

## Gospel John Chapter 11 -- John Karmelich

1. In life, I suspect all of us battle with negative emotions from time to time.
  - a) Fear, anger, worry, anxiety, etc.
  - b) All of these things stem from a lack of an ability to control the outcome of a situation.
  - c) In life we get frustrated because we want to do things our way.
    - i) And we want to do them now!
  - d) It is when we *don't know* what is going to happen in the future.
    - i) Or when we *can't control* what is going to happen to us in the future.
      - a) (The future can be the next five minutes or years from now.)
      - b) Is when that sense of frustration comes in.
        - (1) This frustration can lead to fear, worry and depression.
        - (2) This frustration can also lead to stress, and then anger.
    - e) None of these qualities is what God wants for our lives.
    - f) God wants us to live in a sense of peace.
    - g) And, first and foremost, this means letting go of our desire to control a situation.
    - h) The *faster* we can learn to turn a situation over to God to solve,
      - i) the healthier, and happier we become.
      - ii) What is *more* amazing, is that God usually gives us the things we desire once we turn over to Him.
  2. If I took a survey among non-Christians as to what is their greatest fear,
    - a) I would surmise that the number one fear among people is death.
      - i) To a non-Christian, death means no more control of life.
        - a) Death means the end of the pleasures that one enjoys in their life.
        - b) Death is fear of the unknown. Death means no control of their destiny.
      - ii) Even to a Christian, the process of death is undesirable.
        - a) The physical body does not work as well as one gets older.
        - b) Growing old means physical pain one has to deal with.
        - c) It also means we are going to miss the company of the one who dies.
  3. The topics of death and lack-of-personal-control are dealt with head-on in Chapter 11.
    - a) Chapter 11 shows the last, and greatest and John's miracles.
    - b) A person, dead in the grave for four days, rises from the dead.
    - c) But the focus of the chapter isn't just on the miracle.
      - i) It was written for us to know the power of Jesus Christ.
        - a) How this power is available to us for the asking (as a gift).
      - ii) Since God has this power:
        - a) He wants us to relinquish our fears and desires for control over to Him.
          - (1) So He can work in ways far greater than we can imagine.
  4. The last thing Jesus ever wants for our lives is for us to be miserable.
    - a) All our struggles with fear, anxiety, death, depression, anger etc. come from the focus on our problems and not on God. Listen to what Jesus says about "Joy":
      - i) "These things I have **spoken** to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11 NKJV)
      - ii) "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. **Ask**, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:24 NKJV)
      - iii) And these things we **write** to you that your joy may be full. (1 John 1:4 NKJV)
      - iv) "but I (John) hope to **come** to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. (2 John 1:12b NKJV) (Joy through fellowship with believers.)
    - b) God speaks to us, we need to ask of him, God writes to us (Bible) and talks to us through other Christians.
    - c) So with that long introduction complete, lets go on to Chapter 11.

5. Chapter 11, Verse 1: Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.
  - a) Remember that the Gospel of John was probably written about 20-30 years after the other 3 gospels were in circulation.
    - i) The story of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus with her hair (Verse 2) was already told in the other Gospels (Mark 14, Luke 10, Matthew 26).
    - ii) I love the fact that in Verse 1 the town is nicknamed "The village of Mary".
      - a) Listen to Jesus' prediction of Mary in Mark 14:9
      - b) Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, *what she has done will also be told*, in memory of her." (Mark 14:9b, NIV)
6. Verse 3: So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."
  - a) This is a shining moment for the two sisters.
    - i) They didn't instruct God on what to do
      - a) They didn't say, Jesus get down here quick and heal Lazarus.
      - b) They just said, "Lord", as in "The God who is in charge of our life".
        - (1) Then they said the one you love is sick.
        - (2) The order of those two words are important.
        - (3) It was not the one who *loves you* is sick,
          - (a) but the one *you love*!
          - (b) That is relinquishment of the problem into Jesus' hands.
7. Verse 4: When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."
  - a) There is a great lesson to be learned from this one verse.
  - b) God often *allows* us to go through pain for His glory.
    - i) Often we ask "God, why do you allow this sickness to happen?"
      - a) Or "God, why do you allow so much misery to occur?"
    - ii) It is often so that "God's son may be glorified through it."
      - a) Many a person has turned to Christ *due* to the trials they have endured.
      - b) Many a Christian has *increased* their faith because of the trials they endured.
      - c) Think of how many Christians have increased their faith by hearing the testimonies of other's suffering & the joy in their lives as God worked *through* them.
      - d) Think of the people who have been consoled by others who have gone through the same tragedy.
      - e) One of the greatest verses in the Bible (and often, the most difficult to accept) is Romans 8:28: And we know that in **all** things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NKJV)
        - (1) All means all, although we don't always understand the reasons, and may never know until after we die!
8. Verse 5: Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
  - a) There is a cute implication in Vs. 5: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus"
    - i) Mary, who is famous (Verse 1 – "Town of Mary" is not mentioned in this verse.
    - ii) It's like saying "Jesus loved Martha, Lazarus and what's-her-name!"
      - a) It implies that Jesus does not show favorites.

