



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 11:28-45

“Lazarus Loved and Raised”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning for the Scripture reading to John chapter 11 and beginning our reading at verse 27. In the last time that we studied John 11 we were looking at Martha's conversation with the Lord Jesus and his words that he spoke to her concerning a resurrection and the life in the context of the restoration to life of Lazarus her brother. And in verse 27 she had answered after the Lord said, "Believest Thou this?" "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." And in verse 28 we read,

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he

loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Well our subject for today has to do with John chapter 11, and we are looking at the passage in which Lazarus is loved and raised. There are many answers to life's questions that come in chapters such as John 11. For example, is there life beyond the grave? Well there is no one to whom we can go to find the answer to a question like that but someone who has come from life beyond the grave. Augustine said, “Thou hast made us for thyself and our heart is wrestles until it rests in Thee.” We would like to know the answers to some of these questions. Is there life beyond the grave? May we obtain such a life? How can we know that we have such a life? The tendency of our age is to go to the human thinkers, the philosophers, the psychologists, the sociologists and

others who have certain aspects of truth and on the basis of this incomplete knowledge of men seek to frame an answer to questions like this and in the final analysis however, we cannot learn about life from beyond the grave from someone who has never seen that life beyond the grave. Fortunately when we come to the Scriptures we do have the testimony of those who do know the answers to questions like that. The Lord Jesus is the only person who is ultimately qualified to answer questions like this. He alone knows life beyond the grave by virtue of the fullness of his power over death and he alone has the life that overcomes death.

Now of course when a person has his life they obtain the life that overcomes the grave. But in himself he's the only one who has that life. His answer to these questions is a resounding, “Yes.” Is there life beyond the grave? Yes. Jesus has been beyond the grave and has come back and has given us the certain and sure answers. May we obtain such a life? Yes, we may obtain such a life. “He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live,” Jesus says in this very chapter. Is it possible to know that we possess this life? Yes it is possible to know that we have this life.

Many years ago Oswald Spengler wrote a book, a rather strange book. It was called *The Decline of the West*, and in that book Mr. Spengler found the clue to history in nature. In it he made a startling statement which preachers have latched upon because of its usefulness in contracting the ministry of Christ with his human conclusions. He said, “We await today the philosopher who will tell us in what language history is written and how it is to be read.” Well, that's the way of the world. They look for a philosopher. They look for a thinker. They want a psychologist or a psychiatrist or some humanly trained individual to tell them about divine things. Scientists, philosophers do not have the answers to questions like this. We don't await a philosopher. We don't even await a prophet because a prophet without divine authentication is useless too. In fact all of the prophets of the Old Testament from the beginning on up to and including John the Baptist could not give us any certain word were not the Prophet, the Messianic King, the God-man to be the ultimate conclusion of the line of prophecy. For we must have divine authentication for messages concerning things like this. That is why the incarnation is necessary. We could never know from an Isaiah. We could

never know from a Moses. Truly, they were not simply anticipations of the prophet to come, the God-man who would give us the ultimate truth. “No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.” And if Jesus Christ had not come, we would have no certain word. Even though we had the words of Isaiah or Moses we still could have no certain word. That’s why the incarnation was necessary, and that’s why the Lord Jesus authenticates all of the Bible, both that which has to do with the past and that which has to do with the future. It’s true. The ages were hanging upon the ministry of Christ.

Now the Lord Jesus is the God-man and thus is able to give us the authoritative word, but he is also the God-man, and being the God-man he has all of the qualities that belong to perfect humanity. So he is great not only because he’s God. He’s great because he’s man. He’s truly one of us and thus he can represent us, and thus he can communicate with us too.

Now we’ll try to highlight the humanity here as well as the deity, and I’d like for us in the time that we have just to look briefly at the seven stages of Lazarus’ story. Lazarus’ story begins with the statement in verse 14, “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’” You know the background of the story. News had come to the Lord that Lazarus was sick. He had spoken to the disciples and said that he was on his way to see Lazarus. They sought to dissuade him because he had been in Judaea previously and they had sought to slay him at the last of his visits there. And so they sought to dissuade him, but he insisted that he must go in order to awake Lazarus out of his sleep. They of course misinterpreted sleep as being the sleep of snoring instead of the sleep of death, the metaphorical use of the term which refers to a believer’s death. And so after overcoming their dissuasion the Lord Jesus made his visit south and met Martha first, who heard that he was in the area. And she went out to him and she said to him, “Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died, but I know that even now whatsoever you will ask of God God will give it to you.” And the Lord Jesus had said to her, “Thy brother shall rise again,” and that had led him into the expression of the fact that he was the resurrection and the life.

