

## **Series: The Gospel of John**

### **Day 11: The purpose of God's love**

#### **Prayer**

Let us pray

O loving God and heavenly Father. The Gospel of John calls us to believe. If there are people listening today who doesn't have the knowledge – give them the knowledge today. But O Lord, most of the people listening have the knowledge. They have been faithful in going to church, but these times are testing our trust, O God. And faith is knowledge and trust.

Some lost their sport, some their jobs and income, some their food, some their contact with family, some their health and all lost their freedom of movement. It exposes our lack of trust in You God.

Show us Your glory today, that we may realize that we can and should trust in Your love for you have a purpose for us. When we open Your Word may we hear Your mighty voice.

Amen.

#### **Introduction**

We are still walking together through the Gospel of John.

#### **The first ten days...**

Let's quickly look together at a summary of the first 10 chapters:

- In chapter 1 we saw the Word become man and we saw his glory, but his own people did not even accept him.
- Chapter two's first miracles made some believe, but others did not.
- Chapter 3 showed that being born again coincides with us looking up to Jesus on the cross and see and believe in God's glory.
- Chapter 4 showed how the woman at the well's thirst was satisfied when she was born again
- In chapter 5, we heard God's mighty voice that caused these people who were born-again to rise from the dead.
- Chapter 6 presented the bread of life for these people
- In chapter 7 and 8 we learned that if the Spirit fill someone who is born again, then streams of living water will flow out of him or her and they will be free to be disciples.
- Chapters 9 and 10 taught us that suffering is part of God's purpose to gather His sheep as a door and shepherd, so that we can be with Him forever.

This then brings us to John 11, the purpose of God's love.

## **The purpose of God's love**

When I read through chapter 11 it struck me how different this miracle is from the other miracles. The other miracles we read about within the first 10 verses, whereafter a long chapter followed to clarify the meaning of the miracle. It usually had a lot of controversy with it and some believed and many didn't believe and finally we got the message.

But chapter 11 is different, this chapter also tells us about a miracle, but the miracle only happens at the end of the chapter and here is a long build-up, to then bring us to the miracle. And if John then tells this miracle in a different way, there is a reason, there's an important thing he wants to highlight to us why he does it differently this time. Let's read.

*1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus  
of Bethany,  
the village of Mary and her sister Martha.*

*2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment  
and wiped his feet with her hair,  
whose brother Lazarus was ill.*

*3 So the sisters sent to him, saying,  
"Lord, he whom you love is ill."*

A great emphasis on love: Lord, he whom You love is ill. Jesus' love. This event where Mary dried Jesus' feet with her hair and anointed Him only happens in the next chapter, but John already tells us here, to highlight how much she loved Him. We see true love in this first part.

And then verse 5 goes on and says:

*5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

*6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill,  
he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*

*7 Then after this he said to the disciples,  
"Let us go to Judea again."*

A bit of a strange verse, with the narration of love - he stays two more days.

The rest of the chapter still emphasizes this theme of love, just look at verses 33 and 34 much later when Jesus is already with them:

*33 When Jesus saw her weeping,  
and the Jews who had come with her also weeping,  
he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.*

A picture of love.

*34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?"  
They said to him, "Lord, come and see."*

*35 Jesus wept.*

The conclusion from the Jews:

36 So the Jews said, *"See how he loved him!"*

...

2 verses later:

38 Then Jesus, *deeply moved again*, came to the tomb.

John's run up to the miracle is a run up to emphasize for Jesus' love for us. So, let's go back to this strange verse.

The word 'so' in Greek means 'therefore'. Therefore. This scripture needs to read:

*Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

*6 [Therefore], when he heard that Lazarus was ill,  
he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.*

*7 Then after this he said to the disciples,  
"Let us go to Judea again."*

Therefore, show us the reason, there is a reason for His love.

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **[Therefore]**, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Until Lazarus died.

Are you wondering why God is allowing certain things in your life? Why does someone die? Could the Lord not help? Could the Lord not stop it? Could God not stop this virus?

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **[Therefore]**, he stayed. He loves you so much therefore He lets certain thing happen you.

The reason for His love was already shown in verse 4,

*4 But when Jesus heard it he said,*

*"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."*

The purpose of Jesus' love is that the Son of God can be glorified through it. And that's why he says in verse 14:

*14 Then Jesus told them plainly,*

*"Lazarus has died,*

*15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there,  
so that you may believe.*

The purpose of God's love is that that the Son of God may be glorified through it and that you may believe.