9. Verse 6: Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. <sup>7</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."
- a) The first thing Jesus did when he heard about Lazarus was *nothing* for two days!
    - i) God does not always answer prayers when we ask them!
    - ii) The 3 answers to any pray are "Yes", "No", and "Not Yet"
  - b) God often delays answering our prayers in order to *increase* our faith.
    - i) By delaying the raising of Lazarus from the dead.
      - a) He was able to show *convincingly* that God has the power to raise someone from the dead.
        - (1) If he went immediately, He would have just cured another person of sickness and not have shown His power over death.
        - (2) Or, if he went sooner, the critics would argue that Lazarus was not really dead yet.
      - b) The point is, we the reader, can more easily understand why Jesus delayed going to help Lazarus.
      - c) Our knowledge of the story was no comfort to Mary and Martha!
      - d) Just like in *our* lives, we can't see the whole story.
        - (1) We have to remember that God has wonderful plans for our lives. By delaying the blessings, God is working on our faith *in Him* to work our way through a situation.
        - (2) For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)
10. Verse 8: "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"
- a) In Contrast to Mary & Martha putting the problems in Jesus hands, the disciples make the mistake of focusing on their problems (and fears!) and not on God.
11. Listen to Jesus' response: Verse 9: Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. <sup>10</sup> It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."
- a) Jesus is saying he is to do what God called him to do when God says so.
    - i) Not a moment sooner, not a moment later.
    - ii) Jesus knew what God had planned for him, including the crucifixion.
      - a) He also knew when this is going to happen.
  - b) As Christians we are often called by God to perform specific ministries.
    - i) God is quite aware when it is time for us to die.
      - a) Not a moment sooner, and not a moment later.
      - b) Since we don't know that hour, our job is to do what God calls us to while we still have time (i.e. "while it is still "light").
      - c) It is pretty difficult for us to be good witnesses after we die.
        - (1) Although others can use our lives as testimonies after we die,
        - (2) Jesus is concerned we are good witnesses while we have time.

