

- **\*READ John 11:1-5\*** After Jesus's stay in Jerusalem where He taught many concerning Himself as the one sent forth from God, we find Him having to flee the area because, once again, He finds himself in the crosshairs of many who want to take hold of Him with no good intentions in mind. **(John 10:39)** Leaving Jerusalem, Jesus goes *"again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there."* **(John 10:40)** What Jesus needed at this point was some space between Himself and those who were constantly looking to seize and kill Him, so He finds Himself more than likely in an area known as Perea. We might think that Jesus would take this time to relax and maybe get away from all people, but we still see many coming to Him and believing in Him while He spent time in that place.
- While away from Judea and Jerusalem, a couple of sisters, Mary and Martha, of Lazarus send word to Jesus and inform Him that *"he whom You love is sick."* **(John 11:3)** The man being referenced is Lazarus of Bethany. His sisters ought to sound familiar to us. The sister Mary is assumed to be the same woman who anointed Jesus's feet and wiped them with her hair. **(Luke 7:36-39)** The sisters together are the ones who bickered with one another concerning whether or not they should be concerned with house chores or listening to the wisdom of Jesus. **(Luke 10:38-42)** These were individuals with whom Jesus would have been well familiar. This becomes especially evident when they mention the love that Jesus had for their brother Lazarus.
- **John 10:1-45** details for us what transpires upon Jesus hearing that His dear friend is sick and near the point of death.
  - **(vv.1-6) Jesus receives bad news of Lazarus....**but He doesn't leave straight away. In fact, He stays two more days in that place before He decides to leave. Yet, notice that Jesus seems to have a good understanding of the situation, and He already knows that something is going to come from it.
  - **(vv.7-10) Jesus's disciples warn Him about returning to Judea....**His disciples are slightly perplexed as to why Jesus would want to go back near the place where He had just fled from because of threats against His life. However, Jesus was well aware of where He was going and what the risk were. He was not afraid of stumbling or failing because He knew what must be done.
  - **(vv.11-16) Jesus speaks as if Lazarus is only sleeping, and He needs to go awaken him....**While Jesus tries to insinuate that Lazarus will live again, His disciples are clueless, and Jesus has to end up speaking plainly with them in order for them to understand.
  - **(vv.17-27) Martha converses with Jesus....**Jesus arrives as Lazarus and already been dead four days. Understandably, his family is very distraught, and Martha comes to meet Jesus so that she can speak with Him. This is the heart of her face to face conversation with the Lord.
  - **(vv.28-32) Mary & others join Jesus and Martha....**Martha leaves Jesus and goes to get her sister Mary who is still at their home. They come to Jesus and Mary proclaims that Jesus could've prevented all of this from happening. She and all of the other people begin to weep.
  - **(vv.33-45) Jesus is moved with emotion, resurrects Lazarus, and many believe in Him....**Jesus sees their weeping and Himself is moved to tears. Others see Him weeping and they confess how much Jesus loved Lazarus. Jesus then speaks to God the Father and raises Lazarus from the grave. Many see this great sign and are moved to believe in Jesus.

As with the other examples of individuals who came face to face with Jesus, Mary was not different in the fact that her face to face encounter with Jesus left her changed with new understandings. Let's use the next few minutes to consider what it was that she realized about Jesus from her time spent face to face with the Son of God.

## What Martha Realized Through Her Face To Face Meeting with Jesus:

### I. Jesus had power beyond that which was natural.

#### A. Like many others, Martha knew there was something different about this man.

1. With John's purpose being to convince the reader that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, it would make sense that John would continually include instances of people coming in contact with Jesus and being impressed with what He said and did.
  - a) Nathanael declared Jesus as the Son of God because of His seeing him and knowing his heart before ever meeting him. **(John 1:43-51)**
  - b) Many saw his signs during the Passover and believed in His name. **(John 2:23)**
  - c) Nicodemus and the other Pharisees assumed that Jesus was from God as a teacher based upon the signs that He had been performing. **(John 3:1,2)**
  - d) The Samaritan woman at the well concluded that Jesus was a prophet based upon His knowing of her personal life and past. **(John 4:16-19)**
  - e) The Royal official and his household believed when Jesus healed his son. **(John 4:53)**
  - f) The multitude believed Him to be the Prophet because of His feeding of the 5,000 with insufficient means. **(John 6:14)**
  - g) Many in the temple in Jerusalem believed upon Him based upon the signs He performed and the things He taught. **(John 7:31,40)**
  - h) Many came to believe in Him following His declaring Himself as the light of the world. **(John 8:30)**
  - i) Jesus's healing of the life long blind man led to him being in Jesus. **(John 9:38)**
  - j) Many believed in Him as He spent time in Perea after leaving Jerusalem. **(John 10:42)**
2. Why list all of these examples? Because they are given as evidence for the purpose of helping the readers to see that believe in Jesus wasn't a stretch, but it was a result of the overwhelming evidence He gave to prove who He was...the One sent by God.

