

# Following Jesus - The Life of a Disciple - Part 36

## Lesson 36 - The Story of Lazarus

### Background:

This lesson is based on chapter 11 of John's gospel. It is the climax of the first half of this gospel. From here, Jesus moves into His final week in Jerusalem. In this passage, Jesus performs one of His most famous miracles – the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead for days when Jesus carried out this miracle. We can be certain then, that Jesus has complete power and authority over death.

The story is also a tender one. Two sisters, Mary and Martha, have lost their brother. Jesus knows them very well and counts them among His closest friends. In fact, He is moved to tears when He meets them. This reminds us that Jesus feels pain and suffering in the same way that all humans do.

### Scripture Passage:

Read: [John 11](#)

### Read the Following Quote:

"What Jesus did with Lazarus, he is willing to do with us. Which is good to know, for what Martha said about Lazarus can be said about us, "But, Lord, it has been four days since he died. There will be a bad smell" (John 11:39). Martha was speaking for us all. The human race is dead, and there is a bad smell. We have been dead and buried for a long time. We don't need someone to fix us up; we need someone to raise us up. In the muck and mire of what we call life there is death, and we have been in it so long we've grown accustomed to the stink. But Christ hasn't. And Christ can't stand the thought of his kids rotting in the cemetery. So he comes in and calls us out. We are the corpse, and he is the corpse-caller. We are the dead, and he is the dead-raiser. Our task is not to get up but to admit we are dead. The only ones who remain in the grave are the ones who don't think they are there. [Max Lucado](#)

### Questions:

Discuss this quote by Max. What does it mean that the human race is dead? How can Jesus be the "dead-raiser"?

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### Scripture Passage:

Now answer the questions based on [John 11](#)

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## The Death of Lazarus [John 11:1-16](#)

1. Who are the main characters in this story? What was the message that was sent? (Verses 1-3)

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2. How did Jesus respond to the message? Does His response surprise you? What do you think Jesus thought was going to happen? Where did Jesus want to go and what did the disciples think of His plan? (Verses 4-8)

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3. What does Jesus say has happened and what does He tell them He will do? (Verses 11-15)

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## Jesus Comforts the Sisters [John 11:17-37](#)

4. Describe verses 17-20 in your own words.

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5. Study verses 21-27. What does Martha believe about Jesus' identity? What does she believe about Jesus' power? Do you think she is angry with Jesus for not coming more quickly? What amazing statement does Jesus make in verses 25-26? Do you believe this? Why or why not?

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6. What do you learn about resurrection and life from this passage? Summarize what does Paul teach about life and resurrection in [I Corinthians 15:20-28](#). Now compare [Revelation 20:11-15](#). What do we learn about life, death and resurrection in this passage?

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7. What did Martha do after her conversation with Jesus? What did Mary do and say when she found out Jesus had arrived? Do you think that she was angry with Jesus for not coming earlier? (Verses 28-33)

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8. What do you think of Jesus' behaviour in verses 33-37? What do his actions tell you about Jesus' feelings? What do the others in the crowd say and think?

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## Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead [John 11:17-37](#)

9. Where was Lazarus's body? What is the condition of the body of Lazarus after so many days? Why do you think this is an important detail? Do you think that Jesus was confident He could do something? Why? (Verses 38-40)

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10. Describe what happens in verses 41-44. What does Jesus actually do to raise Lazarus from the dead? What does this tell you about Jesus' power? Why does Jesus tell them to take the graveclothes off of Lazarus? How would you feel if you were Lazarus, the sisters, the people in the crowd?

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## The Plot to Kill Jesus [John 11:38-57](#)

11. How do the Jewish leaders respond to the raising of Lazarus? What did Jesus do? What event was coming soon? Why are all these points important?

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## For Discussion

12. What do you learn about life, death, and resurrection in this lesson? Does death frighten you? How can we prepare for our eventual death?

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**Suggested Prayer:** *Dear Lord, sometimes we are frightened when we think of death. We thank you for the marvelous truth that Jesus has power over death and that by simply trusting in Him we can be forgiven of our sins and certain of our future in Heaven. Help us to rejoice and share this wonderful news, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.*

## For Further Reading:

[The Pharisees Plot to Kill Jesus and Lazarus](#)

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