12. Verse 11: After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." <sup>12</sup> His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." <sup>13</sup> Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. <sup>14</sup> So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,
- a) One of the best descriptions I ever heard of our "soul" is a comparison to computer software versus computer hardware.
    - i) If you took a 3.5 inch floppy disk (a blank disk used to store computer programs and files). If the disk was "blank", what does it weigh?
      - a) Answer: About 2-3 ounces
    - ii) Now if you took that same floppy disk and put files or programs on that disk, what does it weight *now*? The exact same.! Software has no weight (mass). It is created and transformed from one source to another.
      - a) Just as when our bodies die, "the soul" is transferred to our new heavily bodies. Our soul has no weight, it is simply "contained" by our body.
      - b) This analogy is not perfect, but you get the idea.
    - iii) For further study, contemplate story of *another* Lazarus in Luke 16
      - a) Again, this is a different Lazarus than the one in our story.
      - b) The Lazarus in Luke 16 is about a beggar who was dead and his story how he is "comforted" by Abraham while a rich man was in torment.
  - b) Christians are never described as "dead" in the Bible
    - i) We are only described as "falling asleep"
    - ii) There are two major Biblical views on this
      - a) One is called "soul sleep", where are soul sleeps with our body until God calls us at the rapture or the "end-of-the-age", depending on your view of the "end-times".
        - (1) There are scriptures to support this point of view
      - b) The other view (the one I take) , is that once you die, your soul immediately goes to be with the Lord.
        - (1) And we are not afraid but are quite content to die, for then we will be at home with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8 The Living Bible)
        - (2) The story of the "other Lazarus" in Luke 16 also supports my disagreement over the concept of "soul sleep".
      - c) Whichever view you take, it doesn't matter. It's just "debate". Once you awake from death, you will be in the presence of the Lord!
    - iii) A Christian author named Peter Marshall was famous for describing what death in simple terms. He told of a 12 year old boy who knew he was dying. The boy asked his father what death was like. The father would answer "Son, do you remember when you were little how you used to come and sit on my lap in the big chair in the living room? I would tell you a story and you would fall asleep? When you woke up, you were in your own bed. That is the way death is. When you wake, you are not were your were. You are in a place of security and safety, beauty and rest"
13. Verse 15: "and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."
- a) Jesus gave the disciples a clue what he was going to do.
  - b) He also states the purpose of his trip to visit Lazarus.
    - i) "I was not there, so that you may believe"
  - c) Remember why the Gospel of John was written. The Gospel of John is one of the few books where the purpose of the book is stated directly in the book:
    - i) But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31 NIV)

14. Verse 16: Then Thomas called Didymus (which means "The Twin") said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
  - a) Commentators are mixed on Thomas' reaction.
    - i) Some say that he was being cynical, meaning that Thomas feared for his own life and was focusing on his problem.
    - ii) Others see Thomas more of a leader. The interpretation is that Thomas was trying to "rally the troops". To paraphrase this interpretation : "If we must die to serve our Lord, so be it."
    - iii) The truth is we weren't there, so we don't know. Since Jesus did not comment further (neither rebuke nor praise), it really does not matter. The purpose of Jesus going back to raise Lazarus was to further indicate who Jesus was and his power over death. Whether Thomas was trying to be a hero or speak in fear, in either case, his focus was not on God's plan.
  - b) If Thomas was one of "twins" there is no mention of a twin brother anywhere in the Bible. Again, there is speculation by the commentators about this reference, but the truth is simply unknown.
15. Verse 17 :On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.<sup>18</sup> Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,<sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.<sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.
  - a) Martha to me is a woman of action. She is somewhat similar in character to Peter.
    - i) Martha is the type of person that has to do *something*.
      - a) That is she can be aggressive, but also impatient.
    - ii) Mary is more the "contemplator". She is somewhat similar in character to John.
      - a) She is the one who waits at Jesus' feet.
    - iii) This is consistent with other passages about Mary & Martha (Luke 16: 19-31).
    - iv) God loves the "Martha's" of the world just as much as the "Mary's".
16. Verse 21: "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died.<sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."
  - a) I don't believe (and neither do the majority of commentators) that Martha is rebuking Jesus. She is only *acknowledging* that Jesus had the power to prevent Lazarus' death if Jesus so choose. Her statement is one of regret.
  - b) Martha at this point still does not realize that Jesus *is* God.
    - i) She believes Jesus has the power to *ask* of God.
17. Verse 23: Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."<sup>24</sup> Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
  - a) Martha is focusing on the long term, and Jesus is trying to get her attention on the immediate situation at hand.
    - i) Martha understands there will be a resurrection one day, just not today.
      - a) This is a common belief among people raised Orthodox Jews.
        - (1) It leans more toward the Pharisee's view on resurrection.
    - ii) Martha understands that God has the power to do miracles.
      - a) But she does not expect him to perform one today.
  - b) This is a mistake Christians make. We are so afraid of being let down, we don't pray for God to intervene on-the-spot.
    - i) We *must* resign ourselves that God's answer to pray *may* be "no" or "not yet".
    - ii) But that does not mean we should not *ask* for immediate intervention.
    - iii) The key is God's will, not ours to be done.
    - iv) "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24 NKJV)

