

Rise Above

There is a story in the Bible about three siblings and Jesus.

My prayer is that this story will open our eyes to the love and compassion and power of Jesus Christ our Lord whom we celebrate today as our risen Lord and Savior.

This story was told and written down for us by one of Jesus' disciples named John.

John had a special relationship with Jesus, in fact John writes about himself, as the one Jesus loved.

Jesus loved everyone, but there was a special bond between Jesus and John so much so that when Jesus was crucified and hanging on the cross, Jesus put John over the care of His mother.

It is this John that tells us this true story in chapter 11 of the gospel of John:

John 11:1-3 CEV - The Death of Lazarus

11 ¹⁻² A man by the name of Lazarus was sick in the village of Bethany. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. This was the same Mary who later poured perfume on the Lord's head and wiped his feet with her hair. ³ The sisters sent a message to the Lord and told him that his good friend Lazarus was sick.

There was a close family in the Bible;

- They were siblings whose names were **Mary, Martha, and Lazarus**.
- They were close friends with Jesus.

Jesus was teaching in a town some distance away

- About one days travel away, from where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were -
- During that time Lazarus became very sick.

So Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that your dear friend Lazarus is sick.

And this is **Jesus' response** when He heard about Lazarus:

John 11:4-6 - ⁴ When Jesus heard this, he said, "His sickness won't end in death. It will bring glory to God and his Son."⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother. ⁶ But he stayed where he was for two more days.

Jesus has a plan and knows exactly what He's doing.

- He knows what He's going to do here.
- He knows that everything is going to be okay.
- He knows exactly what He's going to do, and *how it will **bring glory to God***.

He didn't send a note back to Mary and Martha telling them what His plan was.

He just stayed where He was for two more days.

How many of us have had a situation, a circumstance, and issue *in our lives* **where you have sent out a message to God**?

- You've cried out to God, cried out to Jesus –
- And it seems like ***He's out to lunch***?

You tell Him your issues, your circumstances

- It seems He's gone for two more days, two more months, two more years -
- With not so much as a note, a message, a sign, ***that everything is going to be okay!***

Yet all the while He's got a plan

He just hasn't revealed the plan to you. He's silent.

- And it may be a long time **before He responds to you**
- Some of you **may still be waiting**.

Jesus' reason for not going to Mary and Martha and Lazarus

- Was that He allowed this to happen so that -
- He could **bring glory to God**, and so that **He would be glorified**.

It's **not** that He didn't love them, it says here,

- Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus -
- He stayed where he was for the next two days.

He **loved them** very much, but He had a plan for them

- And for **God's glory to be revealed** by what He was going to do.

He let things happen in the lives of Martha and Mary and Lazarus

- To teach them to have faith and trust in God
- Even when **they didn't understand** His reasoning behind His delay.

God has a plan for you too.

- He sees the fear you have today.
- He sees the trouble you have.
- He sees the hurt you have.
- He sees the worry you have. **He has a plan**

He allows thing to happen in our lives to teach us to trust him, have faith in him, and sometimes he makes us wait.

- He **does not** work on our time schedule.
- **He works** in His time.
- **In God's time** He will reveal himself.
- **In God's time** He will show Himself and **work in your situation**.
- And **He won't show up** until you're ready to receive what He has for you.

After two days Jesus travels with His disciples to where Lazarus, Mary, and Martha are.

And while they are traveling Jesus tells them this:

John 11:7-15 - ⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "Now we will go back to Judea."

⁸ "Teacher," they said, "the people there want to stone you to death! Why do you want to go back?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in each day? If you walk during the day, you will have light from the sun, and you won't stumble. ¹⁰ But if you walk during the night, you will stumble, because you don't have any light." ¹¹ Then he told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, and I am going there to wake him up."

¹² They replied, "Lord, if he is asleep, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus really meant that Lazarus was dead, but they thought he was talking only about sleep.

¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead! ¹⁵ I am glad that I wasn’t there, because now you will have a chance to put your faith in me. Let’s go to him.”

So Jesus tells His disciples that *Lazarus is dead.*

- In fact he’d been dead for four days.
- Can you imagine **the anguish of Mary and Martha?**
- Their brother had died,
- **Their friend Jesus** wasn’t there when it happened, and
- **He didn’t come** to them right away.

The emotions and fears and doubts were running high.

- And the first person to come **running to Jesus was Martha.**
- **Martha** was the active one.
- **Always busy** doing, doing, doing, and trying to figure things out.

She was the one **who complained to Jesus about her sister** not helping in the kitchen while preparing a meal and **Jesus had to set her straight.**

Martha came to him and:

John 11:16-22 - ¹⁶ Thomas, whose nickname was “Twin,” said to the other disciples, “Come on. Let’s go, so we can die with him.”

Jesus Brings Lazarus to Life - ¹⁷ When Jesus got to Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many people had come from the city to comfort Martha and Mary because their brother had died.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask.”

Now Martha, Mary, and Lazarus **had great faith in Jesus,** and **believed** in Him.

Martha believed, had Jesus been there, He would have healed her brother.

This is Jesus response to her:

John 11:23-26 - ²³ Jesus told her, **“Your brother will live again!”**

²⁴ Martha answered, ***“I know that he will be*** raised to life on the last day, when all the dead are raised.”

Then Jesus says this to her:

²⁵ Jesus then said, “I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith **(believes)** in me will live, even if they die. ²⁶ And everyone who lives because of faith **(belief)** in me will never really die. ***Do you believe this?***”

Let me tell you what Jesus is saying here.

