Lesson 12 [Chapter 11]”Lazarus, come forth!”

Remember:

Last lesson, Jesus said He was the "Good Shepherd" and the "door" to the sheepfold, showing His sacrificial love, protection, and provision of abundant, eternal life for His followers.

Lesson Goal:

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, He has absolute authority over death, and He grants eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Lesson opener:

TOO LATE

“Imagine you are in serious trouble. You text someone you trust—like urgent, right now—They see it… typing bubble pops up… and then… nothing.”

Pause.

“Not an hour later… not that night… they show up… days later.”

“Like, ‘Hey, sorry I’m late.’”

Ask:

“At that point, are you even listening to their excuse?”

“Are you glad they’re there… or just like, ‘Why did you even come?’”

Let them react.

“Because there’s a difference between being late… and being too late.” Short pause.

“And once it feels too late, it kind of changes everything.”

Then transition:

“There’s a moment in John 11 where that’s exactly how it feels— like help showed up… but way too late.”

Lesson Body:

The raising of Lazarus occurred on the Saturday preceding the Lord's entry into Jerusalem. Thus, this event took place a short while just before the last week of the life of Jesus on earth. The miracle is not recorded in the other three Gospels.

Informing the Lord that Lazarus is Sick 11:1-16

In a small village called Bethany, there was a family that the Lord Jesus loved very much. In the midst of the bitter and dangerous pain caused by Lazarus's sickness, the two sisters sent Him a message: "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick" [3]. The sisters did not ask for the healing of their brother. Moreover, they did not ask the Lord to leave His service and visit them in their difficult circumstances. They were satisfied to present the case to Him.

Lesson 1: Look to Jesus First When Any Problem Arises:

They remind us of the first miracle Jesus ever performed at the wedding in Cana. When the wine ran out, St. Mary turned to Him to ask Him to do something. In both these instances, they turned to Jesus immediately when something came up. A lot of times when something comes up for us, we try to solve it ourselves or we tell someone we think we can help. It is only when everything else fails that we now remember Jesus. But Mary and Martha's example is a reminder to us to look to Jesus first. We should train our minds to see Jesus as our first and only solution.

Lesson 2: Your trials are not only about you:

The Lord proclaimed that this death was not a final one in this life. It was a temporary one that was allowed so that God may be glorified through His power to raise the dead.

Our trials are not useless. This may seem like an insensitive thing to say or to hear but always remember that God is a God of The Big Picture. There is so much we cannot see. Our faith in God grows exponentially and we learn that God is with us even when we are struggling. That He is with us in our weeping and rejoicing. Trials deepen our faith, when we are going through hard times, let's ask God how He wants to reveal His glory. Or let us just trust that He will.

After they had heard that their brother's sickness would not end in death. They found him dead. However, they were not shaken when events proved contrary to that. Despite everything, they hurried to the Lord when He arrived and did not utter a bad word. Each member of this family felt that he had a special place in the Lord's embrace and love.

Lesson 3: We may not understand God's Timing, but we can trust it:

Read verses 5 and 6, If Jesus loved them so much, why did He not leave immediately? Delay seems like something someone would do if they don't really love you, or it seems like they aren't really concerned. Yet we know Jesus loved them and He was still delayed. This shows us that God's delays do not mean that He doesn't love us, or that He doesn't hear us. It means there is something we cannot see, something we do not know but God knows, and He is working from the pace of His omnipotence.

He let him remain in the tomb until the fourth day and until his body decayed. This proves that everyone will be granted life and resurrection even after the body has decayed.

We can trust God's timing because He knows all things. If there is something you are asking God for and it seems like He is delaying, do not be angry with Him. Trust His timing, trust His plan.

The disciples were concerned about His safety, but they were even more so about themselves. They were not perfect and it was on this account that Thomas was shaken with fear and said: 'Let us also go, that we may die with Him.' This was because Thomas was still weak in faith. Nevertheless, see how the Lord encouraged them by His words in the next verses.

Lesson 4: Walking in God's Light and You WILL Never Stumble:

Our path is full of stumbling blocks. He who walks in the light does not stumble. However, those who remain in darkness will stumble.

The disciples were scared of Jesus going back to where the Jews could see Him because they tried to stone Him the last time.

'Daytime here symbolizes the knowledge of God's will and reliance on His guidance, and night symbolizes the absence of this knowledge combined with self-reliance'. To walk in God's light is to remain entirely dependent on Him, walking in His will and taking every step only when He says so. Whenever we rely on our own selves, Jesus is saying that it is like walking in the dark and we will stumble. Remember that we are not called to a life of independence in the Kingdom of God, we lean on Him for everything and anything.