Now Lazarus is dead. Now remember that in the Book of John John is setting out seven great signs which are designed to bring us to faith. He says that he has chosen these signs, “In order that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that in believing in him we might have life through his name.” So he has chosen the signs with the specific purpose of bringing his readers to faith in Christ.

Now seven signs are chosen and this is the seventh one. It’s not surprising that it should be the climatic one in which he brings a man from death back to life. Well that is what he can do in the spiritual sphere for the signs are designed not simply to show his mighty physical power as the God-man but to point us to the spiritual realities that lie back of them. When we read that Lazarus was dead then we are not simply to think of Lazarus as physically dead though that of course is what he was. But we are also to see ourselves there and that is what the Bible says about us. The Bible says for example, that we are dead in our trespasses and in our sins. That is we are born that way. We are by nature the children of wrath, Paul says in that same context. That means that every one of us by nature is a child of the wrath of God that is a child that is the object of the wrath of God. That is the way we are born. We are born in sin. So Lazarus as a dead man suggests all men who are born under the wrath of God who are dead in their trespasses and sins.

There is a story which I like very much which I have mentioned before. There is a graveyard in Ayrshire in Scotland. That’s over in kind of the west of Scotland, a little south of Glasgow. And in that part of the country there was a graveyard where once a stranger was buried, and it rather stressed the people of the parish where he had been buried because he was not one of them and so much so that it is said that they put up a notice to the effect that, and this is the notice, “This graveyard is reserved exclusively for the dead who are living in this parish.” [Laughter]

Well now that is the biblical truth. That’s true. That is what we are in Dallas. We are thousands and thousands of dead people who are living in Dallas, spiritually dead, very much alive otherwise, but spiritually dead. And there maybe some who are in this audience who are spiritually dead, very much alive physically, but spiritually dead. You do not really have an assurance of a

relationship of life with the Father in heaven made possible by the Lord Jesus Christ's saving work on Calvary's cross.

All of this of course goes back to the fall in the Garden of Eden when God said to Adam, “Adam of all the trees of garden you may freely eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden you shall not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Now Adam ate of the fruit of the tree. He did not physically die, but he died spiritually. And the race thereafter was born in sin. Adam is the great federal-head who failed. Jesus Christ is the great federal-head who succeeds. Adam plunged those who are related to him in death. Jesus Christ brings out of death those who are related to him. The story of the Bible gathers around the two men, the first Adam and the last Adam, the first man and the second man. And the relationship that we bear to the two men determines our eternal destiny. We are all in the first Adam, but we may be by the grace of God taken out of the first Adam and related to the last Adam through the redemption he has accomplished on Calvary's cross. To which of these men are you now related? That of course is the question.

Well, Lazarus now is dead. Now the second thing that we note about Lazarus in this chapter is verse 36, “Behold how he loved him.” Now I think it's important to look at a few of the details in order to gather specifically what might be meant by that. When Martha went out to meet the Lord he gave her that wonderful message, “I'm the resurrection and the life.” And we go on to read that after that Martha went back to the house where Mary and others were weeping and wailing because Lazarus their brother had died. Usually the mourning continued for about a week in this form, and then continued about a month in other forms. And it was the kind of loud wailing that characterizes mourning in the east. You can see it today on the television screen when things happen in the east. In the midst of the wars and difficulties there constantly our TV camera men show us mothers and fathers and children who have lost members of their family and it is the loud, ostentatious kind of wailing that is characteristic of the east. That is just the way they wail.

Well when Martha went back to the house and Mary found out that Jesus was there she too went out to meet him, and those in the house thought that she was going out to the grave site in order to weep there, and then we read in verse 33, “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled.” I wish I knew precisely what that means. “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled,” or “and troubled himself” as the original text has it. “He groaned in the spirit.”

