

## RAISING THE DEAD

Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56; John 11:1-57

Jairus was a leader at the synagogue in Capernaum. His 12-year-old daughter was very seriously ill. Although many of those in the synagogue would not have turned to Jesus for help, Jairus went searching for Him.

Jesus had visited the other side of Lake Galilee and a large crowd waited in Capernaum for Him to return.

Jairus came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with Him to come to his house as his daughter was dying.

As Jesus was on His way, the crowds almost crushed Him. Among the crowd was a woman who had been ill for 12 years with an illness that made her bleed.

She had spent all her money going to doctors to make her better but her condition had only got worse. In Jewish law her illness, as it caused her to bleed, made her unclean, so she had to avoid going near other people or touching them when she was suffering.

Hoping to go unnoticed, she crept up behind Jesus. 'If I just touch the hem of His garment, I will be healed,' she thought.

The woman reached down and touched the edge of Jesus' garment. Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt well. [*Note: On the four corners of the Jewish prayer shawl were four tassels, or tzitziyot. These tassels were to remind each Jewish man of his responsibility to fulfill God's commandments but also came to represent that man's authority (Numbers 15:37-41).*]

At once Jesus knew power had gone out from Him. He turned round in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched me?' His disciples replied, 'Everyone is crowding around and pushing. Yet you ask who touched you?' But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.'

The woman came trembling and fell at His feet. She confessed in front of everyone that she had touched Him and had been instantly healed. Jesus replied, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'

While Jesus was still speaking, someone came to break terrible news to Jairus, 'Your daughter is dead,' he said. 'Don't bother the Teacher any more.'

Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; just believe, and your daughter will be healed.'

Jesus went to Jairus' house where people were wailing and mourning. 'Stop wailing,' Jesus said. 'She is not dead but asleep.' The mourners laughed at Jesus, knowing the girl was dead.

Then Jesus took Peter, John and James, and the child's parents inside the house.

Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, 'My child, get up!' Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up.

Jesus told her astonished parents to give her something to eat. Then Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in Bethany with his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

Bethany was two miles (3km) from Jerusalem. Jesus often stayed at their home when He was in the area.

One day Lazarus became very seriously ill. Jesus was not near them at the time but teaching in the region on the other side of the River Jordan. So Mary and Martha sent a messenger to fetch Him quickly.

The messenger found Jesus and said, 'Sir, your good friend Lazarus is very, very sick.' Jesus announced, 'The purpose of Lazarus' illness is not death, but for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this situation.' Then instead of rushing to Bethany He stayed where He was for the next two days.

Two days later Jesus told His disciples, 'Let's go into Judea.' His disciples protested, 'Why do you want to go near Jerusalem? There are people there trying to kill you.'

Jesus replied, 'Our friend Lazarus has gone to sleep. I am going to wake him up!' His disciples thought Lazarus must be resting. So Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. This will give you another opportunity to believe in me. Come, let's go to him.'

When they arrived at Bethany, they were told that Lazarus had already been in his tomb for four days. When Martha got word that Jesus had arrived, she went to meet Him. But Mary stayed at home.

'If you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died,' Martha told Jesus. 'And even now it's not too late, for I know that God will bring my brother back to life again, if you will only ask Him.' Jesus told her, 'Your brother will come back to life again. I am the one who raises the dead and gives them life again. Anyone who believes in me, even though he dies like anyone else, shall live again. He is given eternal life for believing in me and shall never perish. Do you believe this, Martha?' 'Yes, Master,' Martha replied. 'I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God.'

Martha rushed to fetch Mary who came and fell down at the feet of Jesus. 'If you had been here, my brother would still be alive,' she wailed. When Jesus saw her weeping along with others who were mourning, tears came to His eyes. 'Where is Lazarus buried?' He asked.

Jesus was taken to the tomb. It was a cave with a heavy stone rolled across its door. 'Roll the stone aside,' Jesus told them. Martha protested, 'By now the smell will be terrible, for he has been dead four days.'

'But didn't I tell you that you will see a wonderful miracle from God if you believe?' Jesus asked her. So they rolled the stone aside.

Then Jesus shouted, 'Lazarus, come out!'

Lazarus came out from the tomb still bound up in the grave clothes, his face muffled in a head swath. Jesus told them, 'Unwrap him and let him go!'

The Jewish leaders who were with Mary and saw this miracle believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. However, the Chief Priests and Pharisees in Jerusalem publicly announced that anyone seeing Jesus must report Him immediately so that they could arrest Him.

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