

*THE TALE OF  
TWO SISTERS  
MARTHA AND  
MARY*



# A Tale of Two Sisters

John 11:17-32

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Two sisters—Mary and Martha—have lost their brother Lazarus. It is a sudden, unexpected tragedy in their home. Death is an enemy—the great opponent to life. "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:25).

## A Summary of Today's Message

Everyone lives with death anticipation, knowing that in a moment, everything we are and have can be stripped away. Woody Allen said, "I'm not afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens."

Death happens to everyone.

# A Summary of Today's Message

Joseph Bayly states: "We may postpone it, we may tame its violence, but death is still there waiting for us. Death always waits. The door of the hearse is never closed."

## A Summary of Today's Message

Dairy farmer and sales executive live in death's shadow, with Nobel Prize winner and prostitute, mother, infant, teen, old man. The hearse stands waiting for the surgeon who transplants a heart as well as the hopeful recipient, for the funeral director as well as the corpse he manipulates.

Death spares none."

## A Summary of Today's Message

In this passage, Jesus tells us the greatest news ever to have fallen on human ears: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). He was speaking to Martha, but His disciples were listening

## A Summary of Today's Message

"He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:21). He then demonstrated His power over death by raising Lazarus, and others, authenticating His statement in John 11:25.

## A Summary of Today's Message

Finally He will raise Himself from death. When His disciples realize the truth of His statements, they become unstoppable: bold as lions—martyrs! They don't care what happens to them.

Resurrection is the central theme to their communications throughout the book of Acts.



## I. Jesus and Martha (vv. 17-27)

Immediate burial: no embalming

Mourning: thirty days, seven of intense mourning. Demonstrative, emotional: tears robes, beat breast, wear sackcloth and ashes, hire professional mourners. Firmly believed Ecclesiastes 3:4: "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;"

## I. Jesus and Martha (vv. 17-27)

Some superstitions Jews believed the spirit would linger for three days, seeking to re-enter the body. By the fourth day, when decomposition had set in, the spirit would depart. On the fourth day, when "all bets are off," Jesus shows up.

# Her Sorrow

Typical process of grief (Elizabeth Kubler Ross)

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

## Her Sorrow

"Let grief do its work. Tramp every inch of the sorrowful way. Drink every drop of the bitter cup. Those who truly love will say that they have found in sorrow a new joy, a joy which only the broken-hearted can know."

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## Her Struggle

Pours out what's on her mind: "If you had been here"

If you had been here—as if Jesus couldn't do a long-distance miracle (Nobleman's son—See John 4:46-54)

Struggle to believe

## Her Struggle

Man with demon possessed son: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

God can handle our honesty

(See David's Prayer in Psalm 13, Psalm 58:6)

# Her Struggle

C.H. Spurgeon

He is unshockable. Our prayers don't impress Him either. "There is not a secret in my heart I would not pour into the ears of my God."

## II. Jesus and Mary (vv. 28-32)

Her Summons

Her Submission

In joy or in sorrow,

Mary is always at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39)



## II. Jesus and Mary (vv. 28-32)

"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;  
Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

"In the presence of trouble, some people grow  
wings; others buy crutches."

### III. Jesus and You (vv. 25-26)

Whoever – unconditional without any time boundary

Resurrection is more than an event. It is a person: "I am the resurrection and the life."

"There are two ultimate questions of our existence: Has anyone ever cheated death? Did He make a way for me to cheat death?"

### III. Jesus and You (vv. 25-26)

"Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory”

(Colossians 3:4).

### III. Jesus and You (vv. 25-26)

Fifth of Seven "I am" statements

"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35).

"I am the light of the world" (John 8:12)

"I am the door" (John 10:9).

"I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11)

"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)

### III. Jesus and You (vv. 25-26)

Do you believe this?

Believe: the theme of the Gospel of John

If so, death is not a big deal

(it opens the door for more life)

### III. Jesus and You (vv. 25-26)

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)

Makes all the difference now and forever

The Master is calling for you!