

136. Jesus Lets Lazarus Die (John 11:1-16)

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, often we cannot understand Your plans. But we can trust You to work for our good. Make our faith strong to trust You in everything, and give us Your gift of eternal life. We pray in Jesus our Savior's name. Amen.

John 11:1-3. Lazarus was sick. He lived in the town named Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha. Mary was the same one who poured perfume on Jesus' feet and wiped His feet with her hair. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus and said, "Lord, the one You love is sick." But when Jesus heard the message, He said, "Lazarus' sickness will not lead to death. His sickness will lead to God's glory. Because he is sick, God's Son will receive glory."

- When Lazarus became sick, what did Mary and Martha do? What did they think Jesus would do?
- What did Jesus say about Lazarus' sickness? Why was he sick?

John 11:5-10. Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. When Jesus heard Lazarus was sick, Jesus stayed two more days. Then Jesus told the disciples, "Let's go to Judea again." (Lazarus lived in Bethany, in Judea.) The disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, the Jews wanted to stone You to death! You are going there again?" Jesus answered, "A day has 12 hours, right? If you walk during the day, you don't trip and fall. You can see because of the light. But if you walk at night, you trip, because you have no light."

- Mary and Martha expected Jesus to come quickly to help Lazarus. Did Jesus come quickly?
- When Jesus decided to go to Lazarus, what did the disciples think?
- Jesus answered something about day and night and light. What did He mean? What (or who) is the light? What does it mean to walk? To trip?

John 11:11-16. Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus fell asleep. But I will go and wake him up from his sleep.” The disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” The disciples thought Jesus meant Lazarus was really sleeping. Jesus meant Lazarus had died. Jesus told them, “Lazarus is dead. I am glad I wasn’t there. This is better for you, so you can believe. Let us go to him.” Thomas told the other disciples, “Let’s go with Jesus, so we can die with Him.”

- Now Jesus explains why He didn’t go right away. Why did Jesus wait?
- Who will benefit because Lazarus died?
- Does God sometimes allow bad things to happen to you because He wants to use you to help someone else’s faith?

137. The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Jesus told this story, probably while He and His disciples traveled to Lazarus.

Luke 16:19-21. A rich man had expensive purple and fancy clothes and enjoyed his wealth every day. In front of his house near his gate, a beggar named Lazarus sat. His body was full of sores, and he was hungry for the food that fell from the rich man’s table. Even dogs licked his sores.

- The story is about two people. Who are they? What was their life on earth like?

Luke 16:22-24. It happened, the beggar died and the angels carried him to heaven with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. He was in terrible pain in hell. He looked up and saw Abraham far away, and he saw Lazarus with Abraham. The rich man called out to him, “Father Abraham, show mercy to me. Send Lazarus to put his finger in water and touch my tongue. I am suffering terribly in this fire.”

- Both the rich man and Lazarus died. Where did the rich man go? Where did Lazarus go?

Luke 16:25-26. But Abraham answered, “Son, remember, in your life you had many good things, and Lazarus had many bad things. Now Lazarus gets comforted here, and you suffer. Also, there is a large separation between you and us. Anyone who wants to go from here in heaven to you can’t go, and no one can come from hell to heaven.”

- What did the rich man ask for? Why couldn’t he have it?
- Some people read this and think all rich people go to hell and all poor people go to heaven. Is that true?

Luke 16:27-29. The rich man said, “Then I beg you, please, send Lazarus to my father's house. I have five brothers. Lazarus needs to warn them, so they do not come to this painful place.” Abraham said, “Your brothers have the writings from Moses and the prophets. Your brothers should pay attention to God’s word.”

- What did the rich man ask for?
- What did Abraham answer?

Luke 16:30-31. The rich man said, “Father Abraham, no! If someone rises from the dead and speaks to them, they will repent.” Abraham said, “If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even if someone rises from the dead.”

- Why did the rich man think his brothers will listen to Lazarus?
- Are people today satisfied with God’s word? Or do they want something more, like miracles, proof about God?
- But God gives many things to help us believe. He gives us His word, and someone rose alive from the dead. Who?