

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS

John 11:1-44

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 11:25

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many slips of paper with the number "8" written on them and as many small prizes (pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.) as the number of children in your class, and a bowl.

A box, a ball, and a jar.

A roll of toilet tissue.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The "Who's in Control" Lottery

Make out as many slips of paper with the number "8" on them as the number of children in your class. Put them in a bowl and have each child draw one out. Instruct them to be careful not to let anyone else see their number.

Tell your class that you are going to pick a number and whoever has the corresponding slip will win a prize. Tell the class that if their number is called, they must jump up and shout, "I win! I win!" Pick the number "8."

Explain to your class that the reason everybody won was because you had complete control of the game. You wrote out the numbers, you chose the prize and you picked the winning number. Everyone was a winner because you were in control of the

situation. In today's lesson we will learn that **Jesus is in control of every situation.**

Pass out to each member of your class a small prize.

LESSON TIME!

Do you know what resurrection means? It means the giving back of life to someone who is dead. Can you resurrect anyone? No! It's beyond our human power. Once someone dies we can't do anything to make him or her come back to life.

Today, we'll hear a story of resurrection. There are several resurrection stories in the Bible; the greatest one of all is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Death is the one thing everyone must eventually suffer. When Jesus died and rose again, He conquered death. Jesus' victory over death was prophesied of by Hosea. Hosea 13:14 says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes."

Our story today will show us that Jesus was not just some mere teacher of a future resurrection, but that He is the author and source of resurrection and eternal life! Jesus can raise people from the dead and give them eternal life because He has power over death and life. And because He has power over death and life we need to put our trust in Him for our eternal life. **Jesus is in control of every situation.**

JOHN 11:1-3

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother

Lazarus was sick.

Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

We know from other scriptures that Mary, Martha and Lazarus were dear friends of Jesus. Lazarus loved his friend Jesus, and Jesus loved Lazarus. Lazarus became very sick. This sickness would eventually kill Lazarus, but we'll see in our story today that **Jesus is in control of every situation**. There is no need to fear. Lazarus is going to become a living, walking, talking demonstration of Christ's resurrection power! Remember that the Lord never loses control. Jesus will use this death to bring Himself glory and to demonstrate His love.

JOHN 11:4-6

When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

At first glance these verses seem to show Jesus as being out of touch with the reality of Lazarus' situation. Verse 5 tells us again that Jesus loved Lazarus, but when He heard he was sick, He stayed in the place where He was for two more days, instead of going to His sick friend! Don't you think He should have rushed over there? Well, remember that **Jesus is in control of every situation**.

Jesus had good reason for not going right away. He would raise Lazarus from the dead, but He would do it in God's perfect timing. By waiting, an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate His power over death was made possible, and Jesus was able to give another lesson

in faith to His disciples. We may not always understand God's timing, but rest assured **He is in control of every situation!**

JOHN 11:7-16

Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

"But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."

However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

These verses give us a good picture of Jesus' disciples. They were not twelve super-saints or deeply spiritual men of faith who understood everything. They were like you and me. They doubted a lot. They often forgot who Jesus really was and what He desired to do in their lives. Jesus was going to use the death of Lazarus to strengthen His disciples' faith and remind them that Jesus is the Master of every situation.

The disciples knew that the Jews were angry with Jesus and they were seeking to kill Him. Going to Bethany would be taking them closer to these angry Jews. But Jesus knew all of that and wasn't afraid. He had to be about His Father's business and didn't worry about His own safety. The time would come that the Jews would arrest and crucify Him, but it would all happen in God's perfect timing. **Jesus is in control of every situation.** Isn't it great to know that the same Jesus who is in control of everything is the One who promised to come into our hearts and strengthen our lives when we accept Him as our Savior.

Jesus said Lazarus was just sleeping. The word sleep is often used in scripture to mean the death of a believer. The disciples got confused and thought if Lazarus had been sick and was now resting that he was getting better and they didn't have to go. Jesus had to tell them plainly "Lazarus is dead." He lets His disciples know that He will take the death of Lazarus as an opportunity to strengthen their faith and show them that **He is in control of every situation.**

Has there ever been a time when you thought that a situation was out of control? Sometimes we might look at our own situation and think we can get it under control. The disciples were afraid that they would all be stoned with Jesus if they traveled to Judea. But **Jesus is in control of every situation.** No one could stone Jesus until His time had come when He was to lay down His life for the sins of the world.

JOHN 11:17-27

So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.

And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

"But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

"And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Jesus arrived on the scene in Bethany. Lazarus had already been dead four days. Mary and Martha, his sisters, are broken-hearted. The people are wailing and lamenting in the face of death. WOW! What a picture of man's condition! No matter how clever or advanced man becomes he cannot change the condition of death. Even when our bodies are alive on earth the Bible tells us that we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sin. Man is absolutely helpless and hopeless and cannot save himself.

