

LAZARUS CALLED FROM THE GRAVE

John 11:1-45.

LESSON 84 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “Thou hast given him power over all flesh”
(John 17:2).

For the Glory of God

One of Jesus’ friends, named Lazarus, became very sick. Jesus had visited at the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, some time before this. We know that Jesus loved these kind friends, and no doubt He enjoyed being with them. When the sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick, they very likely thought He would come quickly. But He did not. He had an important lesson to teach them. He said that the sickness was for a reason: for the glory of God.

When sickness or trouble comes to us, it may be for a purpose – perhaps Jesus has a lesson to teach us, too. He may not always answer our prayers right away, because He wants to teach us to trust Him. If we are sick and pray to Jesus and He heals us, we should tell others about it. Perhaps we can tell about our healing in a testimony meeting; that is one way to give glory to God for healing us. It often causes other people to have faith to trust God for healing, too; for if He will heal one person, He will also heal others.

Never Too Late

Jesus did not hurry to go to Lazarus, but spent two more days in the place where He was. By the time that He reached the village of Bethany, He found that for four days Lazarus had been dead and in the grave. When Martha heard that Jesus had come, she went to meet Him and said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Later, we find Mary saying exactly the same words. They had faith in Jesus and knew that He could have prevented their brother from dying, and they wondered why Jesus had not come to them sooner; but Jesus knew why. He is never too late. When we call for Him, as these sisters did, Jesus comes to our help and He will come at just the right time. He can heal us at any time.

We find recorded in this lesson the shortest verse in the Bible, “Jesus wept.” This shows how much Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. Even the Jews who were there said, “Behold how he loved him!” Jesus knows when one of His children is suffering or in sorrow; and He cares, too. We sing that beautiful song, “Jesus Love Me.” We know He loves us, because the Bible tells us so.

They came to the grave of Lazarus and Jesus told them to take away the stone. Jesus wanted Mary and Martha to have much faith in Him, and no doubt their faith was made stronger when He said to Martha, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

“Come Forth”

The graves of long ago were not like the graves of today. The place where Lazarus was buried was a cave, and a stone was rolled to the door of the entrance. The people rolled away the stone, at Jesus’ command; and He lifted up His eyes and prayed to His Father in Heaven, and then cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.”

This was the same Voice which had stilled the tempest on the Sea of Galilee; the same Voice which had said to the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda: “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Many other commands had been given by the voice of Jesus. All Heaven and earth obey that Voice – now the dead man in the grave obeys the voice of Jesus – Lazarus comes out of the grave! If Jesus had not said, “Lazarus,” all the other dead in the graves might have come forth, too. There was great power in that command to “come forth.”

It is impossible to imagine the extent of the joy that must have filled the hearts of Mary, Martha, and the friends of Lazarus, when he came forth from the grave! Some of us have lost a brother or some other member of our family through death. Surely, words could not express the joy one might know, if, after several days, this loved one were restored to our side!

The Great Resurrection

Someday there shall be a greater resurrection than the raising of Lazarus. Jesus said, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28, 29). When one of our friends or loved ones is taken by death, we can look forward to the day of the

final resurrection, and say as Martha said, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

When Jesus Comes

Some of us who are living today may never die, for we are looking for Jesus to return and take us to Heaven. Perhaps very soon we shall be caught up to Heaven to be with God. We read in I Thessalonians 4:16, 17: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” A wonderful hope! The ones who are ready are not fearing that day, but are longing for it. We shall have no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more death – all will be joy and peace.

The Preparation

But there is something for us to do in order to be ready for that day. If we are not saved, we must pray that God will save us from all our sins; then we must pray and give our lives to God, and He will sanctify us wholly; He will also baptize us with the Holy Ghost and fire so that we may have part in that wonderful Rapture. In Heaven we shall see and know Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and all the other saints who have gone before us. First of all we want to see Jesus who died to save us from sin. He made it possible for every one of us to make Heaven our home. What a happy time that will be!

QUESTIONS

1. Did Jesus go immediately to Lazarus? John 11:6.
2. Did Martha and Mary think that Jesus could have prevented Lazarus’ death? John 11:21, 32.
3. Why was Jesus able to call Lazarus from the grave? John 11:25.
4. Did Martha believe that Jesus was the Christ? John 11:27.
5. Will the dead in Christ rise someday? I Thessalonians 4:16, 17.