

***Rolling Away Stones***  
***John 11:1-44***

- 1 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.
- 5 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?
- 9 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.
- 11 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.
- 13 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.
- 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.
- 16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.
- 17 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.
- 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.
- 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
- 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.
- 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
- 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
- 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
- 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?
- 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying,  
The Master is come, and calleth for thee.  
29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.  
30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.  
31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw  
Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the  
grave to weep there.  
32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet,  
saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.  
33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her,  
he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,  
34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.  
35 Jesus wept.  
36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!  
37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have  
caused that even this man should not have died?  
38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone  
lay upon it.  
39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto  
him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.  
40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest  
see the glory of God?  
41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted  
up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.  
42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said  
it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.  
43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.  
44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face  
was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. KJV

### **Introduction:**

John 11:2

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) [It was that Mary ...] See the notes at Matt 26:6; Luke 7:36-50. (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft)

John 12:1-6

1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.  
2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.  
3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,  
5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?  
6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. KJV

Luke 7:36-38

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.  
37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,  
38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. KJV

Matt 26:6-15

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,  
7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.  
8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?  
9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.  
10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.  
11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.  
12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.  
13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.  
14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,  
15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. KJV

Looking at those three accounts, observe:

It was Simon the Leper's house, who was also a Pharisee.

Judas' father was Simon, mentioned in the same setting.

Lazarus was there, Martha served, Mary 'the woman who was a sinner' was the one who came to anoint Jesus.

Judas was comfortable enough there to speak out in criticism.

Customarily women designated as 'sinners' were those who had been immoral and maybe had been put away by their husband.

Mary had access to the house.

This event seemed to have been the final straw for Judas in his decision to betray Christ.

My question has always been, was Mary the divorced wife of Simon the Leper and Pharisee who was also Judas' father? And, was she then the mother of Judas? Was Lazarus his uncle and Martha his aunt? Was he not only a disciple and one of the 12 but also a member of this family whom Jesus knew and loved in a special way? That would add an even greater layer to the

betrayal.

This story indeed has a number of elements to it.

We see the Sovereign Work of God in dealing with suffering in His people, sometimes doing the exact opposite of what we expect.

Jesus, though He was willing to risk the danger near Jerusalem, still waited until Lazarus was dead rather than coming and healing him like He had done for countless thousands of others. ***Sometimes those closest to the Lord, those who love Him the most, are the ones called upon to suffer the greatest tests of Faith.*** It is, as we see in the story, a tool He uses to increase their confidence in Him ultimately. But they do not understand as events unfold.

We see the Lord Himself expressing grief, but probably not for the reason many people think. Lazarus is OK and He knows that. He also knows that He is going to raise him and restore him to his family. One **might think** that His sorrow was that He was bringing the man back rather than that he was dead.

But it seems most likely that Jesus was grieving over the obvious unbelief of some that He held close and loved intensely.

- 32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
- 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,
- 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.
- 35 Jesus wept.
- 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!
- 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?
- 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

It is an interesting picture, Mary and Martha with the friends of Lazarus weeping that the man was dead and Jesus weeping and groaning for an entirely different reason. They lacked confidence that Lazarus was OK in death.

- 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The believer should have a totally different view of the death of another believer than he does of an unbeliever. The unbeliever has gone to eternal suffering and that, indeed, is a tragedy worthy of tears and grief. But the saint has gone into the Presence of God and has been released from all sorrow into the thing that he delights the most, the Presence of God.

2 Cor 5:6-8

- 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

- 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)  
8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. KJV

**But, there is another issue in this text that I would like to discuss with you.**

I want you to notice the things that the Lord commanded those present to do as He wrought the miracle of restoring life to the dead.

- 39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.  
44 ...Loose him, and let him go.

The question occurs to the mind, why would the One Who Raised the Dead require men to participate in the doing of those two things?

I am indebted to my father for this answer, “because men *can* roll stones and take off grave clothes.”

It is as if Jesus refused to do what men *could do* and only moved to do what they *could not!*

It really seems that there is a lesson here worthy of note and worthy of application concerning a number of things.

