

The Death of Lazarus (and Three Others)

John 11:1-53

The world tells us that death is natural, not to be feared, and not worthy of much consideration.

- These are all *lies*. See Gen 3:19, Ps 55:4-5, Eccl 7:2, Job 18:14, Heb 2:15.

But how should we respond to the monstrous reality of death?

- In one amazingly rich passage (John 11), we learn everything we need to know.

Thomas: Willing to Die

- So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (11:16)
 - The surprising courage of Doubting Thomas?
- Key question for everyone: What or who would you die for?
 - *You don't know what to live for until you know what to die for.*

Martha: Ready to Die

- "Everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ." (11:26-27)
 - *This* is the faith needed before you die.

Lazarus: (Dis)allowed to Die

- [Jesus] cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The man who had died came out. (11:43-44)
 - The seventh and climactic *sign* in the Gospel of John: Jesus' power over death

- Jesus says the glory of God is especially revealed in raising a dead man (11:4, 40-43).

Jesus: Targeted to Die

- Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them... "It is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." (11:49-50)
 - Ironic prophecy
- Jesus must die and rise: "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Is 53:10)

To the Lord's Supper!

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. Read these verses: Gen 3:19, Ps 55:4-5, Eccl 7:2, Job 18:14, Heb 2:15. How are these teachings about death different than what the world teaches us?
 - Why are these background teachings necessary to 'get' Easter?
2. Thomas expresses a courageous willingness to die (John 11:16). Who or what are you willing to die for? Be honest and specific to yourself and to God. (Depending on the situation, you might not find it appropriate to share this with others.)
 - Now: what's worth living for?
3. The key to beating death is taught by Jesus in John 11:26-27.
 - Can you name a truth more important than this? If not, then tell it to someone.