

# Men's Breakfast - a Friend is Dying

1. Describe the sickest you have ever been.
2. What polite phrases do we use to describe death?
3. When has someone you've known died unexpectedly?

## John 11:1-16 (NIV)

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [2] This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. [3] So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

[4] When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." [5] Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [6] Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

[7] Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

[8] "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

[9] Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. [10] It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

[11] After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

[12] His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." [13] Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

[14] So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, [15] and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

[16] Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**DISCUSSION:** There is not a man here that at some point in his life (at least once) has not gone to Jesus to ask Him to save the life of a loved one - for a family member or friend, etc. This is the context with which to view this event, the same hope, at the same time the same uncertainty. Will he get the message (prayer), how will he respond? When will he respond?

1. Why do you think Jesus didn't immediately go to help Lazarus?

- a. He was afraid he would get killed if he went back to Judea
- b. He didn't always do what the people wanted.
- c. He was waiting for the "go ahead" from his Father
- d. God would receive more glory if Jesus waited until Lazarus died

2. How would you describe Jesus' relationship with this family (w. 1-5)?

3. What was wrong with Lazarus? (11:1)

4. To whom was Lazarus related? (11:2)

(See Passage John 12 on Back)

5. How did Jesus get word about Lazarus? (11:3)

5a. Why did Jesus say Lazarus was sick? (11:4)

6. What did Jesus do when He heard about Lazarus? (11:6)

7. Given that Lazarus was one to two days away and Jesus waited two days and when he gets there Lazarus has been in the tomb 4 days - what is the likely status of Lazarus when Jesus gets the message? Could he have made it back on time if he left when he heard about it?

8. Why did Jesus' disciples respond negatively to Jesus' plan to return to Judea? (11:7-8)

9. Given his disciples' objection (v. 8), what do you think Jesus means by his parable (w. 9-10)?

10. How did Jesus answer His disciples' hesitancy about returning to Judea? (11:9-10)

11. What did Jesus say had happened to Lazarus? (11:11)

12. Notice how Jesus refers to Lazarus in verse 11. How does he describe his relationship? How many other people in the bible are referred to as Gods friend?

13. Why is Jesus returning to Lazarus at this time (vv. 11-15)? What do the disciples fear instead (w. 8,16)?

14. How did the disciples misunderstand Jesus? (11:12)

15. What did Jesus mean when he used the word "sleeping"? (11:13-14)

16. Why did Jesus say that He was glad He wasn't with Lazarus? (11:15)

17. What melancholic suggestion did Thomas make? (11:16)

18. What is different about Thomas in this passage compare to the "doubting" Thomas portrayed later?

**John 12:1-3 (NIV)** 1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**2 Chronicles 20:7 (NIV)** O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?

**Isaiah 41:8 (NIV)** "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have

chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,

**James 2:23 (NIV)** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

**Romans 8:28 (NIV)** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**Philippians 4:19 (NIV)** And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

**John 5:21 (NIV)** 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

**John 6:40 (NIV)** For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

#### REFLECTION:

1. Have you ever felt like God was not listening when you prayed? How did you deal with this? How does the way in which Jesus postponed his response to the sisters' request help you in understanding your own prayer life?

2. Think back to the death of a family member or friend. Did that death cause you to question God's love? Explain.

How can we resolve the seeming conflict between Jesus' love for Lazarus and his deliberate delay in helping him (John 11:4-5)?

3. How can those verses help us when we feel abandoned by God in a time of great need?

4. What additional insight into God's purposes can we gain from Jesus' statement in John 11:15?

5. Have you, like Thomas (v. 16), ever felt Jesus was calling you to do something very risky? What happened?

6. How would you respond if you heard that a good friend was very sick?

7. When have you thought you had a better plan for your life than the one God was working out?

8. In what way has God used sickness in your life or the life of another to bring someone to Himself?

9. Why would God choose to use sickness to bring someone to Himself?

10. What shortcoming or disability in your life has God chosen to use to draw others to Himself?

11. How would you respond differently from the way Jesus did if you heard that a good friend had died?

12. When have you felt that you had to perform a task regardless of the obstacles in your path?

13. What gave you the confidence to pursue a hard task that others strongly opposed?

14. When have you felt misunderstood by your friends or family?

