

Come Out!

John 11

Easter, 04.24.11

Intro. The message of Easter is that a supernatural, life giving, life transforming intervention by a personal yet transcendent God is possible for you today. As we have just read in Matthew's account of Jesus resurrection, the church's God given assignment and responsibility is to spread the news that Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death and that eternal life is available to all who will receive him. Easter is all about life and death.

The reality of new life, a transformed life that comes from God through Jesus is possible for you today. Some of you are not thinking quite that big. You may believe that you have some problems that need solving or that while challenging at times, your life will sort of work itself out in the end.

Please turn to John chapter 11 (p.897). Here John records the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. It is a true story of divine intervention that results in that which was dead being made alive. This powerful act of Jesus is the 7th sign that John records indicating in a convincing way that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

One question the rather detailed and extended account answers is 'how does God intervene in a life that is unreceptive to him and transform that person to believe and follow Christ?' The Lazarus story is about Christ's power to raise a man who had been dead for 4 days. It provides the pattern for how God intervenes in lives today to transform people from spiritual death to life, darkness to light and condemnation to eternal life.

Let's read and follow the storyline carefully pausing four times to note the indicators in a person's life that God is at work in a life transforming way. The story breaks down into 4 sections for our understanding.

1-16 The Death of Lazarus

In this section the major characters are all introduced and the crisis is defined. Jesus good friend Lazarus has died. Major tensions are developed of Jesus love for the Bethany family, the danger for Jesus of going back to Judea and the disciples seeming confusion.

Jesus responses to the crisis recorded in these verses (4, 9, 14-15) leads us to our first indicator that God is at work in your life.

You begin to notice God.

Jesus clearly taught the perspective that this crisis involving Lazarus death is not about Lazarus death. Jesus draws our focus in the midst of the various crises of our lives to three things that are true about God that must capture your attention.

- 1) God wants you to know him. 11:4
- 2) God deserves your following him. 11:9-10
- 3) God expects you to trust him. 11:15

17-27 Jesus Unusual Claim

After waiting intentionally 2 days, Jesus travels to Bethany to reveal and display the glory of the Father. The fact Lazarus has been 4 days is established – the crisis is real. Martha met him on the way into Bethany. John records their conversation in such a way as to focus our attention on who Jesus claims to be and what he claims to be able to do.

Both Martha's affirmations (22, 24, 27) and Jesus 'I am' revelation (25-26) point us to a second indicator that is true in the person who is being or had been transformed from death to life.

You understand the exclusive claims of Jesus.

Martha's belief that Jesus was powerful, compassionate and trustworthy are set as the backdrop for the essential and exclusive truth that Jesus claims for himself. His statement in verses 25-26 make 2 basic truth claims of Christianity. They are followed by both an appeal to believe and a response of faith.

Jesus claims to be the only, exclusive option for fixing death. The reign of sin and death in your life can only be reversed and replaced with a new life through Jesus Christ. Note what he claims about universal and inescapable problem you have with death.

- 1) I am the resurrection . . . the one who believes and dies will be raised again.
- 2) I am the life . . . the one who believes in a very real way has eternal life now.

'Do you believe this?' You understand that there is objective, exclusive and reasonable truth claims that you must embrace. These truth claims insist that Jesus Christ is the only God given answer for your problem with sin and death.

28-37 Jesus Outrage and Grief

When confronted by Mary with her tears and a crowd of grieving Jews, John uses three different terms to describe Jesus reaction. A look is provided into the heart and mind of Christ . . . the nature and glory of God is revealed by his responses to Lazarus death and the grieving crowds.

Jesus' response as recorded in verses 33, 35 and 38 reveal a third indicator of God's transformational power to give you eternal life.

You are disturbed at the consequences of sin and death.

Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit, greatly troubled and he wept. These reactions were interpreted by the crowd in different ways. Jesus' reactions prompted and explain his action of stepping to the tomb and calling Lazarus back to life. Understanding what disturbed him is crucial to the transformation from death to life. Romans 5:12-21

- 1) Disturbed by the grief and confusion caused by sin and death.
- 2) Disturbed by the hopelessness caused by sin and death.
- 3) Disturbed by the sadness and separation caused by sin and death.

**You begin to notice God.
You understand the exclusive claims of Jesus.
You are disturbed at the consequences of sin and death.**

38-44 The Resurrection of Lazarus

All eyes are on Jesus as he walks to the tomb, orders the stone removed and lifts his eyes to heaven as he prays. Jesus reminds Martha and the crowd of his theme of belief and the glory of God. Jesus calls loudly for the dead Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Lazarus came out.

You see and receive the glory of God.

In an incredible demonstration of power over sin and death, Jesus displays the glory of God. Jesus issues the command and the dead are given life. The basic truths of the gospel are found in this scene at Lazarus' grave. God's glory is revealed and received in these ways:

- 1) God's grace for dead, enslaved and condemned people is seen.
- 2) God's power over sin and death is revealed in Christ.
- 3) God's glory is received by some and rejected by some.

Several days after the raising of Lazarus from the dead, Jesus Christ is crucified, buried and three days later raised back to life from the dead. Jesus resurrection further and finally demonstrates that God's glory is displayed in saving people from the dominion and condemnation of sin and death.

The Lazarus story stops as soon as Lazarus comes out of the tomb. The storyline turns abruptly to response. God's glory has been revealed . . . what is your response? Will you become a follower of Jesus today?

Review & Summarize . . .

**You begin to notice God.
You understand the exclusive claims of Jesus.
You are disturbed at the consequences of sin and death.
You see and receive the glory of God.**

Do you believe this?

Come out!

Unbind him and let him go.

John 1:12,13 *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*