

Love, Death, and the Glory of God

Ty Knight

Christ Church - Moscow, ID

Sermon #1922 - A.D. March 13, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

In our passage in John, three realities drive the story--love, death, and the glory of God. Jesus has a deep love for Lazarus and his two sisters, and they love Jesus. But Lazarus dies. Jesus even intends for Lazarus to die. How can the love of Jesus and the death of Lazarus fit together? Love and death both lead to the glory of God. And the only way for them all to hold together is by Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus is able to bring glory even out of death so that we may believe. Love, death and glory are central, not only to this story, but to the Gospel, God's work in the church and our lives.

THE CASE FOR LOVE (VERSES 1-6):

In the first six verses, John introduces the characters, Lazarus, Martha, Mary, and Jesus. But there's a problem. Lazarus is sick so the sisters send for help (vs 3). Notice how they speak of Lazarus. He is not a stranger, a beggar on the side of the road. The sisters remind Jesus of his affection and commitment to Lazarus. Probably all of us have done the same. We have sent to Jesus. We have cried to him. "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (vs 4). Jesus loved Martha and Mary and their dying brother Lazarus, THEREFORE he stayed where he was (vs 5-6). John wants to stress that Jesus' action of waiting two extra days was motivated by love. The gut wrenching question is, "How is it love for Jesus to wait so that Lazarus dies?" Our understanding of love may need to be tweaked. Love can't just be trying to make life easy for someone else. This kind of love would lead them to experience the Glory of God.

GLORY: THE FATHER'S DELIGHT IN HIS SON

We need to say a few words about Glory. But I feel like a child standing on the seashore holding a bucket of water about to tell a crowd about the Pacific ocean. How do you begin to explain, let alone experience, the Glory of God? Peter explains when he observed glory on the Mount of Transfiguration in 2 Peter 1:16-18. Glory is the Father's voice thundering, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." C.S. Lewis in his sermon *The Weight of Glory* describes his understanding of glory as approval, like that of a young child's great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. "This heavenly glory is fame with God, approval, or (I might say) 'appreciation' by God...nothing can eliminate from the parable the divine accolade, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'" Glory is the "Watch this" from the child and the "Well done" from his father. Glory is the Father delighting in the Son and the Son pleasing his Father. It's the perfect relationship of the Triune God, the Godness of God. Glory is delight in the Son AND it is the death of a brother. Glorious is the Crown, and Glorious is the Cross that leads to the Crown. Jesus is the King of Glory, he is the Word that became a Man, to draw near our doubts, tears and despair (John 1:14). Mary and Martha and the world will soon see the Glory of God because Jesus is drawing near.

TRUTH AGAINST DOUBT (VERSES 17-27):

When Jesus arrives, Lazarus has already been in the tomb four days (vs 17). Martha comes to meet him and is torn between doubt and hope (vs 21-22). Jesus gives her the truth, "Your brother will rise again" (vs 23). Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Today is that day, because Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. And this resurrection is not just for this one man, the promise is to everyone who believes in Jesus. Because Jesus will be resurrected, we can be resurrected. Because Jesus lives, we too can live. Do you trust the word of Jesus about death, life and resurrection? "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world" (vs 27).

GRACE AGAINST DESPAIR (VERSES 28-37):

Now Jesus gives grace to fight the despair of Mary. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (vs 32). Mary did not speak this like Martha, she wept those words. Jesus doesn't launch into a theological discussion. He meets Mary where she is at--overwhelmed in grief. Mary had listened to Jesus teach while she sat at the Lord's feet (Lk 10). And now she weeps at his feet. Jesus is the sympathetic High Priest from Hebrews 4 that we can "draw near to the *throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.*" Jesus is described as "deeply moved in his spirit" (vs 33). The phrase "deeply moved" has the root meaning of "to snort" like a horse. The word picture brings up is war horse snorting before charging into battle. But what is Jesus angry at? The King of Glory is angry at the whole situation of death and sorrow and the cause of it all, sin. This is the battle that is before him.

BATTLE AGAINST DEATH: WATCH THIS! (VERSES 38-46):

Jesus marches to the grave and orders that the stone be rolled away. Martha protests that it will stink. "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" (vs 39). Jesus tells her to watch what he is about to do, and she will see the glory of God. Jesus lifts his eyes from all the difficulties and the doubts and fixes them on his Father. All of this, the prayer, the tears, the delay, the death was so that people would believe that God the Father sent his Son as the Christ, the deliverer, the only one to defeat death. "Lazarus, come out" (vs 43) and the man who had died came out. The love of Jesus calls his friend from death. And many of the Jews see what Jesus had done, and they believed in him. They see and believe and come into glory.

LAZARUS DEATH AND NEW LIFE:

The same one who called Lazarus from death, speaks today. We are all sick, like Lazarus. This disease, this cancer of sin, entered us with the disobedience of Adam and Eve. But the God of Glory so loved the world that he gave his son, the one whom He loved, that whoever believes in him, will live. At the cross, death is not the end but the Glory of the Son of God. The love of God sent Jesus to die. And what is this? GLORY! Jesus says, "Watch this, Father." And the Father says, "Well done, my beloved Son." Like Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, we may only see sickness, questions, death, grief. But Jesus knows the end--the Glory of God, resurrection, belief. Does the Father love you? Is there any kind of sickness or death in your life? Then you can pray, "Watch this, Father!"



PUBLISHED BY: CANON PRESS • P.O. BOX 8729 • 205 E. 5TH ST. • MOSCOW, ID 83843
WWW.CANONPRESS.COM • ORDERS@CANONPRESS.COM
PHONE 800-488-2034 • FAX 208-882-1568