We're all familiar with it, but this is the thing that we often skip.

It's probably the key to understanding what's going on here. And I just jerked it out so it doesn't start out very well, but to God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

And I've mentioned this before in one of my sermons, but Dan, the question is, and I think we Christians don't have a good grasp on this. What is glory?

[ 7 : 55 ] We don't, we say it, we sing it, we talk about it, we read about it, but I don't think we got a really good grasp on what it is. I mean, anyone got any ideas?

We'll just do this spontaneously. Anyone got an idea of what is glory? Uplifting God. Say it again. Uplifting God. Uplifting God. Okay, that's a good answer. Anybody else?

He's number one. He's number one. That's another good answer. He's magnificent. Magnificent. Awesome. Awe-inspiring. All those things.

Yeah. Has to do with honor and reputation. Yep. He's perfect. He's going to be a preacher someday.

He's all these things. He has a name above all names. We're doing Exodus in my Sunday school class. They haven't got there yet, but Yahweh, God, is going to say, I am Yahweh, and I'm going to liberate my people so that the nations will know my name.

[ 9 : 07 ] He wants to, that's glorifying him. When the nations know his name and give him the honor that he is the God, only God, creator God, God Almighty, that's glorifying him.

He has a reputation. Moses is going to, and Exodus is going to say, when the Israelites mess up real bad with the golden calf, he's going to say, your reputation's on the line.

The nations are watching. You destroy these people, they're going to say, what kind of God is this? And God says, okay, I won't destroy him. glory has to do with all that.

He has to have primacy. He has to be honored. He has to be, we sang about it, three songs. It was a great song, Stephen, for this. We have to worship him as the only true God.

That's glorifying him. And now Jesus needs to be glorified too, and that's one of the reasons he's doing these miracles, and the ones that John included, is that he is God in the flesh.

[10:07] He needs to be recognized for that. He needs to be honored with that. People need to believe in him. In this case, that's what he really is after, is that people will believe in him, that he is from the Father, and he is coming to bring salvation to the world.

You also, you know, this is an interesting thing. You go back to Exodus. You know what God says? I want to dwell in their midst, and they will be my people, and I will be their God. The word dwell there, is the same word as tabernacle.

So when they build a tabernacle, that's God's dwelling place. And now you go back to John 1. What does he say? And the word dwelled amongst them.

Same word, tabernacled. He was there. And so God said, I want to live amongst my people. Well, they weren't having it.

[11:07] They wanted to be religious, but they didn't want a God interfering with their day-to-day. They were seeking their own glory. And here Jesus comes, and he says he came into the world, and the world didn't, his own didn't accept him.

And they rejected him. And he's saying, here I am. I am God in the flesh dwelling amongst you. You need to understand how desperately loving and caring I am to want you, even though you don't really want me.

He wants to bring the nations, the peoples of the earth, back to himself. He wants to dwell with them, and wants them to know him and acknowledge who he is.

Well, John makes a great effort to reveal Jesus as I am. You know, he says that seven times. John has recorded Jesus saying, I am, seven times, which, of course, is the name of God.

Jesus says, I am. Before Moses was, I am. He's making it very clear that Jesus is claiming to be God in the flesh. He records seven miracles demonstrating Jesus' power.

[12:18] And if you look at them, it covers every aspect of creation. There's one thing that he hasn't done yet and demonstrated he has power over death.

And that's our last and most fearful enemy there is, death. And Jesus is going to say, I even control, have power over death.

Which means he also has power over the father of lies and the one who brought death into the world through his deception.

And John then, in doing all this, records Jesus talking about revealing God's glory and glorifying God and himself through his acts.

In our current chapter, we have this. Jesus says, take away the stone. They have the stone in front of the grave. Martha, his sister of the deceased, replied, I like the King James.

[13:20] This is the only time, Sandy, I like the King James. He says, Lord, by this time, the body will have a bad smell. And King James says, Lord, the body will stinketh.

And I think that's a pretty accurate statement. Because he's been buried for four days. Which probably indicates that he died right after the message was sent to Jesus.

And Jesus responds, Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you would see the glory of God? You see, that's the point. That's why he delayed.

Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? Then Jesus prayed. So they took away the stone, and Jesus looked upward and said, Father, I thank you that you have listened to me.

I knew that you always listened to me, but I said this for the sake of the crowd standing around here, that they may believe that you sent me. There's that thing. Believe that you sent me.