18. Verse 25: Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;<sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"<sup>27</sup> "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."
  - a) This is one of the great "I am" statements of the Bible. As in "I am the bread of life, I am the Good Shepherd, etc."
  - b) This is one of the powerful claims of the Bible. Let's go back to my opening statements.
    - i) We all go through periods of fear, doubt, anxiety, worry etc.
    - ii) Here is Jesus, claiming that **He** has power over life and death.
      - a) He is claiming that by believing in Him, we will *never* die.
    - iii) Jesus is asking Martha, as well as you & I: "Do you believe this?"
      - a) If we believe this, as we claim we do,
      - b) Then why are we worrying, complaining and doubting?
      - c) The answer is because like Martha, our focus is on the problem & not Jesus!
  - c) Martha's response is the acceptance of the Gospel: Verse 27: Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."
    - i) Martha claims that she believes three things about Jesus
      - a) 1. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the promised one of God
      - b) 2. He is the Son of God, (divine Child of God, who is Deity Himself)
      - c) 3. Who was to come into the word. (As predicted by the prophets)
19. Verse 28: And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you."<sup>29</sup> When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.<sup>31</sup> When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.
  - a) Mary & Martha are still dealing with the fear of "The Jews" (the Jewish leadership).
    - i) Martha sent a message to Mary saying "the teacher" is here, not naming Jesus by name. This was a "coded" message from Martha to Mary.
    - ii) Mary also showed good signs of obedience. When Jesus calls for you, do you sit and wait for Him to come to you, or do you go and meet him?
20. Verse 32: When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."
  - a) Mary uses the exact same expression Martha (Verse 21)
  - b) I suspect during the time of grieving, before Jesus showed up, Mary & Martha had a conversation over and over again how things were different if only Jesus were here.
  - c) Imagine the grief and stress that the two sisters went through for a few days. They thought that Jesus was Lazarus only hope of not dying
    - i) Imagine telling Lazarus to just hold on until the message got to Jesus.
    - ii) Imagine their prayers hoping Jesus would get the message in time.
    - iii) Now here they are in their grief, all hope is lost. It's too late. Lazarus is dead.
    - iv) This is often when God can do his best work.
      - a) Once we have quit trying in our own efforts to fix things,
      - b) once we have given up, and can *only* rely on God, is when God does his best work!

21. Verse 33: When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup> "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"
- a) One has to think carefully about these verses. There are 3 emotional reactions listed by Jesus in three verses.
    - i) Jesus was "deeply moved in spirit" (Verse 33 and again in Verse 38)
    - ii) Jesus was "troubled" (Verse 33)
    - iii) Jesus "wept" (Verse 35). This verse is famous as the shortest verse in the Bible.
    - iv) It also helps to understand what these emotions mean
      - a) "deeply moved" in the Greek is a reference to "controlled anger", like the way a horse snorts when it is anguished.
      - b) "troubled" is used to describe a sea in a storm and the effect of fear or surprise on the human mind
      - c) "wept" means weeping as an outbreak of tears.
  - b) So the big question. Since Jesus knew he was about to resurrect Lazarus, why was he so emotionally down?
    - i) You would think he would be excited with anticipation by everyone's reaction. ("I would be thinking, "Oh boy, is this going to be great!")
    - ii) The answer has to do with grief over sin.
      - a) The thing we tend to forget about God is how *seriously* He takes sin.
      - b) As one reads the Book of Leviticus the *details* that God lays out for dealing with sin, you get an idea of how *seriously* God feels about sin.
        - (1) Phillip Yancy says about the Book of Leviticus: "It reads like a manual for working with radioactive material!"
      - c) And the final result of sin is death.
        - (1) "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a)
      - d) I am convinced Jesus is weeping over what sin, and the results of sin has caused to the world.
      - e) Remember that God never intended for sin to enter the world.
        - (1) By man choosing "free will", we are now paying the consequences every day.
        - (2) This verse proves that God grieves over the result of that choice!
      - f) The whole purpose of God sending Jesus into the world was to provide a way for us to make the *right choice* (God's will over our will), and at the same time, not compromising on God's justice and dealing with sin.
22. Verse 37: But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"
- a) The reputation of Jesus had grown. He is remembered for opening the blind man's eyes (Chapter 9).
23. Verse 38: Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."
- a) Martha was again, making the mistake of focusing on the problem, and not Jesus for the solution. (Notice that Jesus does not rebuke her in Verse 40, but encourages her.)
  - b) Some commentators love to point out that Lazarus name is *not* named in this verse. He is referred to as "the dead man" in Verse 39.
    - i) There is a "typology" being created here. Just as we are "dead" in our sins, we are useless. It is not until God calls us into our new live we "have" a name.