Lesson 5: Jesus Knows Everything:

In verse 11, Jesus announces that Lazarus has died, and we are not told that anyone sent that news to Him. He just knew it, the way He knows everything. That is why we should never feel like we should hide anything from Him. He already knows.

The Lord used the word 'sleep' to indicate the way He sees death. Then He added the word 'dead' when the disciples did not understand!

The Lord travels towards the home of Lazarus family 11:17- 33

Lesson 6: We can Face God Even in Our Disappointment

When Jesus finally arrived at the home of Lazarus, he had been dead for four days. Yet when Martha heard Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet Him. When there is something, we want Jesus to do for us, and He doesn't do it, what is our reaction? Maybe we refuse to pray, or to go to church? God does not ask us to hide our feelings of disappointment; He asks that we come to Him with them. That we speak to Him in love and say, 'God I really wanted to win this award, but my essay was rejected and it has made me very sad. Please help me in this moment of sadness Lord'. Martha's brother had just died and she said to Jesus "'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Mary and Martha had not yet realized that Jesus is present everywhere. They believed that His presence could have prevented death from touching their brother. Martha believed that if the Lord prayed for anything, He would get it. She dared not ask Him to resurrect her brother.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." [25]

By these words, the Lord revealed His authority. He revealed that He did not need anyone to help Him since He Himself is the life.

She then went to call her sister so that she might share the pleasure she had received.

Lesson 7: Jesus feels with us.

Some believers criminalize and invalidate emotions. Someone will be grieving a loved one and they say things like 'it is the will of God' or 'don't cry, they are in a better place'. But that is not what our Jesus did. When Jesus saw people grieving their dead, The Bible says He was 'deeply moved in the spirit' and when He saw Lazarus' tomb, He wept. Jesus feels with us. He cries with us. He knows what sadness and grief feels like. He knows the WHOLE spectrum of human emotion, and He does not invalidate our emotions. That is why we can trust Him with whatever it is we are going through. Invite Jesus into all your feelings; joy, sadness, grief, confusion. He will feel with you.

Raising Lazarus from the dead 11:34- 44

The Lord ordered them to lift the stone so that all the bystanders would see the dead body lying in the grave. They would also smell the odor and be assured that he had decayed.

Then when Lazarus would walk out of the grave, they would not imagine him to be a phantom but that it was his body indeed.

Would it have been too hard for Him to roll the stone just with His word?

He ordered them to remove the stone so that unbelievers would believe what they saw as they watched the dead man raised up. Also, He wanted us to learn to do our share in moving the burdens of others.

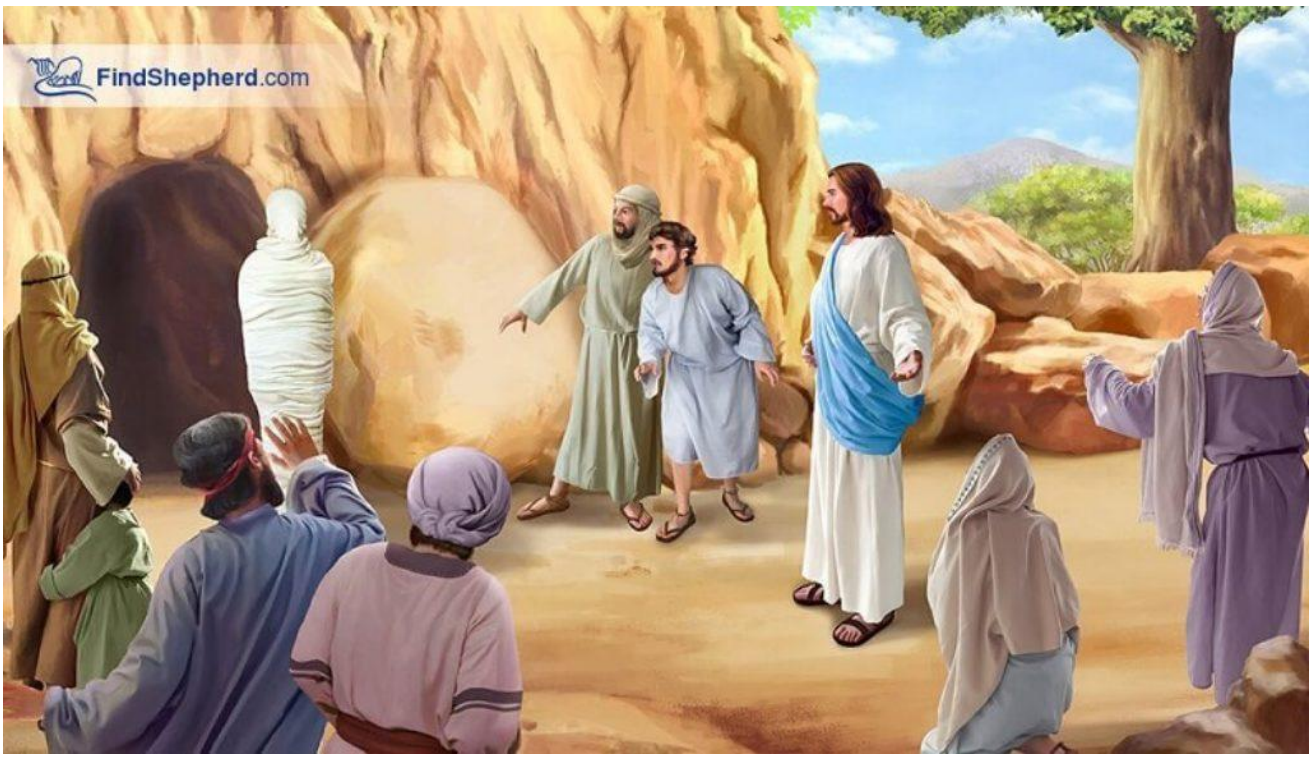
Lesson 8: Thanksgiving is Powerful and Precedes Manifestations of Power.

