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SERMON TITLE

Live Again

SERIES

Come Alive in 2025

DATE

2/23/2025

KEY SCRIPTURE

John 11

SYNOPSIS

When the Lord speaks, even the dead listen and come to life.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Live Again

We've been talking about Coming Alive in 2025, and today we will look at a situation that went from bad to worse even though the Lord had made a promise. Plus, it seemed as though the Lord didn't really care. Can you relate?

John 11:1-46 NKJV

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." 4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Most everyone listening today is familiar with this story. Lazarus and his sisters were personal friends of Jesus, whom he loved. From other references, we know that he had been at their home several times, so they knew each other well. Now, Lazarus was sick, but it was more than just a cold or flu – apparently this was serious. Nonetheless, Jesus makes it plain that this situation would not end in death, but would bring glory to God. That was a promise – how many of the Lord's promises ever fail?

6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

Interestingly enough, Jesus was not in a hurry. Sometimes, we forget that about the Lord. We want him to hurry up and answer our prayers. He does answer our prayers, but his timing is not the same as ours.

☞ He intentionally waited two more days. **God's delay does not mean God's denial.**

We know from the previous chapter that Jesus had been in and around Bethany recently, but had gone beyond the Jordan when the Jews tried to seize him. So, we know he was roughly 20 miles away at this point – about a day's journey. So, he's not getting back to Lazarus very quickly at all. Plus, the disciples are thinking it's a bad idea to go back there anyway.

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

The disciples were worried about the safety of Jesus, but Jesus understood that his own time of death was not yet. Thus, he would continue doing the Father's will until the appointed time, and God would watch over him through it all. It's a good reminder for us to simply keep on doing God's will.

11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." 12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."



Apparently, the disciples knew about the message regarding the illness of Lazarus and thought that if he was sleeping he would improve. They were thinking in the natural, while Jesus was living in the supernatural. Thus, Jesus had to be blunt so that they would understand. How often do we get stuck only seeing in the natural, and miss the supernatural that's all around us? **Lord, help us to tune into the supernatural** and understand what you are doing all around us.

Jesus knew Lazarus was dead even though nobody told him. He even says he was glad he was not ☞ there because it was better for his disciple in order to strengthen their faith. Sometimes **God's delays are actually better for us** than an immediate response.

16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

This response from Thomas gets no commentary from the Lord. On the one hand, there's a sense of loyalty, but on the other, a lack of faith... "I guess we're all gonna die anyway."

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. 19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

This interaction is interesting – Martha seems to say, "I wish you were here sooner so that this didn't happen." That sounds like faith wrapped in frustration. "I know you could have saved him... but you didn't!" Sometimes we are just like that. "I know God can do anything, but arghh, why doesn't he?" ☞ However, Martha leaned into her faith, saying, "**even now** I know..." **Don't let fear and frustration overcome your faith.**

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Jesus says in essence, "Lazarus isn't going to stay dead." Martha immediately thinks of the fulfillment of the ages in the future, but Jesus was talking about the here and now. How often are we just like Martha? We believe the bible and the prophecies; we know Jesus is coming soon and will make all things right again; but **do we believe he will do miraculous things right now, in our time and our place?**

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him.



Here, I simply want to note how quickly Mary responded when the Lord called for her. Are you willing to respond that quickly when the Lord speaks to you? Will you heed his calling?

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. 31 Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there." 32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Note how she basically quotes her sister. No doubt, Mary and Martha had discussed this before and had similar feelings about the situation – faith mixed with frustration.

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept.

☞ **Jesus sees your tears and feels your pain.** There's a double layer in the response of Jesus here. In one sense, he feels the hurt and identifies with it – he wept. In another sense, he is angry at the situation. "He groaned" in the Greek, literally means *to snort like a horse* — implying anger and indignation. Now, from the context, it doesn't seem that he is angry with the family, but rather is simply angry at the situation and all of its ramifications. Death had taken a good friend, the family is grieving, and others are being affected as well.

Jesus came to deliver us from sin and death, and now he sees the effect of those things on a family to ☞ which he is very close, and it sort of ticks him off. **He is angry at the Devil.** But, **what the Devil intends for discouragement, doubt and destruction, the Lord uses to develop us.** (John referenced this in his sermon last week. The Lord isn't nearly as interested in our comfort and relief as he is in our commitment and rising to the occasion.)

36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" 37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?" 38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying.

Jesus was about to do a miracle, but there was a barrier that needed to be removed. Actually, there were two. Unbelief was one... Martha is still struggling with her faith... "he's been dead long enough ☞ that there's a stench!" **Unbelief is a significant barrier to the supernatural.** So, the Lord deals with that by reminding her of the promise he had made... "believe and you will see the glory of God!" We must constantly feed our faith, so that we don't get overcome by unbelief.

☞ **Remember God's promises! Keep the faith!**



The other barrier here was the stone blocking the entrance, or in this case, the exit. This was a man-made barrier that needed to be removed. In our case, today, there may be barriers blocking us from fulfilling God's will. What sort of things prevent us from heeding the Lord's call?

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — **the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting** of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

☞ **Cravings, lust, and pride need to be rolled away, so that God's will prevails...** These are barriers and blocks to heeding God's call. "What I want might not align with what God wants." "I want more and more stuff, but God may ask me to give it up." "I want to look good and impress people, but God may want me to stay out of the limelight." "I want to climb the ladder of success, but God just wants me to be a servant." Those stones need to go.

And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

When the Lord speaks, even the dead listen and come to life! Is anything impossible for God? Yet, the ☞ Lord didn't miraculously remove the grave clothes. They had to do that. So, we see a **partnership with Lord...** first he asks us to **believe**; then, he tells us to **remove the barrier** – whatever is blocking us from conforming to his will; and finally, he tells us to **loose the bondages** so that we can be free to go as he directs. Even if you're alive in Christ, there may be things in your life that are holding you back (graveclothes). Those must also go!

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

No matter what the Lord does, some will believe and some will not. This is the nature of humanity, and we may as well get used to it. But, what can be said, is that many had not believed in the Lord until this moment. So, I want God working in and through me, as well as our church, so that some will believe.

Whom do you most identify with in this story? Mary & Martha – wrestling with unbelief? Lazarus – blocked & bound; dead inside? The Lord is asking us to listen and believe. Jesus is calling us to Come Alive in 2025. Do you believe? Will you remove the barriers and bondages? Will you get rid of anything that is holding you back from completely following the Lord? Will you respond to his call? Lazarus, come forth! Come out of that grave and Live Again!