

# FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS OF JESUS

## DEAD MAN WALKING

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**OPEN:** The most amazing of all miracles occur...a dead man lives again!

- ✓ Did you hear about the guy who took a taxi...he wanted to speak to the driver, he leaned forward and tapped him on the shoulder. The driver screamed and almost lost control of the car. The startled passenger apologized, "I didn't mean to frighten you, I just wanted to ask you a question." The taxi driver said: "It's not your fault sir, this is my first day as a taxi driver...I've been driving a hearse for the past 25 years."
- ✓ In Holmes County, Mississippi (March of 2014), 78-year-old Walter Williams was declared dead Wednesday night. The Coroner, Dexter Howard, received a call from the hospice nurse, who told him Mr. Williams had passed away.
  - The funeral home came to pick up his body, no pulse and at 9 PM they pronounced him dead.
  - The Coroner completed his paperwork, placed Mr. Williams in a body bag and he was transported to the funeral home.
  - There in the embalming room something strange happened. The body bag moved. He was kicking his legs and he began to breath.
  - They called an ambulance, the Paramedics arrived and hooked Williams up to the monitors. His heart was beating...he was carried back to the hospital.
  - The explanation given...the defibrillator that had previously been implanted in his chest jump started his heart after he was placed in the body bag.
  - Needless to say...the family was overjoyed.
  - The long-time farmer who went by the name "snowball" died in his home two weeks later.

- One of the family members said: it was a two week miracle and we enjoyed every minute of it.
- ❖ In a quiet little village named Bethany, along a rocky drive, sets a house with a wreath upon the door.
  - ✓ Friends and neighbors have come and gone over the last few days. Food, flowers and hugs have been given.
  - ✓ Martha and Mary grieve over the death of their brother. Being a small town everyone was aware of the situation.
  - ✓ The question that remained; where was Jesus? Why didn't He come? He had been sent for...no matter now it is too late.
  - ✓ Four days had passed since Lazarus had died. A group of men had just arrived...word spread that Jesus and His disciples were in town.

## 1) **TROUBLE BREWING.** *(PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)*

- John records seven miracles of Jesus' public ministry.
  - ✓ He begins and ends with a family...one is in Cana of Galilee and the other, Bethany of Judea.
  - ✓ One is at a wedding feast and the other a funeral...life's gladdest and saddest moments.
  - ✓ Turning water into wine He reveals Himself as the Lord of Creation...raising the dead – the Creator of Life.

### **John 11:1-6**

- Jesus loved this family, Luke in his Gospel Chapter 10 tells us about Martha and Mary and their different personalities.
  - ✓ Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, Martha serving in the kitchen.
  - ✓ Even in the best of homes there are occasional quarrels and tension.

- ✓ Bethany, just 2 miles outside the old city made it a convenient place to visit.
- There are at least six different Mary's in the N.T. so John identifies this Mary (vs. 2 the one who poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet...) an event that doesn't happen until the next chapter.
  - ✓ Lazarus and his two sisters lived together. Lazarus means "God is my help."
  - ✓ He became sick, a word that means weak or helpless. This same word was used to describe the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda.
  - ✓ To make matters worse, Jesus had gone away. John 10:40 – "beyond the Jordan River" approximately 25 miles from Jerusalem...one day's journey.
  - ✓ Things were not looking good, a runner was sent to fetch Jesus...hopefully, He could get back in time and heal their brother...Jesus' friend.
- Jesus doesn't seem to be in a hurry...He stayed put for 2 more days (vs. 6).
- ❖ Have you ever noticed God is never rushed...Jesus doesn't panic!
- ❖ Waiting on God and waiting for God is often the will of God.
  - ✓ Jesus stayed put for two more days...we might imagine Martha sitting by Lazarus' bed, wiping the sweat from her brother's brow...hoping Jesus would make it there in time.
- Meanwhile...in Bethabara (beyond the Jordan) Jesus announced: "let's go back to Judea" (vs. 3).
  - ✓ The disciples do not think this is a good idea...the last time they were there they had barely escaped.
  - ✓ Jesus knew that His days on earth were coming to an end.

