

## John 11.1-45 Jesus brings Lazarus back to life

Lazarus lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. One day, Lazarus became ill. Although Jesus was their good friend, and he received a message to say that Lazarus was very ill, he delayed visiting, and stayed where he was. The last time he had been to Judea, people had tried to stone him!

After two days, Jesus said, 'Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him.' His disciples were confused. 'Why go to such a dangerous place just to wake him up? He'll wake up without you.' So Jesus spelt it out. "Lazarus is dead. I didn't go when he was ill, because through him, many will see God's glory.' Hearing this, Thomas said to the others, 'Let's follow him. If he's doing to be stoned, we should die with him"

Lazarus' sister Martha came out to meet Jesus. She said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus said, 'Your brother will rise again.' 'I know', answer Martha, 'at the resurrection on the last day'. Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live and never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord', said Martha, 'I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God'.

Then Martha's sister, Mary ran out to meet Jesus. She knelt at his feet, crying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus wept with Mary. He asked, 'Where is his tomb?'. A crowd of mourners followed Jesus to the cave where Lazarus' body had been laid. Lazarus had been dead for four days, but Jesus asked for the stone to be rolled away.

Jesus prayed aloud, so the crowd would hear him and know that God had sent him. Then he shouted into the cave, 'Lazarus, come out!' Incredibly, Lazarus walked out of the tomb, wrapped in burial cloths.

Jesus said, 'Unwrap him and let him go.' And many people who saw this believed in Jesus.

## Notes

Jesus was teaching when he had news of his friend Lazarus' illness. Instead of rushing to be by his side, Jesus stayed where he was for two more days before making the journey to Bethany. When he arrived, Lazarus was already dead.

Jesus' humanity is shown in this story. He is anxious about whether he should travel to Bethany. He is worried about his own and his disciples' safety. He is deeply moved by the sisters' disappointment, anger and grief. And he is touched by the presence of those from the village who console them.

As well as losing their brother, Lazarus' death would have added significance for Martha and Mary. He was the source of income and status for the family. They were losing their reputation and status in society as well as their closest relative. They were losing their hope.

This passage can be read as a parable by those who want to know where Jesus is when life falls apart. It suggests that he is present even in his absence. We can imagine him carrying his concern for the Bethany family from the moment he hears about his dear friend's illness. Jesus' faith carries him through the dangers of the journey to Bethany and into the place of loss and death, where he brings life even from the tomb through the resurrection power of his word. How often do we struggle to see Jesus' presence when things go wrong?

## Questions for discussion

How were Martha and Mary feeling because Jesus hadn't come to be with them?

Why didn't Jesus rush to Bethany?

Have you ever felt let down by someone?

What might help us to know that Jesus is with us even when we feel sad?

## Songs

Lord, I need you

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_rR\\_Rdb1CTE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rR_Rdb1CTE)

I am not alone

<https://youtu.be/Ow4OfW4DP9s>