*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

March 25 - 30

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, March 25 John 11:1-7**

*“He whom you love is sick”*

 There is an intimate tenderness in the announcement brought to Jesus that Lazarus, “he whom you love,” is sick. Each of the people in the home is identified. According to the story in Luke 10:38-42, Jesus had enjoyed the hospitality of this home, and during that final week between his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his crucifixion it would become his place of retreat (Matthew 21:17; Mark 11:11-12). Although the sisters do not request Jesus to come, it is implied since he is well known as a healer.

 When Jesus hears the report about Lazarus’ illness, his response parallels his comments about the man born blind (John 9:1-5). The final result of this tragedy is that God will be glorified. It is not a denial of Lazarus’ physical death, but that death will not gain the final word in this man’s life. The tragedy is not by God’s design, but God will use it for an opportunity to glorify his Son. Strangely, after hearing of Lazarus’ illness, Jesus waits two days before beginning the journey back to Bethany in Judea.

*In our time of need, Jesus, we turn to you for healing. Amen.*

**Tuesday, March 26 John 11:8-16**

*“Let’s go – and die with Jesus”*

 Jesus’ disciples recall the last attempt of the Jews to stone him and ask if he really is planning to go there again. But there is an appointed time, the twelve hours of daylight, when work is to be done. This is a time when a man does not stumble because the sun is shining. When darkness comes no work can be done. So Jesus will finish the mission the Father has given him before the darkness of opposition closes in. He knows what he must do and what God’s timetable is.

 A part of that work for Jesus is to call Lazarus back to life. Jesus here speaks of his death as sleep, for physical death is merely an incident in the presence of the One who is Life. The disciples misunderstand and think that Jesus is speaking of that healing sleep which comes after illness has passed. Lazarus would then become well. Would this not make the trip to Judea unnecessary? Now Jesus bluntly states the simple fact, “Lazarus is dead.” He is glad, not that Lazarus is dead, but for the sake of his disciples whose faith will be strengthened when they see God’s power manifested through Jesus’ actions.

*Now is the time, Jesus, for me to do the work you have given me. Amen.*

**Wednesday, March 27 John 11:17-26**

*“I am the resurrection and the life”*

 Martha expresses great faith in Jesus when she meets him. It is simply a fact, she declares, that if he had been with them her brother would never have died. When Jesus makes the general statement that her brother will rise again, her reply indicates she accepted the traditional Jewish belief in the resurrection at the last day. Yes, she trusts Jesus, but she has not grasped the wonder of the life that is in him. She does not yet understand who he really is.

 Jesus declares to Martha that *he* is the resurrection and the life. In other words, eternal life and rescue from the finality of death are not merely gifts obtained by appeal to God; they are aspects of what it means to live a life associated with Jesus. If Jesus is life, then those who believe in him will enjoy the confidence and power over death known by him. This does not mean that Jesus’ followers will not die a physical death, but that life will be theirs beyond the grave; they will not suffer death in eternity. Moreover, they will have a life now and do not have to await the end of human time and history in order to enjoy the benefits of Jesus’ power.

*In you, Jesus, my death is defeated for I will be resurrected from the grave. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

March 25 - 30

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, March 28 1 Corinthians 15:21-23**

*“All who belong to Christ will be raised”*

 Christ has been raised bodily and has thus set into motion an unstoppable chain of events that will culminate in the universal demonstration of the absolute sovereignty of God: Christ’s bodily resurrection guarantees the future bodily resurrection of all believers. Paul points out the parallel between Adam’s sin leading to the sinfulness of all humanity and Christ’s resurrection leading to the resurrection of all his followers.

 Because Adam represented the entire human race that would descend from him, sin spread throughout the whole world. Because Christ, as fully human, represented the entire human race in bearing its sin, he is able to apply the benefits of his death and resurrection to all who will accept them. “All” in the statement “all die” (verse 22a) means “all who are related to Adam.” “All” in the declaration “all will be made alive” (verse 22b) refers to “all who are related to Christ,” as verse 23 makes clear (“those who belong to him”). The general resurrection of believers will take place at the time of Christ’s return.

*Your resurrection, Jesus, guarantees mine. Amen.*

**Friday, March 29 John 11:27-37**

*“He was deeply troubled”*

 What arouses Jesus’ anger? Why is he outraged in the deepest level of his being? He is certainly not angry at Martha, Mary, or their mourners. Rather, he is overcome by the futility of this sorrowful scene in light of the reality of the resurrection. God’s people should possess a faith that claims victory at the grave. But here they stand, overcome in seeming defeat. And here stands the One in whom victory, life, and resurrection are powerful realities. Jesus is angry at death itself and the devastation it brings. His only interest now is to locate the tomb and begin to demonstrate divine power over humanity’s foe.

 Jesus’ tears are not for Lazarus, whose removal from the grave is imminent and whose life is going to show God’s glory. His tears here are like those he sheds over unbelieving Jerusalem. The public chaos surrounding him, the loud wailing and crying, and the scene of a cemetery and its reminders of death – all the result of sin – together produce deep emotion in the Son of God as he works to reverse such damage.

*Because of your resurrection, Jesus, we claim victory over the grave. Amen.*

**Saturday, March 30 John 11:38-44**

*“Lazarus, come forth!”*

 When Jesus gets to the tomb he commands that the stone be removed from the cave. Here the gruesome finality of death is made vividly clear again as Martha, who had expressed such loving faith in Jesus, protests. The body will stink. Her brother has been in the tomb four days. What can anyone, even Jesus, do with a decomposing body? But Jesus reminds her she will see the glory of God if she will believe. As the shining radiance of God’s power will be seen here at this tomb, so in a few days his greatest splendor will break forth at another tomb.

 In spite of Martha’s misgivings, the people obey Jesus’ command and the stone is removed. And in the midst of the stench of death and the unbelieving crowd, Jesus lifts his eyes toward “home” and offers a prayer. Here we see the intimacy and union between Father and Son, and the warm gratitude of the Son that the Father always hears and answers. Then there is the cry, the loud shout, “Lazarus, come forth!” The dead man hears the voice of the Shepherd and comes to life. He comes forth, still bound in the old grave clothes.

*You, Jesus, have called me out of death and into new life. Amen.*