[14:31] And when he said this, he shouted out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. Now this is where the devotional writer did something that I had never thought about.

Lazarus came out dressed in the grave clothes. In other words, he's wrapped, and his face is covered. And he even said, those clothes would have absorbed the stinketh of the body.

And here he is, Lazarus. Can you imagine? I almost preached this sermon. What did Lazarus think? He walks out. I mean, he comes out, wrapped up, smelling, and alive.

And Jesus says, unwrap him, unwrap him, let him go. Stored him to life. Why did he do that? It wasn't because he loved Lazarus. It's so that people would believe that he was God in the flesh. He did something only God could do. And that the Father then would be glorified as the people saw what God was doing through him.

[ 15 : 44 ] That he, as Jesus, had power over everything to include death. Now earlier, when Martha came out and said that if he'd come sooner, Lazarus would not have died.

She understood that Jesus could heal sickness, but Jesus responded saying this, I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live even if he dies. And the one who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?

And that's a good question for us. We say we accept Christ. Do we believe that? I'm going to tell you when we're going to find out if you believe that on your deathbed.

How you die is going to tell a lot about what you believe is going to happen. And that day is getting closer and closer for some of us.

[ 16 : 43 ] Well, there are a few young ones that think they're going to live forever. And she replied, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God who comes into the world.

And that was before he raised Lazarus. Can you imagine what she thought after he raised him?

See, Martha was going to see more and understand that Jesus did have power over death.

And she was going to give God glory. Even as she confessed that he's the Christ, the son of God coming into the world. The father and the son were going to be honored and glorified in this.

Now, you remember chapter one of John way back when? I think every time I've preached, I've said, you've got to have a grasp on chapter one if you're going to understand John's gospel.

I mean, otherwise, it's just a bunch of stories and a lot of, I don't understand why he said that type things. We miss a lot if we don't connect what John said in chapter one with what's going on in the rest of the gospel.

[ 17 : 58 ] He wrote these things. Now the word became flesh and took up residence, dwelled amongst us. And we saw what? His glory.

The glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, the one who came to the father. We saw his glory. And so John's telling us stories about how to Jesus' life and ministry to point out his glory and the glory of the father.

In John 14, he says, and I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the father may be glorified in the son. That we would turn and go, wow, what an awesome God.

What a loving God. What a graceful God. What a, and you put the adjective in there. And then he said, Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven and said, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. That's one thing about God. He is not shy about revealing his glory.

[ 19 : 13 ] If you look for it, you will see it. And if you see it, you better turn and worship because it's that important to you and your well-being, but also to him.

I think the next one, we've got these. Then in John 17, and there's three of them in John 17, they're all sort of in the same section. It says, when Jesus had finished saying these things, he looked upward to heaven and said, Father, the time has come.

Glorify your son so that the son can glorify you. What is he preparing for? Death. Resurrection. Death. Father, it's time.

Glorify your son. And how is Jesus glorified in this particular situation? God's going to have him go through that situation and come out alive on the other side.

And people are going to go, what a God. Look what he did. 17, 4.

[ 20 : 21 ] I have glorified you. And here's an important clue how Jesus did that. I glorified you by completing the works you gave me to do. You glorify God when you're obedient.

We talked about that this morning a little bit in our Sunday school class. If God gives you a task, put something on your mind, believe it or not, he's giving you that a task. So the next time you think, I really should call blank, you fill in the blank.

That's God saying, tap, tap. Do this. This is a task I'm giving you. And when you do it, what are you doing? You're glorifying God. Why?

Because you're being obedient. You're saying, I want to do your will. I want you to be honored in my response to the things you give me to do. I have glorified by completing the works you gave me to

do.

And then last in five, he says, now, Father, glorify me at your side with the glory I had before you, with you before the world was, created. Philippians says that he set aside all that, that glory and honor he had, so that he could come and do what he did to save us.

[ 21 : 46 ] John tells an amazing story. A story about a man who was brought back to life. A story about Jesus demonstrating his power over all of creation, especially death in this case.

And he declared to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. And I've read, you know, you wonder, how many of you have thought about, what is it going to be like to be alive on the new earth after the resurrection? You know, you have thought about that? There are some hints, I think, and I'm not going to tell you that this is, this is my opinion, okay? It says in Hebrews that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom. Well, what did Jesus not have when he was raised?

