



Scripture: John 11

Hey everyone, it's so good to be with you. If we haven't met yet, my name is [name], and one thing you should probably know about me is that I'm usually a pretty positive person. I'm the kind of person who tries to find the silver lining in things. Maybe it's because I don't love sitting in sadness. Maybe it's because I'd rather laugh than cry. Or maybe you can relate to the feeling that when hard things happen, we just want to move on, distract ourselves, or pretend everything's okay.

But today, we're doing something a little different. Instead of rushing past the hard stuff, we're choosing to stay right here in the tension. We're not going to tie it up with a neat bow or make everything's okay. We're sitting in it; right in the middle of joy and grief, gratitude and sorrow, life and death.

Yeah, we're going there today. We're talking about death.

Some of you know exactly what it feels like to lose someone you love. Maybe it was a grandparent, a friend, a parent or someone your age. You've felt the sting of it.

And then there are others of you who feel like death is still a long way off, like something that happens to other people, not something you really have to think about yet. It feels distant, disconnected from your everyday life.

But regardless of where you fall—whether death feels painfully close or comfortably far—it's part of the human experience. And when it shows up, it brings questions. It brings fear. It brings sorrow. And it makes us ask: what do we do with all of this?

But here's the bigger truth; the one we're going to lean into today: we can have hope in the face of death.

So, let's pray together before we jump in.

[Prayer]

Go ahead and open your Bibles to **John 11**, where we're going to walk through a powerful story about grief, confusion, and, ultimately, hope. Before we get there though, let's rewind all the way to the beginning.

In Genesis, we see the first humans—Adam and Eve—created in the image of God. They walked with Him in the garden. There was no death. No pain. No sadness. Just perfect union with God. But then something happened.

Adam and Eve chose to sin. And that sin didn't just mess up their relationship with God, it broke everything. Creation cracked. Pain entered the world. Shame. Separation. And eventually, death.

Death wasn't a part of the original design. It was a consequence of sin. A distortion of the image we were created to bear. And we've been living in that distortion ever since. But God didn't leave us in that brokenness.

Let's pick up the story in **John 11:1–16 (NIV)**:

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

So, Jesus heard that His close friend Lazarus was sick. But instead of rushing to help, He waited for two days. This is truly confusing. Like could you imagine what His disciples were thinking? “Wait, we’re just sitting here while our friend is dying?”

It feels confusing, even frustrating, right? Why wouldn’t Jesus drop everything and go heal His friend? Why the delay? From the outside, it doesn’t make sense. But Jesus wasn’t ignoring the pain. He had a bigger purpose. He even said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” (John 11:4)

What looked like a delay was part of a plan. And that’s hard for us to wrap our minds around, because when we’re hurting, we want healing now. But sometimes, God allows waiting, pain, or even loss, not because He doesn’t care, but because He’s doing something deeper, something that will ultimately show His power and bring Him glory.

Let’s keep reading in **verses 17–32**.

“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

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