

John 11:38-44

“Loose him, and let him go”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 38-44 Two things Jesus didn't do

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Those that followed Mary interpreted Jesus tears as being shed because of the loss of a friend, tears that proved He loved him but was unable to help him. They questioned not His power but His purpose, “*Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also, have kept this man from dying?*” But He corrected this by saying, “*Take away the stone*” and “*Did I not say to you that if you believe you would see the glory of God*”. God’s power is always exercised within His purpose and the delay of His power was so that His purpose of glorifying God would be accomplished.

II. Vs. 38-44 Two things Jesus didn't do

Vs. 38-39 As we look at this section it is easy for us to focus on what Jesus did and miss completely two things He didn't but asked others to do.

1. **Didn't remove the stone**: The stone in front of a cave, Jesus says “*Take away the stone*”. The Jews bury the body the day the person dies as they don't embalm the body and can't wait a few days before it is buried. Lazarus had been dead four days in a hot climate and was now sealed up in a closed tomb. Think about that a moment and you can understand why Martha thought that her brother would be pretty ripe by that time. With Jesus' command to “*take away the stone*” people must have been thinking as Martha that “*by this time there is a stench*”. Perhaps people thought that Jesus wanted to get one last look His friend Lazarus. But He didn't need help to remove the stone if He could bring back folks from the dead and remove His own stone from His

tomb He certainly didn't need to have someone else do it for Him yet plainly we are told that **He asked others to do what He Himself could have done**. In verse 39 He said, "*Take away the stone*" and there is a protest from Martha concerning doing so but He does not rebuke her He instead just brings her back to what He already said that through her belief she would see the glory of God (verse 40).

There is a practical spiritual picture in this as well. There are things in our lives that are starting to decay, things that we have closed up and are letting off a foul odor but before Jesus can breathe His life into that area we have to take away the stone and expose the problem. **We have to let Him in before He can lead us out**. Jesus had given Martha and Mary a promise that part of their life that they loved though it was dead and decaying was going to live again but they needed to believe the promise by letting Jesus in. I'm afraid to say there are far too many Christian's that are emitting foul odors in their lives because what sinks remains closed to Jesus. Vs.40-42 The fact that Lazarus was in a state of decay provided the evidence that Lazarus had indeed died. Now notice that in verse 40 Jesus told them "*if they would believe they would see the glory of God*". Their faith wasn't necessary for their brother to come back to life, their faith was necessary for them to see the glory of God in it. **The failure in faith of Martha didn't hinder Jesus ability to work it only delayed Martha's blessing of seeing God glorified ahead of time**. Oft times we think He is the engine and our faith is the battery but that is not the case the miraculous work of our Lord does not hinge upon our faith. **Our faith is beneficial to us to that we would see the glory of God in the work of God**. The prayer of affirmation is unusual as Jesus didn't pray out loud very often most of His prayer life was private. But here He openly thanks the Father so that others would hear and believe. In His prayer there is no hint of a

request, no spelling out to God what needs to be done, instead just words of gratitude for God the Father's continual relation with Him.

Vs. 43-44 Jesus miracles were never designed as some magic trick, they were always out front in the open. The loud voice was not for Lazarus it was for those gathered around so they could hear that it was Him who was doing the calling. In John 5:25 Jesus said that "*the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.*" One day Jesus will call again only this time He won't just mention one name but the name of all who have trusted in Him. The words of Jesus to that which was past hope dead and decaying is "*come forth*". No elaborate ceremony, no fancy formula just His two words. **Jesus mentions Lazarus by name least the whole cemetery came forward.** What a sight that must have been, how startled the people must have been at Jesus words some may have been tempted to chuckle if it wasn't a funeral. Then there would have been the sound of someone scuffling their feet and perhaps the muffled sound of someone trying to speak. To some this must have looked like Lazarus had been cast for the movie "*Return of the mummy*". So out comes Lazarus bound at his hands and feet wrapped up staggering, just imagine what would have happened if this was a night the place would have scattered.

2. **Didn't remove the grave clothes:** Jesus' other words that He could have done are found in His words "*Loose him, and let him go*". Perhaps there are a few folks that are thinking of those very words right near the end of every Sunday service "*Loose us and let us go*". Jesus brought to life a dead person but it was to His followers He gave the privilege of losing him and letting him go? Jesus told His followers to untie his hands and feet so that he could move as he was designed to do so, to unwrap the grave clothes. Jesus knew that man needs more than just life, man need liberty and freedom as well and all those are a part of what He offers. He grants life than He

uses His followers to grant liberty and freedom. That is what Jesus does for us as He calls us to focus our faith on Him, not on the solution to the problem or the eventual working out of it, but on what he can do right now. Jesus saves them and He calls us to “*Loose them, and let them go*”. We **have to be near folks** to do so you can’t “*Loose them, and let them go*” from a distance.

Then you have to:

- **Talk with them**
- **Pray for them**
- **Stand by them**
- **Love on them**

Jesus is still calling folks from the tomb of sin, wrapped up in the deception of this world with the fragrance of death upon them to come forth out of the hole they have placed themselves in.

Lazarus coming forth was incomplete as he came forth still bound hand and foot with grave clothes as he would one day need them again. You see Lazarus was not resurrected he was resuscitated. Now remember when we get to John 20:5 that John will say that he outran Peter to Jesus tomb and when he looked into the tomb he saw the “*linen cloths lying there*” and here we see that Lazarus came out wearing his. Lazarus was going to need his again one day but Jesus was resurrected into His glorified body as will be the case with us. Kind of makes you wonder why all the fuss of making sure we have a nice suit or pretty dress to burry us in doesn’t it?