Blood. He had flesh. What was the power? You know, it says life is in the blood. Well, then how did he live? He lived by the power of the spirit in him.

[ 22 : 49 ] I have a feeling that when we get to the new, our new bodies are going to be flesh and spirit, not necessarily flesh and blood. That means that when Jesus says, I am the life, he's saying, you're going to live by the power of me living in you.

I'm going to be the animating life that's in you. And of course, he's eternal, so how are you going to live? Eternally. That makes sense to me. Now, that's opinion.

You can say, scratch that off. John got that one wrong. And Jesus brought honor to the father and to himself as a son, so much that those who hated him still admitted that he did miracles, that he was, something was different about him, but they wanted to glorify themselves rather than God. Now, I'm not sure where we are. There we are. We're right. We're right on. All right. Let's read in John 11, 45 on, and it says, then many, this is after the, after raising Lazarus, is then many people who had come with Mary and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in him.

A lot of people had come from Jerusalem. So, you know, a lot of those people had come down because they knew Mary and Martha. And they saw what Jesus did, and they believed in him.

[ 24 : 18 ] But some of them went to the Pharisees and reported to them what Jesus had done. Sort of an insert here. Remember when the, the man, he healed the man.

And what did the Pharisees say? Who did this? And some ran to this and Jesus did it. Jesus did it. See, there are those that are snitches and there are snitches here too.

All right. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called the council together, the Sanhedrin, and it's probably an informal meaning because it doesn't mention the chief priests residing over it, but they come together and said, what are we doing?

For this man is performing what? Many miraculous signs. And they said, look what he's doing. If we allow him to go on like this, everyone will believe in him.

And the Romans will come and take away our what? Sanctuary and our nation. So they're saying, we won't be in charge anymore.

[ 25 : 31 ] We won't be glorified. We won't be able to strut around saying, look at us. We're the guys in charge. We're the good guys. We're the smart guys. We're the religious guys. We're the, you put the adjective in there.

See, they were seeking their own glory. They're saying, if he, if he gets all the people to follow him, what are we? They were looking for power.

They wanted a name for themselves. By the way, that is the ultimate sin. The word name in Hebrew is shem. You go back and you follow that word all the way through the Old Testament.

You find out things like at the Tower of Babel, what did the people say? They came together and said, let us build a tower so that we will make a name for ourselves. It's a seeking to be glorified is what they're doing.

We want to be lifted up and honored and have a good repute. And we want to be people to bow down and say, oh, you're great. You're great. Look how wonderful you are.

[ 26 : 36 ] They were concerned with their own honor and glory, not God's. And for a religious leader, that's backwards. It's actually backwards for a Christian.

We are supposed to be humble servants and we're supposed to quietly serve our Lord without seeking glory for ourselves. We're supposed to bring God's glory to the nations, to the people around us.

They should see in us and through us the glory of God. They shouldn't see John's glory. If they see John's glory, we're all in trouble. But from the beginning, people have sought honor and glory for themselves.

Our sin is often the pursuit of a name or a reputation of wanting to be respected above other people, to be seen as better than or smarter than or whatever, wealthier than or gifted better than. Worthy of honor because of who we are, rather than becoming the humble servants of the one who is truly worthy of honor and glory, now and forever.

[ 27 : 53 ] And that's God alone. Yahweh, the great I am. You know, God can always say that. No matter what day it is, he can say, I am.

One day, John's going to have to say, I was. Jesus raised Lazarus for several reasons. Among them are these, to glorify the Father. And I think that was one of the main ones. To demonstrate that he was the Christ, the God in the flesh. To demonstrate his power over all things, including death.

To do the work the Father had given him. To bring people to believe and to come to God and find life as well. And I think that we would do well to do the same thing.

Whatever we do, do it to the glory of God. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for your love and your grace and your mercy.

[ 28 : 50 ] Lord, where would we be without these things? And I just pray that we would be aware, Lord, that how we bear your image to those around us is going to either bring you shame or honor and glory.

Help us to be mindful to be those that would glorify you, to magnify you, to share your loving kindness and grace for those around that have no clue what it's about.

Help us to do that in our fellowship, that in our fellowship the love would grow stronger and stronger and deeper and deeper. And that people would look and say, these people truly love one another.

That that would honor you and bring you glory. We thank you for this story, Lord. We thank you for what our Lord has accomplished for us. And we commit all this to you in his name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 30 : 50 ] Amen. Amen.

Thank you.