

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

STUDENT LESSON

**JESUS: LORD
OVER LIFE
AND GRAVE**

Open it

1. What is your favorite thing to do in the spring as the weather gets nicer?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read John 11:1–57.

2. Who was sick and what was his connection to Jesus?
3. When Jesus heard of His friend's illness, what was His response?
4. What emotions did Jesus experience throughout this passage?
5. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb when Jesus called Him out?
6. What responses were there to this miracle?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Goodbye May Seem Forever

Read John 11:1–27.

“I love you.” Three simple words, yet they contain profound meaning.

“I love you.” What is love? Does love accept at all costs? Does love affirm all things? Modern thinking tells us that love does those things, that it always accepts at face value who the loved one is, that it affirms all things because to reject or oppose something in someone is to hate them.

But God says, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”¹

Jesus loved Lazarus and found out that Lazarus was sick and likely to die. Shouldn't Jesus' love have healed Lazarus of his illness? Shouldn't His love have eased Lazarus' pain? Wouldn't love change his situation? On the contrary. It was Jesus' love that allowed the situation to remain. “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer...” Jesus stayed put for two more days because he loved them. In those two days, Lazarus died. Martha and Mary said to Jesus, “If only you'd been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died!”

Instead, Jesus' love looked for more, something deeper. Because He loved them, He let Lazarus die so that He could demonstrate that He truly is “the resurrection and the life” and that they would see and believe that Jesus has power over death itself.

Love is patient. Love protects, hopes and endures. Love seeks the best for others.

7. What is “tough love”? Do you believe that “tough love” is legit or an excuse to cause harm to others? When, if ever, do you think it is appropriate to use tough love?

¹ | Corinthians 13:4–6

8. What do you think Mary, Martha, and the disciples would have learned about Jesus had He just healed Lazarus? Instead, what did they learn about Jesus as a result of Lazarus' death?

9. How does this passage inform your understanding of how God loves you?

10. What dangers could we face if God's loving us meant that He did not allow us to suffer?

Day 3 — Today's Theme: So Dear to My Heart

Read John 11:28–38.

“Jesus wept.” The shortest verse in the entire Bible and yet it’s so often misunderstood.

John tells us a couple of times in this story that Jesus was “deeply moved” and “greatly troubled,” apparently to the point of tears as we see in verse 35. We’re typically pretty quick to associate Jesus’ tears with grief as He mourns the death of Lazarus. I mean, in our context, it makes sense because that’s what we typically do when we lose someone we love. But is that really why Jesus was crying? Let’s look a little closer.

Did Jesus regret letting Lazarus die? Why would Jesus cry or mourn at Lazarus’ death if he already knew that He would raise him from the dead in just a short while? After all, Jesus said to His disciples that Lazarus’ “illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” All along Jesus knew the plan, and He had a purpose. So, why is Jesus really crying?

Jesus is deeply moved and greatly troubled at the effect Lazarus’ death is having on everyone else. Seeing them grieving and mourning this death and experiencing the pain it is causing them greatly troubled Jesus. The words John uses here don’t just convey that Jesus was “sad” but really that Jesus was angry. He was outraged. But was He angry and outraged at everyone for grieving? No!

Jesus was outraged and angry because He knew what really caused Lazarus’ death: sin. “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Jesus is so brokenhearted due to the effects of sin that it leads Him to weep for those who are affected by sin. I can’t help but wonder if He didn’t think ahead, knowing that His own death wasn’t far off.

“Jesus wept.” Not because He was sad that Lazarus died, but because He saw the misery that sin inflicts.

11. How should our perspective of sin shape our response to the evils we encounter in the world around us?

12. We know from the Bible that sin leads to death (Genesis 3; Romans 6:23). Yet, most of the time sin doesn’t appear deadly because if it did, we probably wouldn’t be so inclined to do it! What tactics does our enemy use to conceal the true nature of sin?

Day 4 — Today's Theme: The World Will Know

Read John 11:39–57.

What was it like for Lazarus in all of this? I mean, you get deathly ill and die. What did he experience when he died? Did he show up at the pearly gates of Heaven and in his orientation he gets a tap on his shoulder, “Hey buddy, you’re Lazarus, right?” “Yeah.” “Ok cool. So yeah, don’t get too comfortable here cuz you’re going back. Jesus is gonna raise you from the dead.” Like, let’s be real for a second, if you saw the glory of heaven would you want to come back?

I ask that because we need to ask, “Did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead for Lazarus’ sake?” I doubt it. He did it for everyone else. Lazarus just got to be a dead guy that Jesus used to demonstrate that He must be sent from God, because I mean, who can just raise someone from the dead? GOD! As a result of Lazarus’ death and Jesus raising him from the grave, the glory of God was displayed, and Jesus was glorified as many people believed in Him.

But not everyone fully supported Jesus. Here’s where some of the true colors of the Pharisees and chief priests start to shine out. “If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” Ahhh, so there it is. They really didn’t want to lose their place (their power) and at this rate, Jesus was on the fast track to take it from them! What are they going to do?

“Do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” Their plan? Kill Jesus. The high priest comes up with the genius idea that it would be better for one person (Jesus) to die instead of the whole nation perishing. Oh, how true his words were, and he didn’t even realize what he was saying.

By laying down His own life on the cross and rising from the dead, Jesus makes a whole people of “Lazaruses”— those who were dead and have been resurrected to life.

13. What might it cost a teenager today to boldly follow Jesus? What has it cost you?

14. What might it gain a teenager today to boldly follow Jesus? What has it gained you?

15. As Christians, how are we like Lazarus? Describe what it means to have spiritual life rather than being spiritually dead?