- c) Notice that Jesus asks *Martha* to take away the stone.
  - i) Question, why didn't Jesus take away the stone himself?
    - a) After all, when Jesus was resurrected, he removed his own gravestone.
    - b) The answer is he was trying to build Mary and Martha's faith by working *through* them.
      - (1) Just as God wants to increase our faith by working *through* us!
- 24. Verse 40: (The encouragement by Jesus.): <sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"
- 25. Verse 41: So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."
  - a) The key words of this passage are "for the benefit of the people standing here".
    - i) Jesus was praying out loud for someone else's benefit.
  - b) Again, the purpose of the Gospel of John is spelled out in Verse 42b.
    - i) "that they may believe that you sent me."
  - c) Next comes the big dramatic moment in the story.
- 26. Verse 43: When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."
  - a) A lot of commentators love to make jokes about the fact it was a good thing that Jesus said *Lazarus* come forth. If Jesus just said "come forth", *everybody* in that grave would have come forth!
  - b) Notice that Lazarus was still in his grave clothes.
    - i) When Jesus was resurrected, he *left behind* his grave clothes. Why?
    - ii) I would suggest this is another typology.
      - a) To understand, you have to ask yourself, did Lazarus die a 2<sup>nd</sup> time?
      - b) Unless Lazarus is over 2,000 years old, I would suggest he did!
      - c) The point that Lazarus represents the "born-again" believer.
        - (1) We have been resurrected to serve a new-life as Christians *here on earth* until God calls us home.
        - (2) When we become "born-again", we still have on our "grave-clothes" of our previous lifestyle.
        - (3) This represents the sins (our sinful nature) we still carry with us after we become born again.
        - (4) Our lifestyle now *begins* of putting off our old self ("the grave-clothes"), and putting on the new self. (See Ephesians, Chap. 4.)
  - c) Some people question this verse in relation to Hebrews 9:27:
    - i) This verse states: And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, (NKJV)
    - ii) Therefore, how could Lazarus (and others Jesus have raised from the dead) have died a second time in light of Hebrews 9:27?
      - a) Hebrew 9:27 is a *principal* that rebukes reincarnation.
        - (1) We are appointed *once* to die, and then the judgement.
        - (2) Lazarus's *appointed time* was not yet!



