

Elementary Devotion: Death Defeated

Jesus stood in front of Lazarus' tomb.

"Take away the stone," He said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days."

Then Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?" So they took away the stone. - John 11:39-41

Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father aloud so everyone standing by would know that God had sent Him.

Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, "Lazarus, come out!" - John 11:43

Lazarus came out! He was alive and well, still wrapped in strips of cloth. Jesus told the people to remove the cloth and let him go (John 11:44).

Finally it all made sense. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die so that He could reveal something about Himself that these people did not know. Jesus had healed many sick people, but until now, almost no one knew he could raise the dead. God had promised that the Messiah would have victory over death (Isaiah 25:8). After Jesus raised Lazarus, there could be NO QUESTION that Jesus was who He said He was - the Son of God.

Jesus used something people could see to explain something they could not see. It was an AMAZING miracle for Jesus to raise a man from the dead. But as incredible as this physical miracle was, Jesus had the power to do something even more amazing! He could give spiritual life to everyone who was dead in their sins (Read Romans 5:10). There is NO other way to gain eternal life than to place your trust in Him (Read John 14:6).

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus did. So they put their faith in Him. - John 11:45

If you have waited for God to answer your prayers, take heart. He may be waiting so He can teach you something about Himself that you did not know before (Read John 17:3).

Questions to ponder:

- Why did Jesus allow Lazarus to die?
- Have you ever prayed a prayer and it took a long time for God to answer it? Maybe you are still waiting for an answer. What did you learn from that experience?
- What did Mary and Martha learn about Jesus when Lazarus came back to life?