

Decision Time John 11

Introduction:

1. John 11 is about an empty tomb. Not Christ's empty tomb, but Christ's friend Lazarus' tomb. He had been dead for four days, but Christ raised him to life. vs. 41-44
2. It was decision time for Israel. Up to this point, Christ and His teachings had been largely rejected by the people in this area of Judea.
 - In fact, when Christ mentioned to His disciples about going back to this area, they were quick to remind Him of this. vs. 7-8, 16
3. Christ returned, however, performing a miracle of such magnitude that people were basically forced to get off the fence and make a true decision about Jesus Christ.
4. Life is all about decisions. The decisions we make have consequences – there is cause and effect.
5. But there is one decision you will make that will affect you more than you could ever imagine. I am talking about the decision you make concerning Jesus Christ. More important things happened on this day than Lazarus' resurrection. You say, "Huh?"
 - Many people made a decision to believe on Christ and gained eternal life.
 - Many decided to allow unbelief and sin to harden their hearts even deeper.
 - Many eternal destinies were determined that day.
6. Mary and Martha were the sisters of Lazarus, and Martha was privileged to hear some of the greatest teaching a person could ever hear concerning Jesus. vs. 25-26
7. Jesus ended His teaching with a simple question, "*Believest thou this?*" He asked her, "Do you believe me?" Martha heard strong, but true, teaching, and now it was decision time. She made that decision (vs. 27). This was **before** the miracle of Lazarus.
8. Likewise, every person must decide to believe on Jesus Christ. Why?

Jesus is God in the flesh.

1. Jesus was not a mere man or prophet. Mere men do not have power over life and death. Jesus told Martha in verse 25, "*I am...*" This is significant.
2. Back in Exodus 3, Jehovah God identified Himself to Moses by the great name "*I am that I am.*" Since the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament, and what is concealed in the O.T. is revealed in the N.T., we constantly see Jesus referring to Himself as "*I am.*" In John, it is used 20 times.
 - I am the bread of life, light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the way, the truth, and the life, the true vine, and here in our text – the resurrection and the life.
3. Jesus is the great I AM. He is God in the flesh. 1 Timothy 3:16

Jesus is the resurrection.

1. Jesus told Martha that Lazarus would rise again (vs. 23). Martha was looking at an event (vs. 24). Christ changed her focus from an event to a Person (Himself).
2. He said, “*I am the resurrection...*” This means that if **any** person will **ever** be resurrected to live after death, it has to happen through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. He **is** the resurrection.
3. He proved it on that day, and within a week, He himself would die for our sins on the cross and walk out of the tomb where they laid Him. Acts 2:24
 - “*Should be holden*” means “to retain.” “*Possible*” means “strong enough, capable.”
 - Death was totally incapable of retaining Christ’s body in the tomb.

Jesus is the only giver of eternal life.

1. He is the resurrection and the life. The resurrection is the beginning and gives existence; life is what follows – everlasting, eternal life.
2. Christ gives more than existence – He gives life. He gives expression, energy, enjoyment, and excitement. He said to His flock that He came to provide life, and to provide it more abundantly.
3. You cannot find true life any place other than Christ. He said, “*I am...the life...*”
4. But there is one prerequisite to obtain this never-ending life; you must decide to place your faith in Jesus Christ (vs. 26). Unbelief gains you nothing worthwhile. It leaves you empty handed.
 - Satan argues on behalf of unbelief, but it strips you of resurrection and life.
5. God is calling each one of us to place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. A decision must be made. He said, “Martha, do you believe this?” She said, “Yes Lord, I believe.” Her profession of faith was strong, straightforward, and bold.

Here are some key thoughts from our text about a decision for Christ:

1. A decision for Christ must be made while you are alive.
 - Notice what it says in verse 26, “*whosoever liveth and believeth in me...*”
 - Dead people can’t make a decision or a choice. The time to decide is while you are alive, while you can think, reason, and exercise your free will to choose.
 - Only those who receive Christ while living on the earth will be saved.
 - This is why the Bible says, “*...now is the accepted time... now is the day of salvation.*” **2 Corinthians 6:2**
 - If a decision for Christ must be made before a person dies, and none of us know if we have tomorrow, then common sense says that you should make that decision today.
2. A decision for Christ must be made personally.
 - Did you notice that Jesus asked her directly, “Do you believe this?” Look at verse 27 – she answered, “*I believe...*” She couldn’t speak for her sister or her dead brother, but only for herself.

- Nobody can choose Christ for you. It must be your decision. In the Bible, there is no such thing as people on earth praying dead loved ones out of a certain place.
 - Every person will stand accountable to God for their own decisions.
Romans 14:11-12
3. A decision for Christ must be made with total resolve.
- Martha was resolved to believe on Christ before this miracle, and others were resolved to believe on Christ after the miracle (vs. 45). But look at verse 46. It never says they did NOT believe. They simply ran and told the Pharisees; then the Pharisees decided to put Christ to death. vs. 47, 53
 - The people saw the miracle, but in their heart, they were unresolved that Christ was the Savior of the world. The opposite of resolved is undecided. **Illustration:** Undecided voters.
 - The Jews ran to their religion to see what it would say about the situation. And what do you think their religion did? It talked them **out** of believing on Christ.
 - Christ taught that eternal life was not found in a religion, but in a relationship with Him. If a person can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone, they don't need religion, and that scared the Pharisees. vs. 48

In Conclusion:

1. You can run to religion or seek this world's wisdom, and they will probably try to talk you out of believing on Jesus Christ. Why? Because if Christ is right, they are wrong. Just like it was for the Pharisees, pride is a powerful motivator in decision making.
2. But Christ is willing to receive you into His family and give you eternal life; however, you must humble yourself, believe the words of Christ, and place your faith and trust in Him.
3. Others may tell you that Christ is wrong, but the empty tomb says that Christ is right!