I was brought to consider this principle this week as we prayed for God to send an Awakening on our nation and a Revival to our churches.

***Are there ‘stones’ which He would have us roll away even as we ask Him for a miracle?***

Have we left things undone that are within our power to do while we beg Him for a mighty movement of His power?

I realized that the answer is probably ‘Yes’!

Let us ask another question. How foolish would it have been for those men to have refused to roll away the stone as He commanded while continuing to ask Him to raise Lazarus?

And, do we find ourselves in that situation while asking for a Revival in our own souls and our church while refusing to do things which we can do that He has commanded for our spiritual growth and benefit?

Do you understand that Personal Revival is available to you if you would heed the commands of scripture and do things which are actually possible for you to do?

Now, I know, we need the help of God for every spiritual thing. But, here is the question. ***Have you already been given help to do many things that you are not trusting Him for and acting on faith to obey?***

John 14:15-18

- 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
- 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
- 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
- 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. KJV

John 16:12-14

- 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
- 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
- 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. KJV

Rom 8:9-16

- 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
- 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
- 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
- 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
- 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
- 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
- 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
- 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: KJV

And, there are things that God has given us all to do because we have the Spirit and have the help of God to do them.

Rom 6:11-13

- 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
- 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. KJV

Rom 12:1-2

- 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable

service.

- 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. KJV

This is a duty and a privilege given to us by God Who has already provided the way, the means and the power for us to obey.

You do not need for God to send an Awakening or a Revival to enable you to do what this commands. You are a child of God, you say, and, so, you have the Spirit of God Who will guide you into all truth. He will enable you to do this thing, which is actually a function of the ongoing work of Repentance in your life.

The men who rolled away the stone at Lazarus tomb were able to do it but they still had to put their shoulders to the rock and push with all their might. They could not wish it away nor pray it away, they were required to act.

Jesus Himself said:

Matt 16:24-25

- 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.
- 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. KJV

John 15:4-7

- 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
- 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
- 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. KJV

Now, again, we cannot do this in and of ourselves and in our own strength. But Jesus does not suggest that we need to wait on some special move of heaven to energize us either.

The reality is that things like this happen much as it did when Peter asked to walk on the water.

Matt 14:25-29

- 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
- 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.
- 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

- 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.
- 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. KJV

***Question: when Peter stepped out of the boat, do you think he 'felt like' he could walk on water?***

I am pretty sure he did not but as he obeyed Christ, the Lord enabled him to do the impossible.

But we are talking about trusting Christ to do the ***possible!***

Will He enable us as we step out in faith? My experience has been and the experience of the church over the centuries has been that He will.

Consider some of the other things that we have been given as commands. Actually you must know that they are the same thing as we have already looked at simply described in different terms.

Eph 4:21-24

- 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
- 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
- 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. KJV

Eph 5:18

- 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; KJV

Phil 2:5

- 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: KJV

Phil 3:17

- 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. KJV

Eph 6:11-13

- 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. KJV



Now, I know there are many who look at these verses and tremble for fear saying, "I cannot do that, I do not know how!" And, on the face of it this is true.

But as long as you stand looking at the stone or sit in the boat wishing you could walk on water, that is exactly where you will stay. I am pretty sure that God is not going to come and do for you that which He has already enabled you and called you to do.

At some point we must all make the decision to put our shoulder to the stone or get out of the boat.

Otherwise we remain as foolish as those men would have looked if they had refused to roll the stone but still begged Jesus to raise Lazarus.

Most of the time and in most cases, God is not going to work in power while we remain disobedient to clear commands for which He has already graciously given us enablement.

Now, do you realize that when you commit yourself truly to obey God in these matters and have His Grace operating in you to be able, you will be A Revived Soul. You will not need to wait for a Revival, Revival will be living in your soul.

Bro. John Hunter said that he often ends a message by saying, "Go do something!"

I am going to end this one with "Get out of the boat!"

These scriptures are not in your Bible just to decorate the pages!