Now it is possible of course that he was angry and many of the interpreters have interpreted this passage in that sense. He was angry, that is he raged in his spirit and troubled himself. Well if he was angry, what was he angry about? Probably no one has expounded this any better than Benjamin B. Warfield who in one of his articles on the humanity of our Lord writes lengthily about this experience. He comments upon the fact that this is not uncontrollable grief, but irrepressible anger. An anger at what? Well Warfield leaning upon Calvin says that this is anger against the violent tyranny of death.

In other words, he advances against death as a champion who prepares for conflict and gazing into the skeletal face of the world he saw the reign of death everywhere, and he raged in his spirit at the effects of Adam’s sin which touch all of humanity and finds illustration in the death of his friend Lazarus. Well it is possible that that is what is meant. And when we read then that “He raged in his spirit and troubled himself,” he was angry at the effects of human sin, and the terror and the sorrow and the bereavement and all of the suffering that death has produced. It certainly makes good sense and I'm sure that there was something about that in our Lord.

The difficulty of course is that it’s possible that that word does not really mean that. One man, a Scottish man, Matthew Black who was for many years Principle of Saint Mary’s College at the University of Saint Andrews made a rather detailed study of this expression, that “He raged in his spirit,” and concluded, and Professor Black was a believing man, he concluded that there is no sense of anger in this and that all that it means is that he was deeply moved in his spirit, deeply moved in the sense that he was disturbed over the events. Deeply moved and Professor Black concluded that

the Authorized Version’s translation in verse 33 that “He groaned in the spirit,” was a rather accurate translation. He was just deeply moved in his inner man.

Well the question of course would arise, deeply moved over what? What was he deeply moved over? Well Professor Black does not seek to answer that, but others have and have found the object of his deeply moved condition in the attitude of the others to death. All of the wailing, all of the sorrowing, all of the bereavement which seems to suggest that there is no hope. Lord if you had been here our brother would not have died, but of course if we look at death from the Christian stand point then there is no reason for this uncontrollable kind of grief, but grief is natural as we shall see. It may well be that this means deeply moved in his spirit and troubled simply because we have not yet comprehended the significance of death for believing people. Maybe that’s the point.

Well it’s a very difficult thing and fortunately it’s not necessary for us to solve that problem to understand this passage. And so the Lord Jesus groaning in his spirit and troubled said, “Where have you laid him?” They said, “Lord, come and see.” And then we read in verse 35, “Jesus wept.” No one who reads the Bible much is ignorant of John 11:35, that’s one of the things they teach you in Sunday school. What’s the shortest verse in the Bible? John 11:35, just two words. “Jesus wept.” Well of course that’s interesting statistical information, but often people have the statistical information but they don’t really have the sense of it. “Jesus wept.” Incidentally it’s not the same word for weeping that is found in the rest of the context. The rest of the context has a word that means to wail. This is a word that means something like to sob. In fact it’s been translated because of its tense to burst into tears. So “Jesus burst into tears.”

Now that’s a remarkable thing. “Jesus burst into tears.” “Jesus sobbed.” I’m really glad that this is one verse. Now I don’t know whether you know this or not, but the man who is responsible for the dividing of the Bible into chapters was a man by the name of Stephen Langton, and he did this in the 13th century. Before that you did not have chapters. And in fact in ancient times they didn’t know any chapter divisions. The authors of the Bible didn’t say chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. These are things added afterwards. And in fact the verse divisions too were added. But Stephen

Langton did it first in the Latin Vulgate because that was the common version then and these chapter divisions found their way into the English translations.

Now it was not until the 16th century that Robert Stephanus in 1551 to be exact divided the chapters into verses. Now the chapters are divided into verses primarily in order that preachers may find them and also in order that you may follow preachers who are preaching. Of course just as in the division of the Bible into chapters, so the division into verses has resulted in a lot of poor chapter divisions, and poor verse divisions. Sometimes chapters which begin with a new chapter should have been attached to the preceding, and sometimes the same is true of verses.

Now Robert Stephanus made this on a trip from Paris to Lyons and he made these divisions so tradition has it *en ter equi tundo*; that is, while he was on his horse in effect. So he was taking a journey on a horseback and he thought, “Well the thing to do is to divide the chapters into verses, and so as he was galloping along he would say, “Here and here,” and occasionally, the horse hit a hole in the road or had to jump a log and when he went to put the verse division here he put it over here, so critics say. Well of all of the mistakes that Robert Stephanus may have made this one little accuracy, “Jesus wept.” One whole verse devoted to that almost makes up for most of his mistakes.

