

Jesus and Lazarus

MEMORY VERSE: “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*” (Psalm 116:15).

“In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. . . . The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 219–224. (At the bottom of this page)

1. THE FAMILY AT BETHANY

Sun, Jun 15

a. What disciples did Jesus have in the town of Bethany? John 11:5.

John 11:5

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

“[Christ’s] heart was knit by a strong bond of affection to the family at Bethany, and for one of them His most wonderful work was wrought.

“At the home of Lazarus, Jesus had often found rest. The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples, and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here He found a sincere welcome, and pure, holy friendship. Here He could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that His words would be understood and treasured.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 524.

b. In what type of home is God present with His choicest blessings? Proverbs 3:33 (last part).

Proverbs 3:33

The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

“Our Saviour appreciated a quiet home and interested listeners. He longed for human tenderness, courtesy, and affection. Those who received the heavenly instruction He was always ready to impart were greatly blessed.”—*Ibid.*

2. LAZARUS BECOMES SICK

Mon, Jun 16

a. What action did the sisters of Lazarus take when their brother became seriously ill—and what was the response they received? John 11:1–4.

John 11:1–4

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) **3** Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. **4** When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

“Lazarus was stricken with sudden illness, and his sisters sent to the Saviour, saying, ‘Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.’ They saw the violence of the disease that had seized their brother, but they knew that Christ had shown Himself able to heal all manner of diseases. They believed that He would sympathize with them in their distress; therefore they made no urgent demand for His immediate presence, but sent only the confiding message, ‘He whom Thou lovest is sick.’ They thought that He would immediately respond to their message, and be with them as soon as He could reach Bethany.

“Anxiously they waited for a word from Jesus. As long as the spark of life was yet alive in their brother, they prayed and watched for Jesus to come. But the messenger returned without Him. Yet he brought the message, ‘This sickness is not unto death,’ and they clung to the hope that Lazarus would live. Tenderly they tried to speak words of hope and encouragement to the almost unconscious sufferer.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 525, 526.

b. Describe Christ’s words and actions over the next few days. John 11:5–8.

John 11:5–8

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. **6** When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. **7** Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. **8** His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

“During the two days Christ seemed to have dismissed the message from His mind; for He did not speak of Lazarus. The disciples thought of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. They had wondered why Jesus, with the power to perform wonderful miracles, had permitted John to languish in prison, and to die a violent death. Possessing such power, why did not Christ save John’s life? This question had often been asked by the Pharisees, who presented it as an unanswerable argument against Christ’s claim to be the Son of God. The Saviour had warned His disciples of trials, losses, and persecution. Would He forsake them in trial? Some questioned if they had mistaken His mission. All were deeply troubled. . . .

“The disciples questioned why, if Jesus were going to Judea, He had waited two days. But anxiety for Christ and for themselves was now uppermost in their minds. They could see nothing but danger in the course He was about to pursue.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 526, 527.

3. DISAPPOINTMENT TURNS TO HOPE

Tue, Jun 17

a. What timeless message can we glean from how Christ handled the complex sequence of events surrounding the illness of Lazarus? John 11:9, 10.

John 11:9, 10

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. **10** But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

“Those who might have been collaborators with Christ, but who have spurned the messengers and their message, will lose their bearings. They will walk in darkness, knowing not at what they stumble. Such are ready to be deceived by the delusions of the last day. Their minds are preoccupied with minor interests, and they lose the blessed opportunity of yoking up with Christ, and being laborers together with God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 471.

b. What amazing revelation was Jesus giving to His disciples—yet how did they interpret His words? John 11:11, 12.

John 11:11, 12

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. **12** Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

“ ‘These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.’ ‘Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.’ How touching the words! how full of sympathy! In the thought of the peril their Master was about to incur by going to Jerusalem, the disciples had almost forgotten the bereaved family at Bethany. But not so Christ. The disciples felt rebuked. They had been disappointed because Christ did not respond more promptly to the message. They had been tempted to think that He had not the tender love for Lazarus and his sisters that they had thought He had, or He would have hastened back with the messenger. But the words, ‘Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,’ awakened right feelings in their minds. They were convinced that Christ had not forgotten His suffering friends.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 527.

c. Explain what the words of Christ actually meant. John 11:13, 14.

John 11:13, 14

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. **14** Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

“Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.”—*Ibid*.