He’s telling her:

- **I am the one who has power over death and I am the one who gives life!**
- **I am the one who breathed the life into the first human being**
- **I am the one who forms you in the womb,**
- **I am the one who gives and takes away**
- **I am the resurrection and the life.**

He Who Believes In Me

- **He who believes I have the power over death**
- **And the one who gives life**
- **Will have life forever even though his body dies.**

When He says everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die:

He’s saying:

“Everyone who allows Me into their lives, and follows Me, and believes in who I am, will never ever die.”

Then He asks Martha: “Do you believe this, Martha?”

John 11:27 - “Yes, Lord!” she replied. “I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God. You are the one we hoped would come into the world.”

Martha now goes and gets her sister Mary.

- **Along with her comes a group of mourners**
- **And she approaches Jesus and falls at His feet and she too tells Him:**

John 11:28-33 - ²⁸After Martha said this, she went and privately said to her sister Mary, “The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you.” ²⁹As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went out to Jesus. ³⁰He was still outside the village where Martha had gone to meet him. ³¹Many people had come to comfort Mary, and when they saw her quickly leave the house, they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry. So they followed her.

³² Mary went to where Jesus was. Then as soon as she saw him, she knelt at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw that Mary and the people with her were crying, **he was terribly upset**

You may ask why was Jesus angry?

We believe that Jesus was so deeply moved, and

- That **He loved His friends** so much
- That **to see them** in such distress and anguish
- **It moved Him to anger** about what caused death **to come into the world.**
- **He was angry not** at them, but at sin, Satan, and death.
- **He was angry at** the consequences of sin.
- **He was angry at** the suffering it brings.

The **wages of sin** is death.

Yes, **He was God**

- But **He was human**
- **He felt all the things they were feeling**
- **He had compassion** on them and **it drove Him to tears.**

It was then that **Jesus, went to the tomb** where **His friend Lazarus lay.**

John 11:34-44 - ***“Where have you put his body?”***

They replied, ***“Lord, come and you will see.”***

³⁵ Jesus started crying, ³⁶ and the people said, “See how much he loved Lazarus.”

³⁷ Some of them said, “He gives sight to the blind. Why couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

³⁸ ***Jesus was still terribly upset.*** So he went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone rolled against the entrance.

³⁹ Then he told the people to roll the stone away. But Martha said, “Lord, you know that ***Lazarus has been dead four days***, and there will be a bad smell.”

⁴⁰ Jesus replied, “***Didn’t I tell you that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?***”

⁴¹ After the stone had been rolled aside, Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, “***Father, I thank you for answering my prayer.***”

⁴² I know that you always answer my prayers. But I said this, ***so that the people here would believe that you sent me.***”

⁴³ When Jesus had finished praying, he shouted, “***Lazarus, come out!***”

⁴⁴ The man who had been dead came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth, and a cloth covered his face.

Jesus’ purpose for bringing Lazarus from the dead

- **Wasn’t** to console His friends
- Or make the hurt go away

It was so that his glory would be revealed.

It was so that ***the other people might believe*** that **He is God, the Messiah**

CLOSE: Some months later,

- **Jesus would be betrayed** by one of His disciples.
- **He would be taken by the authorities** to be whipped, beaten, and crucified.
- All of His followers would abandon Him and lose hope.

Jesus would lie in the tomb for three days.

But he did not stay dead!

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 - I told you the most important part of the message exactly as it was told to me. That part is:

Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say.

⁴ He was buried, and ***three days later he was raised to life,*** as the Scriptures say.

⁵ Christ appeared to Peter, then to the twelve.

⁶ After this, he appeared to more than five hundred other followers. Most of them are still alive, but some have died.

He is alive because He is:

- **The one who has power over death**
- The one who gives life
- The one who breathed the life into the first human being
- The one who forms you in the womb
- The one who gives and takes away
- **He is the resurrection and the life!**

He who believes

He has the power over death and **the one who gives life will have life forever** even though his body dies.

Do you believe?

- **By believing**, we have the power over death too.
- **By believing**, we have the power to rise up above our struggles in life.
- **You can rise up** over the death of a loved one.
- **You can rise up** over the illness that **you or a loved one** has.
- **You can rise up** over the turmoil in **your family**.
- **You can rise up** over the evils of this world that we live in.

But you must have the faith and belief that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus had.

Will you believe today, that *Jesus is the resurrection and the life?*

Rise above! – John 11:4-6 - ⁴ When Jesus heard this, he said, “His sickness won’t end in death. **It will bring glory to God and his Son.**”⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother. ⁶ But he stayed where he was for two more days.

- ***Rise above***

Jesus has a plan, and knows exactly what he’s doing.

- **Rise above - Jesus knows exactly what he’s doing.**

Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, **He stayed where He was for the next two days.**

- Rise above

God has a plan for you too!

Rise above

John 11:14-15 - ¹⁴Then **Jesus told them plainly**, “Lazarus is dead! ¹⁵I am glad that I wasn’t there, because now you will have a chance to put your faith **(believe)** in me. Let’s go to him.”

- Rise above - Rise above

Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, and the one the Jews had been waiting for to save them from their sins.

- Rise above

PRAISE TEAM:

This is the response Jesus is looking for from you and me:

“Yes Lord, I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God”

- Rise above

33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a ***deep anger welled up within him***, and he was deeply troubled.

- Rise above

Jesus’ purpose was so that His glory would be revealed

It was so that the **other people might believe**

- Rise above