One well-known Bible teacher and professor of New Testament once said, “The first step in interpretation is to ignore the modern chapters and verse divisions.” So let’s remember that the context of the passage as a whole determines how we shall take a passage, not whether it is a new chapter or not. At any rate, “Jesus wept.” So it’s almost as if a great storm of grief breaks forth in the soul of the Lord Jesus and a great shower of sympathy for what is transpiring.

Well what does “Jesus wept,” really mean? Well the first thing that comes home to us is that one can see the reality of his humanity in this. “Jesus wept.” Here is an individual who was born in our midst, who was fed from his mother’s breast, who grew up as a little child, who grew to young manhood, then grew to manhood. He worked at his carpenter’s bench and now he is drawing near to his physical death, and he weeps. We sometimes have the feeling that the Lord Jesus is the kind of

person who could never really enter into our experiences. Well this should dispel all of that thinking. “He wept,” and he genuinely wept.

Now the amazing thing about this too is he is not ashamed of his holy emotion. He does not go off by the side behind a tree to weep, but he weeps out in the full view of all who are there. There is nothing bad about weeping. There is nothing wrong with weeping. Weeping is part of our human experience. And the Lord Jesus wept, burst into tears, magnificent expression of the fullness of his humanity and of the fact that he is not ashamed of this emotion.

Now what is remarkable about it is of course that he knew what he was going to do with Lazarus and still he wept. He knew that he would bring him forth from the grave, but even then “He wept.” So the fullness of his humanity, even though he is a divine person is not destroyed by the fact that he is a divine person, possessed of a divine nature. He is a divine person but he also has human nature. And all of the attributes of human nature belong to his divine personality as well as all of the attributes of his divine nature belong to his divine personality.

Well of course we cannot fully understand this. I could never explain to you fully what that means because that’s the mystery of the divine person of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one could explain that. If we could explain that perfectly, then we couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it because there is of course about the divine person the nature of infinity. And the very fact that there is an infinity attached to the person of our Lord means that no finite person can ever fully understand it. In fact, when we say as we study the Scriptures from time to time, there is a mystery about the harmonization of this, that’s not a cop out. That is the evidence of the divine aspects of the truth of Christianity, what one might expect.

So when I read, “Jesus wept,” I can believe that he had the fullness of all of the human emotions apart from sin, but at the same time was the divine Son, and he could weep, though Lazarus was absolutely safe in the arms of God at that very moment and was to be raised again to live out his life again and to die again. Jesus had already said at the beginning of this chapter that the

experiences that they would have were designed to glorify God. So he knew what was going to happen.

When we think of the glory of the Godhead we should remember it does not make him ashamed of his humanity. So, Lazarus is loved we read in verse 36 because people looked at him and they said as Jesus wept, “Behold how he loved him.” Now of course their concept of the love of God or the love of Jesus for Lazarus is very, very poor. We can say he wept because he was sorry for Lazarus, and sorry for Martha and Mary because they had lost their brother. You might say this is the love of human pity for their sad condition. But that would of course not ultimately be true. You could on the other hand say, “Well he wept because he was just frustrated. He had healed many people but here is something that even Jesus cannot handle. And so, “He wept.” It was frustrating.

During the past month or so I've read very carefully through a book on divine love. In fact this book is simply an exposition of what the Bible has to say about love. Written by a well-known scholar to whom I'm greatly indebted and whose writings I have read, well I cannot say I have read everyone of his twenty books that he has written, or more than twenty books, but I've read a good many of them and have profited from them. I read this with a great deal of interest because I was very interested in what he would say about divine love, and of course he makes the point as I expected him to make that divine love is all conquering, that it cannot be defeated. These are terms that he himself uses. The love is all conquering. The love cannot be defeated. The love is sovereign divine love. The love is unconditional love, all the things that I rejoice in. In other words, the love of God is unconditional. It is divine. It is all conquering. It cannot be defeated. It is sovereign and then the same author affirms the love of God is universal.