4. WAITING, WAITING, WAITING . . .

Wed, Jun 18

a. Why did Jesus stay away from Bethany even after knowing that Lazarus had died? John 11:15.

John 11:15

And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

“The disciples marveled at Christ’s words when He said, ‘Lazarus is dead. And I am gla. . . . that I was not there.’ Did the Saviour by His own choice avoid the home of His suffering friends? Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone. Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters were upheld by His grace. Jesus witnessed the sorrow of their rent hearts, as

their brother wrestled with his strong foe, death. He felt every pang of anguish, as He said to His disciples, ‘Lazarus is dead.’ But Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father’s blessing might embrace all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

b. What should we realize by the way the Great Healer allowed Lazarus, His friend, to be so ill and actually die? 1 Corinthians 15:17–19; Psalm 18:28.

1 Corinthians 15:17–19

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. **18** Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. **19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Psalm 18:28

For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

“[Christ’s] work did not stop with an exhibition of His power over disease. He made each work of healing an occasion of implanting in the heart the divine principles of His love and benevolence.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 249.

“Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe. He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death; and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. Christ knew that as they looked on the dead face of their brother their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. But He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing their faith would shine forth with far greater power. He suffered every pang of sorrow that they endured. He loved them no less because He tarried; but He knew that for them, for Lazarus, for Himself, and for His disciples, a victory was to be gained.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

5. NOT ALWAYS AS WE EXPECT . . .

Thu, Jun 19

a. What must we always consider regarding the death of God’s faithful servants, regardless of how it occurs? Psalm 116:15. Name an example.

Psalm 116:15

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

“It was not given Elisha to follow his master in a fiery chariot. Upon him the Lord permitted to come a lingering illness. During the long hours of human weakness and suffering his faith laid fast hold on the promises of God, and he beheld ever about him heavenly messengers of comfort and peace. . . . Faith had ripened into an abiding trust in his God, and when death called him he was ready to rest from his labors.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 263, 264.

b. What events took place at Bethany before the arrival of Jesus—and who else was there when He came? John 11:17–19.

John 11:17–19

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. **18** Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: **19** And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

“In delaying to come to Lazarus, Christ had a purpose of mercy toward those who had not received Him. He tarried, that by raising Lazarus from the dead He might give to His stubborn, unbelieving people another evidence that He was indeed ‘the resurrection, and the life.’ He was loath to give up all hope of the people, the poor, wandering sheep of the house of Israel. His heart was breaking because of their impenitence. In His mercy He purposed to give them one more evidence that He was the Restorer, the One who alone could bring life and immortality to light. This was to be an evidence that the priests could not misinterpret. This was the reason of His delay in going to Bethany. This crowning miracle, the raising of Lazarus, was to set the seal of God on His work and on His claim to divinity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 529.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jun 20

- 1. Who were the members of Lazarus’ family?**
- 2. Why didn’t Jesus immediately comply with the request of His friends?**
- 3. What was the disciples’ reaction to Christ’s attitude?**
- 4. How should death be regarded by the believers in Christ?**
- 5. For what purpose did Christ allow Lazarus to die?**

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 219–224.

Those who minister to the sick should understand the importance of careful attention to the laws of health. Nowhere is obedience to these laws more important than in the sickroom. Nowhere does so much depend upon faithfulness in little things on the part of the attendants. In cases of serious illness, a little neglect, a slight inattention to a patient’s special needs or dangers, the manifestation of fear, excitement, or petulance, even a lack of sympathy, may turn the scale that is balancing life and death, and cause to go down to the grave a patient who otherwise might have recovered. (MH 219.1)

The efficiency of the nurse depends, to a great degree, upon physical vigor. The better the health, the better will she be able to endure the strain of attendance upon the sick, and the more successfully can she perform her duties. Those who care for the sick should give special attention to diet, cleanliness, fresh air, and exercise. Like carefulness on the part of the family will enable them also to endure the extra burdens brought upon them, and will help to prevent them from contracting disease. (MH 219.2)

Where the illness is serious, requiring the attendance of a nurse night and day, the work should be shared by at least two efficient nurses, so that each may have opportunity for rest and for exercise in the open air. This is especially important in cases where it is difficult to secure an abundance of fresh air in the sickroom. Through ignorance of the importance of fresh air,

ventilation is sometimes restricted, and the lives of both patient and attendant are often in danger. (MH 220.1)

