

Rise Above

Introduction:

There is a story in the Bible about three siblings and Jesus.

My prayer is that this story will open our eyes to the love and compassion and power of Jesus Christ our Lord whom we celebrate today as our risen Lord and Savior.

This true story was told and written down for us by one of Jesus' disciples named John.

John had a special relationship with Jesus, in fact John writes about himself, as the one Jesus loved.

Jesus loved everyone, but there was a special bond between Jesus and John so much so that when Jesus was crucified and hanging on the cross, Jesus put John over the care of His mother.

It is this John that tells us this true story in chapter 11 of the gospel of John:

John 11:1–44 (NLT)

The raising of Lazarus

1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha.

2 This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick.

3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

There was a close family in the Bible; they were siblings whose names were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

They were close friends with Jesus.

Jesus was teaching in a town some distance away, about one days travel away, from where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were, and during that time Lazarus became very sick.

So Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that your dear friend Lazarus is sick.

And this is Jesus' response when He heard about Lazarus:

4 But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this."

5 So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus,

6 he stayed where he was for the next two days.

Jesus has a plan and knows exactly what He's doing.

- He knows what He's going to do here.
- He knows that everything is going to be okay.
- He knows exactly what He's going to do, and how it will bring glory to God.

But, He didn't send a note back to Mary and Martha telling them what His plan was.

He just stayed where He was for two more days.

How many of us have had a situation, a circumstance, and issue in our lives where you have send out a message to God?

You've cried out to God, cried out to Jesus, and it seems like He's out to lunch?

You tell Him your issues, your circumstances and it seems He's gone for two more days, two more months, two more years – with not so much as a note, a message, a sign, that everything is going to be okay!

Yet all the while He's got a plan.

But He just hasn't revealed the plan to you. He's silent. And it may be a long time before He responds to you, and some of you may still be waiting.

Jesus' reason for not going to Mary and Martha and Lazarus was that He allowed this to happen so that He could bring glory to God, and so that He would be glorified.

It's not that He didn't love them, it says here,

Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days.

He loved them very much, but He had a plan for them, and for God's glory to be revealed by what He was going to do.

He let things happen in the lives of Martha and Mary and Lazarus to teach them to have faith and trust in God even when they didn't understand His reasoning behind His delay.

Link:

God has a plan for you too.

- He sees the fear you have today.
- He sees the trouble you have.
- He sees the hurt you have.
- He sees the worry you have.

But He has a plan.

He allows things to happen in our lives to teach us to trust him, have faith in him, and sometimes he makes us wait.

- He does not work on our time schedule.
- He works in His time.
- In God's time He will reveal himself.
- In God's time He will show Himself and work in your situation.
- And He won't show up until you're ready to receive what He has for you.

After two days Jesus travels with His disciples to where Lazarus, Mary, and Martha are.

And while they are traveling Jesus tells them this:

7 Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

8 But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

9 Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world.

10 But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."

11 Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

12 The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!"

13 They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

14 So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

15 And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

So Jesus tells His disciples that Lazarus is dead.

In fact he'd been dead for four days.

Can you imagine the anguish of Mary and Martha?

Their brother had died,

Their friend Jesus wasn't there when it happened, and He didn't come to them right away.

The emotions and fears and doubts were running high and the first person to come running to Jesus was Martha.

Martha was the active one. Always busy doing, doing, doing, and trying to figure things out.

She was the one who complained to Jesus about her sister not helping in the kitchen while preparing a meal and Jesus had to set her straight.

Martha came to him and:

16 Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.

18 Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem,

19 and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.

20 When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.

21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

Now Martha, Mary, and Lazarus had great faith in Jesus, and believed in Him.

Martha believed, had Jesus been there, He would have healed her brother.

This is Jesus response to her:

23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

Then Jesus says this to her:

25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.

26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

Let me tell you what Jesus is saying here.

He's telling her:

- I am the one who has power over death and I am the one who gives life!
- I am the one who breathed the life into the first human being and
- I am the one who forms you in the womb,
- I am the one who gives and takes away
- I am the resurrection and the life.

He Who Believes In Me

He who believes I have the power over death and the one who gives life will have life forever even though his body dies.

And when He says everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die, He's saying:

"Everyone who allows Me into their lives, and follows Me, and believes in who I am, will never ever die."

And then He asks Martha:

“Do you believe this, Martha?”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.”

Martha now goes and gets her sister Mary. Along with her comes a group of mourners and she approaches Jesus and falls at His feet and she too tells Him:

28 Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.”

30 Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him.

31 When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there.

32 When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.

Why you ask was Jesus angry?

We believe that Jesus was so deeply moved, and that He loved His friends so much, that to see them in such distress and anguish, it moved Him to anger about what caused death to come into the world.

- He was angry not at them, but at sin, Satan, and death.
- He was angry at the consequences of sin.
- He was angry at the suffering it brings.

The wages of sin is death.

Yes, He was God, but He was human, and He felt all the things they were feeling, and He had compassion on them and it drove Him to tears.

It was then that Jesus, went to the tomb where His friend Lazarus lay.

34 "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Then Jesus wept.

36 The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!"

37 But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

38 Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.

39 "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

40 Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?"

41 So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me.

42 You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."

43 Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

Jesus' purpose for bringing Lazarus from the dead wasn't to console His friends or make the hurt go away, but it was so that his glory would be revealed.

It was so that the other people might believe that He is God, the Messiah.

Some months later, Jesus would be betrayed by one of His disciples. He would be taken by the authorities to be whipped, beaten, and crucified.

All of His followers would abandon Him and lose hope.

Jesus would lie in the tomb for three days.

But he did not stay dead!

1 Corinthians 15:3–6 (NLT)

3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.

4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

5 He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.

6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.

He is alive because He is:

- The one who has power over death
- The one who gives life
- The one who breathed the life into the first human being
- The one who forms you in the womb
- The one who gives and takes away
- He is the resurrection and the life!

He who believes He has the power over death and the one who gives life will have life forever even though his body dies.

Do you believe?

- By believing, we have the power over death too.
- By believing, we have the power to rise up above our struggles in life.
- You can rise up over the death of a loved one.
- You can rise up over the illness that you or a loved one has.
- You can rise up over the turmoil in your family.
- You can rise up over the evils of this world that we live in.

But you must have the faith and belief that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus had.

Will you believe today, that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?

Pray.

Rise above.

John 11:4-6

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6 he stayed where he was for the next two days.

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John 11:14-15

14 So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

15 And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe.

Come, let's go see him."

- Rise above

John 11:21-26

21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 “Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

25 Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.

26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.”

- Rise above

Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, and the one the Jews had been waiting for to save them from their sins.

- Rise above

This is the response Jesus is looking for from you and me:

“Yes Lord, I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God”

- Rise above

33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.

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Jesus’ purpose was so that His glory would be revealed

It was so that the other people might believe

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