#### B. Having had a relationship with Jesus, she was surely aware of His healing powers.

1. If you have ever found yourself in a desperate situation then you know what it is to rack your brain to think of anyone and everyone who might have the ability to help you in this desperate time. For Mary and Martha, they were desperate to find someone who might be able to help their brother's dire condition.
2. In their minds, if there was anyone who would be able to do it, it would be Jesus of Nazareth, a man whom they had at one time hosted in their home. **(Luke 10:38-42)** We know that story well. While Martha is busy running around serving, Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus listening and learning. Perhaps, Jesus was speaking of the might and great deeds that He had been performing. Perhaps, He was speaking of the coming kingdom and man's needs for repentance and return to God. Whatever was being spoke of, it seem to have had a strong enough impact for these two sisters to send word to Jesus that their brother was sick.
3. Even more evidence for their believe that Jesus had the power to do something is in the fact that they actually say that very thing! Notice that both sisters, separate from one another, say the exact same thing to Jesus concerning their belief that *"If you had been her, my brother would not have died."* **(11:21,32)** These ladies were well convinced that Jesus had powers that might very well had prevented this terrible thing from happening. We'll soon see that these beliefs were well founded.

### II. Jesus had a deep connection with God the Father.

#### A. Martha speaks to a deep connection that Jesus Himself spoke of.

1. As Jesus arrives, Martha meets Him and expands upon her statement that Jesus could've stopped this from happening. "I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give you." **(11:22)** Martha was convicted that Jesus had a connection with God and she wasn't wrong.

2. In fact, Jesus and others, had many times up to this point, made allusion to the fact that He and the Father were connected in a way that was not so for the normal man. Of course, this was because of Jesus being deity Himself.
  - a) Nicodemus's statement was that the signs showed him that *"God was with" Jesus. (John 3:1,2)*
  - b) The reason the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus in **John 5** was *"because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:18)*
  - c) Jesus responds by doubling down on His intimate connection with the Father. **(John 5:19-43)**
  - d) Jesus, again claims to have been sent from the Father, and that the Father has given Him much. **(John 6:37-40)**
  - e) Jesus states no one has seen the Father except the One who is from God (Himself). **(John 6:46)**
  - f) Jesus cried out in the temple and proclaims that *"He who sent Me is true, home you do not know. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me." (John 7:28,29)*
  - g) Jesus claims that *"the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."* When asked who His Father was, Jesus respond that *"You know neither Me nor My Father, if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." (John 8:18,19)*
  - h) Jesus later says, *"He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are please to Him" (John 8:29)*
  - i) *"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4)*
  - j) *"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." (John 10:14,15)*
  - k) *"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)*
3. Jesus didn't seem to be too concerned with people knowing that He and the Father were deeply connected, and this was something that Martha would shortly come to understand all the more fully.

**B. This connection was shown through the power Jesus displayed.**

1. However, it is one thing to claim that one has a connection with God, yet it is a completely different thing for one to show that one has a true connection with God. Jesus surely knew that most people wouldn't just take the word of a carpenter's son from Nazareth at face value, which is why He performed the many great works that He did. He even made statements to show that these signs confirmed His approval from God the Father.
  - a) *"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." (John 5:36)*
  - b) *"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, as set His seal." (John 6:27)*
2. The miraculous abilities, given by God the Father, were given to Jesus so that He might be able to show people that He had truly been sent from God and that God approved of what Jesus was doing during His ministry. Jesus had confidence in His ability to do these things because *"I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (John 8:29)* Martha was surely aware of the power of Jesus, and I feel confident in saying that she knew that these signs proved that Jesus could truly ask anything of the Father and it would be given to Him if it was God's will.

### III. Jesus was a man of true feelings and emotions.

A. These friends of Jesus were heartbroken over the loss of their brother and friend, and that was not lost upon Jesus by any means.

1. As Martha and Mary make their way to Jesus following Martha's face to face conversation with Jesus, the hurt that is upon their heart and those who were there to mourn with them comes flowing out from them. They all begin to weep, and Jesus Himself ***"was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled."*** (11:33) The Lord asks for them to take Him to Lazarus's grave, and it is at this point that Jesus weeps.
2. These emotions of Jesus were not lost upon those others who were present. In fact, they freely admit how much Jesus seemed to have loved His friend Lazarus, ***"See how He loved Him!"*** (John 11:36) While we do not know much or really anything about Jesus's relationship with Lazarus, we too, must be impressed with the obvious love that Jesus showed for this man and the pain He felt with his loss. I'm sure that all of us can certainly relate with the feelings of our Lord at this time as He mourned for a friend and felt the sadness of those around Him.

