

Defeating Death John 11

Introduction:

1. In this day of modern medicine, it is not unusual for a person to quit breathing and be resuscitated. “Resuscitate” means “to revive from apparent death.”
2. But when someone has been dead (person or animal) for four days, this doesn’t happen. At least, I have never heard of it! Except for once, a little over 2,000 years ago, and it is recorded right here in our text.
3. This event from the life of Christ happened in the town of Bethany (map or picture). Read verses 1-3. Lazarus ends up dying before Jesus Christ gets there and is dead for four days.
4. This set the stage for Jesus to perform His greatest miracle of His ministry (vs. 38-44). Wow! You talk about drama. Wouldn’t you have loved to have been there?
 - Christ had already healed blind eyes, opened deaf ears, healed crippled people who had never walked, and He had even raised up two other people from the dead (Luke 7:2-15). But they were only dead for a few hours.
 - This was a miracle that even the critics couldn’t deny. They were getting worried that Christ might take over their religious positions (vs. 47-48, 53 – kind of silly).
5. But many that day did the sane and rational thing. They believed on Jesus Christ. They said, “Yep, no doubt, He is the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Savior of this world. We believe it!” vs. 45
6. However, within a week, His critics **would** put Him to death on the cross. And then three days later, He would walk out of that tomb, **showing** Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). Now, it is possible for **every** person to overcome and defeat death.

Death is a reality for every person.

1. Did you know death doesn’t care who you know or what your financial portfolio looks like? Did you know death doesn’t care how old you are or what your house looks like?
2. According to our text, Lazarus’s family was obviously wealthy. In those days, only the wealthy had tombs with stones in front. Not only this, Lazarus was a personal friend of Jesus and the twelve disciples. It didn’t matter. He still got sick and died. So, what do we learn from this story?
3. Death is no respecter of persons. It comes knocking on every person’s door. Psalm 89:48; Hebrews 9:27
4. Why is this? Because of something that entered the world shortly after God created it, and that thing is called sin. Adam and Eve were warned, but disobeyed God anyway. We have all felt the repercussions of what occurred that day. Romans 5:12

5. We all have an inherent tendency to do the things we know are wrong, even when we don't **want** to, because we know they will harm us. And many times we still do them because their influence is so strong. Sin ultimately leads to physical and spiritual death for every person. Romans 6:23

Death can be followed by life.

1. Does that sound strange? You say, "You got that backwards. If you're dead, you're dead." Many people believe that when you die, you're dead, and that's it.
2. But Jesus, over and over again, all during His ministry emphasized that a person could have life **after** death (John 5:24). Look in our text at verse 25.
3. The resurrection of Lazarus from death was concrete evidence, Exhibit A that it is indeed possible to obtain life after death. For everyone, not just followers of Christ, physical death is not the end.

Death can be defeated through Jesus.

1. As we said, Jesus had already raised up two dead people, but they had only been dead a few hours. According to Jewish theology, a person wasn't really dead until they had been in the grave at least 3 days – long enough for the body to begin decaying.
2. Lazarus qualified! He had been dead for 4 days! Jesus was very careful to make sure that Lazarus was really, really dead!
3. Nobody had ever been raised from the dead after four days (the O.T or N.T). No person in history had ever come back from the dead after four days in the grave until this day!
4. Jesus Christ preceded this miracle by uttering one of the most powerful and incredible statements that has ever been made. Lets' read verses 23-26.
 - It wasn't, "I can raise Him up to life." It was, "***I am the resurrection, and the life...***" John 11:25
 - He was saying, "I embody life. They may take my physical life, but death **cannot** keep it. **I am** life."
5. That may have been a big statement, but He would prove it within the next week or so.
 - It would begin with His arrest, then Christ would be beaten and ultimately put to death. But He would resurrect from the dead three days later!
 - This miracle of Lazarus' resurrection would prepare their hearts for what would soon happen to Himself.
6. God has provided a way for you and me to defeat and conquer death. And that way is Jesus Christ. There is no other solution. There is no other hope. Why? Because no other person has ever defeated death. **Illustration:** Muslim convert.
 - Faith in just anything will not do. It is faith in Jesus Christ. He is the focus of our faith. He alone is the resurrection and the life. He is the only source of salvation.

7. If only one Person has ever defeated death, then that tells me something. That Person has the key. Therefore, if I want victory over death, I am going to have to go through that Person.
8. Thankfully, we can! Look at what Jesus said in verses 25-26. Revelation 1:18
 - **Illustration:** Door – one person has the key (you aren't getting in any other way).
9. He basically said, "I love you, and I am offering this resurrection life to anybody who will simply believe on me and trust me." John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1; 10:9
10. Jesus Christ is a Giver. He does not desire to keep His life and blessings to Himself. He gave His life on the cross to make a full payment for our sins. He raised from the dead which proved the sufficiency of His work for our sins. Now, He invites "*whosoever will*" to come and put their faith and trust in Him, providing anyone who wills everlasting life.

Death does not have to be feared.

1. Did you know that because of what Jesus did we do not have to fear death? He has overcome, and He has defeated it. If your faith and trust is in Him, you have nothing to fear. Listen closely to Hebrews 2:14-15. **Illustration:** Possum
2. Jesus said, in our text, that if our faith is in Him, we will never die. Sure we die physically, but the believer is more alive than they have ever been. The Bible says that if we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. There is never a second when we aren't alive.
3. For the Christian, death is not the period at the end of a sentence. It is simply a comma, leading us to eternal life with Jesus Christ. Christ is great. He is the only conqueror of death. Sin and the devil give death; Christ gives life – eternal life.
 - The world's philosophy: _____ is dead.
 - The teaching of Christ: _____died and is now living eternally with Jesus Christ.

Conclusions:

1. Will you choose life today?
2. Will you choose Jesus Christ?