27. Back to the text. Verse 45: Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.<sup>46</sup> But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.<sup>47</sup> Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.
- a) Some of “The Jews” (i.e. Jewish leaders) “tattle-taled” on Jesus.
    - i) Notice how Jesus causes division *even after* he raises someone from the dead.
    - ii) Some put their faith in him (Verse 45).
      - a) Others left to report this to the Pharisee’s (assumed to be non-believers).
    - iii) Jesus predicted their lack of faith in Luke 16:31.
    - iv) “But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’” (Luke 16:31 NKJV)
28. Verse 47b: (The scene of the story now moves to the discussion of the “tattle-talers” and the ruling council in Jerusalem): “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many miraculous signs.<sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”
- a) The rulers in Jerusalem were more focused on their own power structure then whether or not Jesus was really the Messiah.
    - i) Their view of the “Messiah” would be one that rules over the nation. Their fear is that if the people accepted Jesus as Messiah, this would threaten the Roman power structure and Rome would come and crush “a rebellion”.
29. Verse 49: Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all!<sup>50</sup> You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”
- a) When you really understand God’s whole redemptive plan, you begin to see how God even uses the enemies of Jesus to glorify God. Here was the Chief Priest prophesizing what God wanted to accomplish! Again, “*all* things work for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28a NKJV)
  - b) The interesting epilogue is that the Jewish leaders thought that by killing Jesus, they could avoid the Romans from destroying their way of life.
    - i) Just the opposite happened. About 40 years after Jesus’ death. The Roman government destroyed Israel. Millions of people were killed.
    - ii) Jesus predicted this was going to happen in Luke 19:43-44
    - iii) “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”
      - a) Jesus held them accountable for not knowing the time of His visitation!
30. In case you missed the point in Verse 50, John adds his own commentary in Verse 51-52:<sup>51</sup> He (Caiaphas) did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation,<sup>52</sup> and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.
- a) This is another statement of the purpose of the Gospel. For God to call out a people of his own (Jews and the scattered children of God, i.e. Gentiles) and make them one.
31. Verse 53: So from that day on they plotted to take his life.<sup>54</sup> Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.
- a) This was the end of the public ministry of Jesus.
  - b) In the mind of the Jews, Jesus was now public enemy #1.
    - i) He threatened their way of live and their existence as religious authorities.
    - ii) In Chapter 12, we will discover the leaders also plan to put Lazarus on the “Mafia hit list” as he also represents a danger to the status quo.

- c) There is a great commentary about the raising of Lazarus in 3 stages:
    - i) First he was dead.
    - ii) Second, bound by his grave clothes, he was defeated.
    - iii) And third, once he was a witness for Jesus, he was dangerous!
  - d) A witness for Jesus Christ is one who is dangerous, and a threat.
    - i) This does not give us a license to act recklessly,
    - ii) Remember Jesus advice about our witness to the world:
      - a) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. (Matthew 10:16 NKJV)
  - e) Last point about this section of verses. Jesus went to a small town to avoid the danger for the time being. Jesus was not running scared. He knew his appointed time. I see this as a last chance to witness to the disciples and to comfort them before the big challenge ahead of the crucifixion.
    - i) God works through our lives in stages. He gives us as much as we can handle, *then* gives us rest, *then* moves on to the next lesson.
32. Verse 55: When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. <sup>56</sup> They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?" <sup>57</sup> But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.
- a) One has to remember that the chapter numbers and verses in the Bible were added centuries *after* the books were written.
    - i) To me, Verse 55-57 fits better with Chapter 11.
  - b) This verse marks the transition of the Gospel of John.
  - c) The first 11 chapters deal with 7 specific miracles showing who Jesus is.
    - i) From here to the end of the book focuses on the last week of Jesus' life.
    - ii) The last week of his life must be extremely relevantly *more* important than the rest of the book if measured by how much space is dedicated to this week!
  - d) Verse 55 refers is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Passover mentioned in Gospel of John
    - i) It is estimated there were 1.5 to 2 million Jews crowded in this small city during this feast.
    - ii) The next chapter is going to being the final "showdown" between the followers of Jesus and the enemies of the cross. We'll leave that here until next time.
33. Let's Pray.
- a) Father, we thank you for the wonderful lessons you have taught us in these verses. Help us to keep our focus on you, and not on our problems. We go through difficult and terrible trials in our life. We worry and strive over and difficulties because we don't know the outcome. Father, help us to remember just how much you love us. Help us to remember that you have a wonderful plan for our lives, and you want us to have joy *through* these difficult times as well as *joy* during the good times. Help us to turn over the situations of our lives to you. We know that you want to bless us. Not because we are good people, but because it is your nature, that you want to bless us and do great things in our lives. May you receive the glory through all aspects of our lives. And we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.