B. The humanity of Jesus is on full display throughout this occurrence.

1. So many people discount Jesus's time on earth. They would say, *"Of course He didn't sin! He was God and it is impossible for God to sin! It is useless for us to look to His example because He had advantages that we simply don't have."* While I can understand the sentiments, let me suggest that Jesus was fully human and this text ought to show us this to be the case.
2. Remember, Jesus knew that these circumstances were taking place for the purpose of God being glorified. I'd even venture to guess that He knew that He would raise Lazarus. Yet, that didn't stop Him from being heartbroken as He was in the presence of others who were not aware of what was about to take place. These people were in the depths of mourning, and Jesus, being in the flesh and human, hurt just as anyone with a heart would hurt. He hurt for His friends. He hurt for the hurt that they felt.
3. As with anyone in this position where hearts are broken and all that can be asked is "why?" Jesus could have well been tempted to do as Job's wife told him to do to ***"curse God and die."*** (Job 2:9) We must never forget that Jesus ***"has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."*** (Hebrews 4:15) It must have been absolutely fascinating for Mary and Martha, two individuals who were fully convinced of Jesus's power and connection with God to see Him as heartbroken as He was. Surely there were some thoughts even on their minds, *"This amazing Man is even just as we are. He hurts as we hurt."* They couldn't have left this situation knowing anything less than that. What a surprising realization that might have been, but it would have to take second place to what they realized after arriving at Lazarus's tomb.

### IV. Jesus had the power to overcome death.

A. There was no way anyone could deny what Jesus had done.

1. Some skeptics would like to argue that the resurrection of Jesus was a cleverly devised hoax, but there was nothing about the raising of Lazarus that could leave anyone with any doubts. As they came to the tomb, Jesus asks for them to move the stone, but Martha responds that this would be a bad idea since Lazarus has already been dead four days and there would be strong stench that would come with opening the tomb. (11:39)
2. As another preacher once said, *"there was no doubt in what Jesus did because Lazarus was so dead that he was stinkin' dead!"* This funny quip is quite true, and the advice of Martha wasn't off base, but Jesus had other plans in mind. He quickly reminds Martha that she had said she would believe and that in doing so she would see the glory of God. (11:40)
3. So Jesus lifts His eyes towards God and thanks Him for always being with Him and always hearing His cries towards Him. He declares that the thing which was about to happen should

serve as a means of evidence for those around to believe that He had sent Jesus. **(11:41,42)** So with a loud voice Jesus cried out for Lazarus to come forth **(11:43)**, and he certainly does, bound all around his body with wrappings and cloths. **(11:44)** Just as Jesus had predicted, Jesus coming back from the grave led many who were there to believe in Him. **(11:45)**

**B. His raising of Lazarus was only a glimpse of Jesus's power over death.**

1. While the raising of Lazarus itself was certainly something to behold, we must recognize that this great sign of power not only was used to establish belief in the minds of many, but it was also given so that many would see that there was truly nothing that Jesus could not do. The ultimate enemy of man was death, yet Jesus just put on full display His power even over death. The ultimate glory and power of God had been seen in Jesus raising Lazarus, and this was only a precursor to what would happen with Jesus Himself.
2. Remember that Martha was confident that Lazarus would be raised eventually on the last day **(11:24)**, but Jesus wanted her to know that He Himself was the resurrection and the life. **(11:25)** He was the one who would have power to raise those who believed in Him to eternal life when that day came. He asked Martha if she believed that those who believed in Him would never truly die, and she answers that she believed that He was the Christ, the Son of God. **(11:27)** At the point of **11:44**, she had seen the dead come to life, and just a short time from then, she would see the same thing happen with the one who Himself had once raised the dead.
3. This power of Jesus to raise and be raised can't be lost upon us. As Paul says in **I Corinthians 15:12-26**, if Christ Himself has not been raised then we should have no confidence in our own resurrection. However, if Christ has been raised, then we can have great confidence in our own resurrection in that last day. Jesus knew that His death was coming, and He willingly allowed for it to happen, but He also knew that He would be able to *"take it up again."* **(John 10:18)** Those who were there at this occurrence, could do nothing but see Jesus's power on full display and what great power it was. He is the resurrection and the life, and those who wish to see those two things must put their full faith in Him as such.

As we have seen with many of the other face to face encounters with Jesus, people came into the encounter feeling one way and they left having had everything within them completely changed. Mary and Martha sent to Jesus in their deepest distress with breaking hearts. They came to Jesus with hearts that had been fully broken, yet those broken hearts were quickly healed knowing that Jesus's power over death had been fully realized by those present. Yes, the death of loved ones can impact us to our very souls, yet for those who were faithful to their Lord, we too can find comfort knowing that one day they too *"will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."* We come to realize through Jesus that death is just another part of the journey, but through our dedication to Jesus and His will, we can look forward to a new life on that resurrection day. May this hope of life drive each of us as we go throughout this upcoming week. Let's close with prayer.

**\*PRAYER\*** *Jehovah God...the Great I AM...we come before you humbly recognizing that You alone have the power over life and death. You alone hold each of us in the palm of Your hand. You alone have the ability to give life to those who are dead in sin, and we are thankful for the sacrifice of Your Son that gives us hope of life in this world and the next. May You help each of us as we go throughout this week to walk only in the light. Help us to resist the temptations of the evil one, and may it all be done to Your glory. May we all look forward to that last day, and may we through Your grace and mercy be raised to glory. Thank you so much for your love, and may we also see Your strength day by day. We love You Father, and we ask these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus the resurrection and the life...amen.*