Jesus said 'I thank you My Father that you have heard me' — this was a thanksgiving of faith, where Jesus was thanking God for already hearing Him, for already raising Lazarus from the dead. Gratitude and thanksgiving are essential in our walk with God. If you want to ask God for something, thank Him for what He has done before. The Bible says, we must enter His courts with thanksgiving. Be like Jesus and always give thanks to God.

He is the Son of God who claims He always possesses divine power. He could cry out "Lazarus, come forth"! This is definitely an order and not a prayer.

He prays as the Son of Man, and orders as the Son of God.

Why did He use a loud voice? to make us realize that He is the One who will come on the last day and speak, then the dead will hear His voice and come to life.



Effects of raising Lazarus from the dead 11:45- 57

Lesson 9: God's Greatest Aim is The Salvation of Souls.

Many of the family's Jewish friends believed in Him. Most of them came from Jerusalem, which is the nearest city to the village of Bethany.

The salvation of souls is God's greatest business. It is VERY important to God that lost souls are brought to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus' delay and the subsequent miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead had this effect: 'Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him.'

The end goal of everything was for people to believe in Him. Once again, God is a God of 'Big Picture' and the Biggest Picture is as many as possible coming to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. And this should be our biggest concern too. We should pray for people to know Him, and our witness should lead people to ask about Jesus.

The chief priests and Pharisees recognized that they could not oppose or deny the truth for the miracle just shouted it out.

Notice how the Jews acted: they should have been astonished and amazed at the resurrection of Lazarus. However, they wished to kill the One who had resurrected the dead.

How could they be so foolish and imagine that they could send to death the One who conquered the death present in the bodies of others. They said that they would kill the Lord to prevent the Romans from coming and occupying their nation and positions. The Romans did not consider that the Lord Jesus Christ opposed their empire. They were not concerned about His popularity because He recommended submission to the authorities.

Caiaphas, the high priest said that Jesus should die for the nation to be saved.

God uses even the evil of the high priest to give testimony for the truth. Moreover, his words predict the redeeming work of Christ for the Jews as well as for God's children all over the world: both Jews and Gentiles.

Lesson Takeaway:

How can this story teach us how to pray?

1. The first prayer-moment in this story is from the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, who send this message to Jesus: "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

Now, think about that as a prayer. What does it teach us? It is an interesting prayer, isn't it? Obviously, Mary and Martha are hoping that Jesus will heal their brother, but their prayer leaves room for Jesus to address their concern in whatever way that He sees fit. It is a prayer that simply invites Jesus into what is happening in their lives.

2. Though Jesus loved this family, He stayed two days behind. Could it be because He has another plan in mind? When God is delaying answering a prayer, it is worth thinking about how God might be using that delay for a higher purpose.
3. Martha's prayer in verse 22 teaches us the importance of faith, and of persistence with our prayers. Martha could have easily given up on this prayer when her brother died. But she didn't. She persisted in prayer. And by doing so, she teaches us to never give up on prayer, and to never give up on God.
4. Have you ever imagined Jesus weeping with you when you are weeping in prayer? I believe that He does. He went through all this so that one day He could return in glory to put an end to all suffering and pain, so that one day He could wipe every tear from our eyes and live among us forever.
5. Jesus told them to loosen him, wouldn't it have been better for Lazarus, and for everyone, to see him come out without him looking like a mummy? He often wants to involve us in His work so that we learn to serve with Him.

Memory Verse: 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."

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

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