The great question is "how can this situation be changed?" Jesus tells Martha the answer to the great question of life in verses 25 & 26. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me though he may die, he shall live." Jesus is God, the great "I AM".

What a great thing for Jesus to say! What does that mean for our lives? It means that when we trust in Jesus, we will never have to die spiritually; we will have eternal life in relationship with God forever. Our bodies may someday wear out, and we may die physically. But we will go to be with the Lord forever. And one day our bodies will be resurrected and transformed into new bodies (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Not only are we delivered from our sin when we come to Jesus but we are also delivered from death. We have the hope of the resurrection.

Jar Drop

Take a large box or piece of cardboard with a hole in the side large enough for a child to slip his hand in with a small ball. Instruct a few volunteers that they need to go on the other side of the box where they can't see and take turns trying to drop the ball into a jar on the other side. The point is that they can't see the jar, but have to make a guess as to its position. As each volunteer drops the ball, make sure that the volunteer cannot see what the rest of the class can see...move the jar so that each child drops the ball right in; don't let any of them miss. Make sure the rest of the class observes what you are doing.

Ask someone in the class to explain why everyone got the ball into the jar. They will, of course, explain that you moved the jar to catch each ball dropped. Ask the class who was in control of the ball going into the jar. They should, of course, answer that you were. Explain that children were successful because you were in control of their efforts.

Explain to your class that Jesus is in complete control of our lives. Every success and failure He uses to our benefit. Even if we can't "see" or understand what is happening in our lives, the Lord knows and is in control.

Jesus is in control of every situation. He is the only master over death. He is the only One who can change man's sinful situation and the hopelessness of death. No one should settle for any god who has not conquered death. Jesus is the only true God. Death just becomes a servant to God. This is the most important thing that separates Christianity from other religions in the world. No other religion can claim victory over death. Jesus is the difference! We serve the one true God who has power over everything and loves us. We need to put our trust in Him. We'll now see how He uses the death of Lazarus to show us that Jesus is the Master of every situation, even death!

JOHN 11:28-36

And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.

Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up

quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

Now Jesus met with Mary. They didn't get to meet alone because the Jews that were with Mary followed her to Jesus. This passage of scripture tells us that Jesus "groaned in the spirit and was troubled." It also tells us that "Jesus wept." The Jews thought Jesus was weeping because Lazarus was dead. Maybe Jesus wept at seeing the consequence of sin, which He came to save the world from. Or maybe He wept out of compassion for the pain everyone was experiencing over the seeming loss of their friend. But Lazarus' death was only temporary. **Jesus is in control of every situation.**

Only Jesus could know what God had originally intended for man and what man had become in the fall, when Adam and Eve sinned. Only Jesus could know what would be provided for man through His sacrifice. Only Jesus could know the great gulf between God's perfection and man's present and sinful condition. That's why Jesus groaned and wept. He saw it all. He saw the big picture.

JOHN 11:37-44

And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

"And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

We see Martha here voice her unbelief. She does not simply watch in belief, knowing that **Jesus is in control of every situation**. She tells Jesus that Lazarus has been dead and buried for four days.

His body would be starting to decay, and it would stink very badly if they opened the tomb. Jesus reminds her to believe and watch what He does. He reminds us of that, too. We are reminded by Jesus to believe His word no matter how discouraging or hopeless the circumstances might appear.

Jesus reminds us, as He did Martha, that we must live by faith and not by sight. No matter how it may look (or smell!), **Jesus is in control of every situation**. We just need to believe Him and watch what He does. Verse 43 shows us what a powerful God we have. If He can conquer death, then He is God indeed.

Even though none of us in this room are physically dead, before we believed in Jesus to be our Savior we were spiritually dead in our sin and needed Jesus to raise us from spiritual death. He calls us all to come out of our grave of spiritual sin and death. We can all put our name in verse 43 "_____ come forth!" (Teacher, give your personal testimony, with appropriate discretion regarding the age of your class, of when Jesus called you forth from spiritual death into newness of life.)

Lazarus, Come Forth!

Ask for a couple of volunteers to act out the story of Lazarus. Have a couple of girls wrap a boy up in toilet tissue. Instruct him to remain motionless, because he is dead. Have a child tell the story as the actors pretend to be Jesus, the disciples, Mary, Martha, the mourners, and Lazarus.

At the appropriate time in the story, instruct the child playing Jesus to shout, "Lazarus, come forth!" Have the child playing Lazarus rip the toilet tissue off of him.

Is there anyone here today who may not have asked Jesus into their life to be their Savior? He is calling you today to come forth out of your sin and into newness of life. All you have to do is tell

Him you know you are a sinner, you are spiritually dead and you want Him to save you and give you spiritual life. **Jesus is in control of every situation** and as you believe Him and watch what He does in your life, your faith will be strengthened.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for always being in control of every situation. If there are any children who have not received the Lord as Savior and Lord, give them the opportunity to do so.