

## John 11: 1-44 (ESV) – I am the Resurrection

**Main point:** Life with Jesus is not defeated by anything, even death itself.

**Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.**

**Background:** This is the story of the last major “sign” in the gospel of John. Jesus has been healing and doing wondrous things, and many people believe in him. Now in this final sign he shows his power over death itself, humanity’s final enemy. This timeframe is getting close to his death in Jerusalem. It would have been dangerous for him to come near Jerusalem, but Mary and Martha want him to come. They and their brother, Lazarus, are Jesus’ dear friends, and they know that Jesus would be willing to risk his life for Lazarus, as indeed he was.

[This is a long passage, so I suggest breaking down the story and using broad strokes to get through it. Read sections separately.]

### I. Read verses 1-7

1. v. 3: *What is the sisters’ message to Jesus?*
  - a. “Lord, the one you love is ill.”
2. *What is interesting about this? Is it a question? Is it a request?*
  - a. No – just presenting a need. Does not dictate how Jesus should respond. Humility and recognition that his will be done.
3. v. 6: *How does Jesus respond?*
  - a. Waits two days! Does this feel like love?
4. v. 4: *What’s the reason he says that Lazarus is ill?*
  - a. Jesus says this sickness is to reveal the work and glory of God and his Son. The Father and Son will be glorified.

### [optional section: Read v. 8-16]

1. *What are the disciples worried about? How does Jesus reassure them?*
  - a. Disciples are worried about the danger. Jesus uses the imagery of light; he’s trying to tell them that they don’t need to worry about what will happen to them because they are with Him, the true Light.
2. *Do they get it?*
  - a. Doesn’t sound like it... Thomas says they’re all going to die.

### II. Read verses 17-27

1. v. 17: *How long has Lazarus been in the tomb by this time?*
  - a. Four days. *Is he just sick or sleeping after all that time?*
    - i. No! really, truly dead.
2. v. 21: *What does Martha say?*
  - a. Martha tells Jesus that she knows he could have done something if he’d come sooner; but also expresses her faith in the future resurrection, which the Jews believed in.

3. *v. 25-26: How does Jesus challenge her understanding of resurrection? Where does he put her attention?*
  - a. Away from death and the future to himself, now, as the true resurrection.
  - b. He does not just give life; he is life, has the power of life and death.
4. *Wow! How would you have felt if you were Martha at that moment??*

### **III. Read verses 28-37**

1. *v. 32: What does Mary say?*
  - a. Exactly the same words as Martha
2. *I wonder what's going on with the crowd at this point?*
  - a. Lots of people around grieving with Mary and Martha; weeping loudly
3. *v. 33-35: How does Jesus feel? Remember, he's a human too:*
  - a. deeply moved, troubled; weeps with those who weep

### **IV. Read verses 38-44**

1. *v. 38: So then they all go to the tomb, which was a rock cave. What does Martha say?*
  - a. It's going to smell! This body has been decomposing for 4 days!
2. *v. 40-43: What does Jesus say? Why?*
  - a. Tells the people to believe, to see God's glory.
  - b. Prays to the Father.
  - c. Commands the dead person to come out: calling across the chasm of death itself.
3. *Why is Lazarus wrapped up?*
  - a. Grave clothes, how the body was prepared, like a mummy – again, very dead.

### **V. Read verses 45-46**

1. *What are the responses to this incredible occurrence?*
  - a. Many believe in him! "Seeing is believing."
  - b. But others go to the Pharisees to tell them; they want to kill Jesus.

### **VI. What does this story tell us about Jesus, life, and death?**

1. *Will our bodies eventually die? Did Lazarus die later (again)?*
  - a. Of course! Our mortal bodies slow down and everything eventually dies.
2. *But is it final?*
  - a. No. The life that comes through believing in Jesus is not interrupted by physical death. When we are united with Christ, we share in his life, the life that triumphed over death.

1. Ask for prayer requests for today.
2. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
3. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