*But let us go to him."*

A few days later Jesus arrives:

21 Martha said to Jesus,  
"Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.

22 But even now *I know*  
*that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."*

Her faith is a certain knowledge, she knows.

23 Jesus said to her,  
"Your brother *will rise again."*

She does not understand that this is still going to happen today.

24 Martha said to him,  
"*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."*

25 Jesus **said to her,**

Jesus gave her a promise:

"I am  
*the resurrection*  
*and the life.*  
Whoever *believes* in me,  
*though he die,*  
yet *shall he live,*

Her confession in the previous verse were:

"*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."*

And He confirms it here:

Whoever *believes* in me,  
*though he die,*  
yet *shall he live,*

And He goes on:

26 and everyone *who lives*

You Martha who lives...

and *believes in me*  
*shall never die.*  
Do you *believe this?"*

Remember what we read in of John 5:

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word** and **believes him** who sent me has **eternal life**. He does not come into judgment, but **has passed from death to life**.

27 She said to him, *“Yes, Lord;  
I believe that you are the Christ,  
the Son of God,  
who is coming into the world.”*

Her faith is a sure knowledge.

Then we skip a whole section and then we find ourselves right here at the grave:

39 Jesus said, *“Take away the stone.”*  
Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him,  
*“Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”*  
40 Jesus said to her,  
*“Did I not tell you that if you believed  
you would see the glory of God?”*

He tells her that faith is a certain knowledge, but also a firm trust in God's promises.

41 So they **took away the stone**.

and in front of the open tomb we find Jesus praying

And Jesus *lifted up his eyes and said,*  
*“Father, I thank you that you have heard me.*  
42 *I knew that you always hear me,*  
*but I said this on account of the people standing around,*  
*that they may believe that you sent me.”*

and these precise words which he prays here, he also prays in John 17:

He says:

***so that the world may know  
that you sent me  
and loved them even as you loved me.***

So the words he prays at Lazarus' tomb he prays here, but here we see there are two “that’s” before he gets there. There are two reasons why he prays this prayer:

22 *The glory that you have given me  
I have given to them,*

I showed them your glory. Why?

*that they may be one even as we are one,*  
23 *I in them and you in me,*  
*that they may become perfectly one,*  
*so that the world may know*  
*that you sent me*  
*and loved them even as you loved me.*

The purpose of this love:

24 *Father, I desire that they also,*  
*whom you have given me, may be with me where I am,*

The love causes us to be with Him and the reason for that:

*to see my glory*  
*that you have given me*  
*because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*

I pray that they may know that they love you. That they may be with us forever and be one with us. That is my prayer.

43 *When he had said these things,*  
*he cried out with a loud voice,*

Do you remember in chapter 5?

25 *Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here,*  
*when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,*  
*and those who hear will live.*

*“Lazarus, come out.” 44 The man who had died came out...*

## **Let us conclude**

Lord, *he whom you love* is ill (*Love*, the a golden thread in the chapter)

*Therefore... for your sake*

It is for the glory of God, *so that* the Son of God may be glorified

Your brother *will rise again*

I am *the resurrection and the life*

everyone *who lives* and *believes in me* shall never die

*I believe that you are the Christ*

*I said this on account of the people*

so that the world *may know that you ... loved them*

My glory given to them

That they also ... see my glory

Lazarus, come out

Therefore it is for your sake  
so that the Son of God may be glorified  
and so that you may know the Father loves you

And this love of God comes through His son Jesus Christ

I am the resurrection and the life  
everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die

### **Reflection**

Today, this passage taught us new things about the love and the glory of God the Father and Son. Especially about God's love. Read the passage again and write down what you learned.

### **Thanksgiving**

As almost all chapters in John, this chapter also called us to believe. Yes we must believe in the resurrection and eternal life, in Jesus who is that. So when you saw His glory and His love, does it also fill you with thankfulness. Is it also bringing you to the confession that you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the resurrection and the life? Write down one, very specific, thing that the Spirit is welling up in you, that you are going to do differently during today.

### **Prayer**

O, God. Thank you that we may know that You love us so much, that you send us Your one and Only Son that we will not perish but have life eternal. Thank you that you revealed your wonderful might and power to us. It fills us with trust that Your promises will come to pass.

Yes Lord, help us that we believe like Martha and hear your voice like Lazarus, because we know that then we have already gone from death to life. Thank you that you change us and live in us and that we can be one with you. We are looking forward to the day when we will be where you are now. Yes, that we may see the full picture of Your glory, forever and ever.

Amen.