Now if the love of God is universal and it is all conquering and cannot be defeated and is sovereign and unconditional, then you can only believe logically that everybody is the object of all conquering, undefeatable, sovereign, electing love. And this everybody must be saved. But fortunately these things are said in different parts in the book and therefore in reading the book one might let that slip by him, but it's said so often, I couldn't let it slip by. You see you cannot believe in

the unconditional, all conquering, sovereign, undefeatable love of God and at the same time believe in the universality of that love. You cannot do that. You either must believe in the universality of the love, and believe that the love is frustrated in measure, or you must believe that there is a special love, a special love which has to do with the people of God.

Now the Bible makes it plain which of these alternatives is to be followed, for it says, “Jacob have I loved. Esau have I hated.” There is a sense in which God’s benevolence encompasses all of us. Everyone has enjoyed the blessing of God, the blessing of life, the blessing of life in Dallas rather than Lawrence, Kansas where I was last week. [Laughter] Snow coming down, I was just longing to be down here in Dallas. We had an attendance of about a third of what it ordinarily would be in our meetings because people were to come from Wichita, and they were to come from Kansas City, and a few did get through. Those souls that nothing can deter them if they want to hear the ministry of the word of God, but anyway...

In speaking about the love of God there is such a thing as the benevolent love which encompasses all men but when we talk about all conquering, sovereign, love that cannot be defeated we are talking about the love of God for his people. Now when we read here, “Behold how he loved him,” their concept of that is no doubt very poor. They no doubt were not thinking about what we’re talking about, sovereign, divine electing love because if they had been they would have anticipated that something like this resurrection might take place. Well that’s what we understand by, “Behold how he loved him,” and ultimately that’s what it meant because Lazarus is the recipient of the sovereign, all conquering love of God.

Now that’s what you sang this morning. Did you know that? You sang in the 4th stanza of the hymn this. Now I didn't tell Mark to select this hymn. He selects the hymns, but he selected this one beautifully because the very stanza that we sang is one that I had intended to mention. “There for me,” Mr. Wesley wrote, “The Savior stands, shows his wounds, and spreads his hands; God is love. I know. I feel. Jesus weeps, but loves me still.” So ultimately at the cross of Christ there is a

manifestation of the sovereign, divine, electing, all conquering love for people like Lazarus who belong to the people of God.

Well they said, “Behold how he loved him.” And then we read that Jesus again groaning in himself came to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. He said, “Take away the stone.” And Martha objected. She still does not quite grasp what is really going to happen and that may be the reason that Jesus groaned within his spirit and troubled himself. They do not yet understand just who he is and what he can do now. Jesus unto her, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone from the place and the Lord Jesus lifted up his eyes to God and he said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” And then looking no doubt at the cave where the body of Lazarus had been placed, he said, “Lazarus hither out.” That’s the Greek, two adverbs, “Hither out.” And an amazing thing, “He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes.” Now I know you’ve heard of Augustine’s comment, that if he had not said, “Lazarus,” the whole cemetery would have come forth.

Well we know in John 5 and verse 28 or so, that’s what will happen in the future, “Marvel not at this for the hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth, but Lazarus came forth and so Lazarus was evangelized by a word from the Lord Jesus. Alexander White who was for many years the preacher at Saint George’s West in Edinburgh, still a very important church in that Scottish city, was the one who wrote so many character studies that are very fruitful, useful studies. He has a study on Lazarus in which he describes Lazarus very movingly. He said Lazarus was already in heaven. He already had his harp. He was just getting ready to play on his harp in heaven when one of the angels came over and tapped him on the shoulder and said, ‘The master has further need of you.’ And Lazarus has the unthankful task of laying aside his harp and coming back here to live with you folks.

So Lazarus has to come back. Lazarus hears, now he's a dead man mind you but he hears the voice of our Lord. That's the miracle of the power of God through the word of God. He's dead, but he can hear through the word. That's the story of how dead men can come to life. Lazarus was given the power to hear and he heard and responded. So when the word of God is preached out of this audience, like this audience which is dead in trespasses and sins or whoever in it may be dead in trespasses and sins. They are able to respond through the word because the power of God operates through the word and communicates through life so that they believe the message that they hear. That's why we are regenerated, given life before we believe.

