

IT IS FOR GOD'S GLORY

John 11:1-16
Key Verse: 11:4

Lesson #29

1. The one you love is sick (1-3)

In the quiet village on Bethany there lived a family consisting of one brother, Lazarus, and two sisters, Mary and Martha. Verse 1 tells us that Lazarus was sick—very sick. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were close personal friends of Jesus. He had visited in their home frequently (Lk 10:38-42). Verse 2 tells us that Mary was the one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. This happened after the events in chapter 11. In chapter 12, Mary dramatically expressed her love for and gratitude to Jesus by pouring this precious perfume on Jesus. Maybe she had been saving the expensive perfume for her wedding, but she held back nothing when she came to Jesus. In verse 3, the sisters sent word to Jesus: “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When the sisters sent this message to Jesus, they were confident that Jesus would drop everything and come—even though it was dangerous for him to return to Judea at that time.

2. This sickness will not end in death (4-6)

How did Jesus respond to the news? Look at verse 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 maybe glorified through it.” Jesus saw problems as opportunities to teach and plant faith. The planting of resurrection faith is real love. So Jesus deliberately waited two more days before going to his friends. Jesus loved this family, and he wanted to give them spiritual life--something better than just physical healing. He saw Lazarus' sickness as an opportunity to glorify God, and to bless his friends and disciples by planting resurrection faith in their hearts. God's love is different from human love. God's love is painful, but life-giving. May God teach us how to use every problem and difficulty, even suffering and grief as an opportunity to glorify God. May he help us to glorify God in every situation and learn to live by faith.

3. A man who walks by day will not stumble (7-10)

Jesus is the light of the world (8:12; 9:5). His disciples, however, had not learned to walk in his light. When he told them he was going back to Judea, they objected, for they were under the power of death, and were full of fear. They knew that the Jews were waiting there to stone Jesus--and maybe themselves as well. But they needed to listen to Jesus and follow him without fear. This is walking in the day.

4. So that you may believe (11-16)

Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead. He spoke of death as sleep, for in Jesus there is no death. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. He wanted to set his disciples free from fear of death and teach them faith in the Creator God, the Giver of life. Thomas voiced their fears and their decision to go with him, even to death. They followed Jesus and learned resurrection faith.