If proper precaution is observed, noncontagious diseases need not be taken by others. Let the habits be correct, and by cleanliness and proper ventilation keep the sickroom free from poisonous elements. Under such conditions, the sick are much more likely to recover, and in most cases neither attendants nor the members of the family will contract the disease. (MH 220.2)

Sunlight, Ventilation, and Temperature

To afford the patient the most favorable conditions for recovery, the room he occupies should be large, light, and cheerful, with opportunity for thorough ventilation. The room in the house that best meets these requirements should be chosen as the sickroom. Many houses have no special provision for proper ventilation, and to secure it is difficult; but every possible effort should be made to arrange the sickroom so that a current of fresh air can pass through it night and day. (MH 220.3)

So far as possible an even temperature should be maintained in the sickroom. The thermometer should be consulted. Those who have the care of the sick, being often deprived of sleep or awakened in the night to attend to the patient, are liable to chilliness and are not good judges of a healthful temperature. (MH 221.1)

Diet

An important part of the nurse's duty is the care of the patient's diet. The patient should not be allowed to suffer or become unduly weakened through lack of nourishment, nor should the enfeebled digestive powers be overtaxed. Care should be taken so to prepare and serve the food that it will be palatable, but wise judgment should be used in adapting it to the needs of the patient, both in quantity and quality. In times of convalescence especially, when the appetite is keen, before the digestive organs have recovered strength, there is great danger of injury from errors in diet. (MH 221.2)

Duties of Attendants

Nurses, and all who have to do with the sickroom, should be cheerful, calm, and self-possessed. All hurry, excitement, or confusion, should be avoided. Doors should be opened and shut with care, and the whole household be kept quiet. In cases of fever, special care is needed when the crisis comes and the fever is passing away. Then constant watching is often necessary. Ignorance, forgetfulness, and recklessness have caused the death of many who might have lived had they received proper care from judicious, thoughtful nurses. (MH 221)

Visiting the Sick

It is misdirected kindness, a false idea of courtesy, that leads to much visiting of the sick. Those who are very ill should not have visitors. The excitement connected with receiving callers wearies the patient at a time when he is in the greatest need of quiet, undisturbed rest. (MH 222.1)

To a convalescent or a patient suffering from chronic disease, it is often a pleasure and a benefit to know that he is kindly remembered; but this assurance conveyed by a message of sympathy or by some little gift will often serve a better purpose than a personal visit, and without danger of harm. **(MH 222.2)**

Institutional Nursing

In sanitariums and hospitals, where nurses are constantly associated with large numbers of sick people, it requires a decided effort to be always pleasant and cheerful, and to show thoughtful consideration in every word and act. In these institutions it is of the utmost importance that the nurses strive to do their work wisely and well. They need ever to remember that in the discharge of their daily duties they are serving the Lord Christ. **(MH 222)**

The sick need to have wise words spoken to them. Nurses should study the Bible daily, that they may be able to speak words that will enlighten and help the suffering. Angels of God are in the rooms where these suffering ones are being ministered to, and the atmosphere surrounding the soul of the one giving treatment should be pure and fragrant. Physicians and nurses are to cherish the principles of Christ. In their lives His virtues are to be seen. Then, by what they do and say, they will draw the sick to the Saviour. **(MH 223.1)**

The Christian nurse, while administering treatment for the restoration of health, will pleasantly and successfully draw the mind of the patient to Christ, the healer of the soul as well as of the body. The thoughts presented, here a little and there a little, will have their influence. The older nurses should lose no favorable opportunity of calling the attention of the sick to Christ. They should be ever ready to blend spiritual healing with physical healing. **(MH 223.2)**

In the kindest and tenderest manner nurses are to teach that he who would be healed must cease to transgress the law of God. He must cease to choose a life of sin. God cannot bless the one who continues to bring upon himself disease and suffering by a willful violation of the laws of heaven. But Christ, through the Holy Spirit, comes as a healing power to those who cease to do evil and learn to do well. **(MH 224.1)**

Those who have no love for God will work constantly against the best interests of soul and body. But those who awake to the importance of living in obedience to God in this present evil world will be willing to separate from every wrong habit. Gratitude and love will fill their hearts. They know that Christ is their friend. In many cases the realization that they have such a friend means more to the suffering ones in their recovery from sickness than the best treatment that can be given. But both lines of ministry are essential. They are to go hand in hand. **(MH 224.2)**