The man who led me to the Lord, Donald Gray Barnhouse used to say that in the audience and everybody would get angry, and I remember when I used to get a little angry and want to..." That's wrong. He's got that wrong. It's faith first and then regeneration." But he was right. We have to have life before we can believe. And so with the word of God comes the gift of life and we respond by believing the word in the context of which the life is given. And so Lazarus the dead man is able to hear the word of God because of the power of God that comes accompanying the word. And he is restored.

Now of course the Bible uses the term resurrection, but he really was restored to life speaking theologically because he lived out his life and then physically died and was buried and awaits the resurrection at the present day. Now Lazarus came forth it says, "Bound head and foot with grave clothes." Have you ever seen anybody walk when he's completely bound? Now you see the custom then was to ministry to people who had died in this way. Napkins would be wrapped around their head. They would be separate and then the body would be wrapped with grave clothes and in the midst of the clothes would be put the spices which were heavy spices. Later on in chapter 20 when we come to the resurrection chapter John will go down into the grave of our Lord and he'll take one look and you read, "He believed." The reason, as he looked at the grave clothes, because of the weight of the spices, they had collapsed from the neck down, but the napkin about his head John says is still in its annular or circular shape. And so the body obviously had been swiftly

dematerialized, had passed through the garments, they were still there. The large garments, the heavy ones were flat, but the one around his head was still there because the weight was not enough to collapse it, and there it was, just in this shape but no head in it. And so “He saw and he believed.”

Now Lazarus comes forth bound and since it was customary to bind both legs in one... One of the technically minded students of the New Testament who has written an excellent commentary in many ways says that this is a miracle within a miracle. It's a miracle that he was able to come back to life, and a miracle that he could walk bound hand and foot. Well I have a good friend who says, “No I don't think that's it. I can believe one miracle, but not two.” So, he believes, and he may be right, that in Lazarus' case he was bound differently and that each leg was bound separately and so you can see him coming out as an ancient ET walking something like this. [Laughter] But at any rate, it was a miracle that he came to life and he came out and the grave clothes were still upon him and of course that's designed to express the fact that life comes through the gospel, but the work of sanctification begins then, and so the Lord said, “Loose him and let him go.” That's the picture of what it is to remove the grave clothes that belong to everyone who has come out of the life dead in trespasses and sins. That takes the whole time of our earthly life. We still have some of those old grave clothes on, most of us. And the work of sanctification is to overcome them.

Well I know our time is up. Let me just mention two things so you can think about them. Isn't it interesting that in the next chapter Lazarus is sitting at the table with the Lord Jesus Christ eating and enjoying the fellowship of him and also will you notice that in the 9th verse of the 12th chapter Lazarus missed his opportunity to become wealthy? He should have as a Christian man organized the Lazarus Evangelistic Society. He did not do it, one of the great missed opportunities of all time, The Lazarus Evangelistic Society. He could have had seminars all over the ancient world, weekend seminars on coming from death to life. And he could have gotten by by charging a thousand shekels every weekend, a thousand shekels, and if he just had the proper PR man, but he didn't do it. He missed a great opportunity of his life. Do you know that this man so failed in business acumen that he never said a word. The Bible has no recorded word of Lazarus. No

plaquers “Come hear Lazarus, the man who came back from the dead,” fifty shekels, one hundred shekels, a thousand shekels for weekend seminars, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Now someone has said that the reason he didn't say a word is because he had two sisters and didn't get a chance to put a word in edgewise, [Laughter] but that's unfair. That's unfair. He could have gotten in a word or two, like “Shut up,” [Laughter] but he didn't, not a single word because of course Lazarus, the very fact that he was alive was testimony enough. And in the final analysis, that's the way it ought to be. The fact that we are alive should be the greatest of all testimonies to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful incidents in the life of our Lord which have been preserved for us in the word of God, so meaningful, so significant, so edifying. And we pray Lord that if there are some here who like Lazarus in what he pictures are dead in trespasses and sins, that through the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus who died for sinners they may hear the voice of the Son of God and come from the graves into life. And for those of us who maybe some years ago have by Thy grace come to see our lost condition and to lean upon him who justifies us by his grace. Lord we pray that we may be responsive and that the grave clothes that still encompass us...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]