- ❖ Do the good you can while you can.
  - ✓ In this agriculture community people worked from sun up to sun down...when darkness came they stopped working.
  - ✓ Jesus was safe doing His Father's will but, according to God's design, His earthly work would include a cross.
- One more miracle...more than healing but revealing who Jesus was...a demonstration of His deity. If there were any questions about who Jesus was this should settle it!
  - ✓ It is likely by the time the runner had reached Jesus that Lazarus had died.
  - ✓ Jesus likens death to sleep and the disciples misunderstand.
    - Jesus calls Lazarus, "our friend" death doesn't change our relationships.
    - The soul doesn't sleep, just the body (at rest, no more laboring). The Greek word for cemetery means "sleeping place."
  - ✓ Jesus clarifies things for them: vs. 14 & 15 NKJV – Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes.
- ❖ Sometimes tragedy becomes an opportunity for God to work.
  - Don't question Thomas' (Doubting Thomas) loyalty...he says to the 12... "let's go with Him...and die with Him." (vs. 16)

1) Trouble Brewing

2) **TEARS FLOWING.** *(PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)*

**Psalm 56:8 (NLT)** – You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

- When our children hurt, we hurt...here we see God's concern for His children.

**John 11:17-36**

- ✓ Martha, upon hearing that Jesus has arrived in Bethany, goes immediately out to meet Him...confront Him?
- ✓ All human hope was gone, the funeral was over...burials took place rather quickly in this climate.
- ✓ Martha's response: **Where have you been? We needed you. Vs. 21 "if only you have been here my brother would not have died."**
- ✓ Disappointed but not disloyal...**vs. 22 "I believe God will give you whatever you ask..."** She knew Jesus had a special relationship with God and that His prayers could bring them some relief.
- Jesus and Martha talk about the resurrection...the O.T. mentions this fact several times.

**Job 19:25-26 (NLT)** – But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God!

**Daniel 12:2 (NLT)** – Many of those whose body lied dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.

- ✓ Martha has in mind this future resurrection.
- ✓ Jesus makes His 5<sup>th</sup> of 7 Great I AM statements: **vs. 25 I AM the resurrection and the life.**
- ✓ It's possible to live after you die if Jesus is your Savior.
  - There is another life beyond the grave.
  - We need to reverse our thinking...we are not in the land of the living, headed to the land of the dying. We are in the land of the dying headed for the land of the living.
  - If you are a believer you are not walking toward the sunset of life, you are walking toward the sunrise.

**1 Corinthians 15:19 (NKJV)** – If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

- ❖ Cling to the truth of the resurrection...it will give you hope.
  - Martha tells Mary Jesus wants to see her...she falls at His feet (her preferred position).
  - ✓ She repeats the words her sister had said...**Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died. (vs. 32)**
  - ✓ She is weeping as were her friends.
  - ✓ Because of sin the enemy of death had robbed them of a loved one...Jesus saw their hurt.
  - ✓ These broken hearts touched the Lord and He wept...God cried.
  - ✓ Some translations say: **He groaned in His spirit**...the word groan suggests outrage, emotional displeasure, anger...
    - He was angry at the pain and sorrow death brought into the world.
    - His tears were not out of mourning Lazarus' death as he knew what He was about to do...tears of empathy and over the pain death brings.
    - They lead Jesus to the cemetery.

- 1) Trouble Brewing.
- 2) Tears Flowing.

### 3) **TOMB OPENINGS.** *(PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)*

- God's power is about to be put on display. **John 11:38-44**
- ✓ Martha doesn't think this is a good idea...**vs. 39 KJV by this time he stinketh.**
- ✓ In Martha's mind...time for miracles were over.
  - It's likely she wasn't even thinking miracle...it was too late for Jesus to say goodbye to His friend...visitation was over...Lazarus has been in the tomb 4 days.
- Jesus had already talked with the Father about this, He would now demonstrate He and the Father are One.

- ✓ The stone is rolled back, Jesus prays and then shouts: **Lazarus, come out! (vs. 43)**
  - There was no question that He was dead.
  - Augustine is credited for saying...if Jesus had not called Lazarus by name He would have emptied every tomb in that cemetery.
- ✓ Their tears turned to triumph when the dead man walked out (hopped out) wrapped in grave clothes.
- ❖ Jesus has power over death.
  - ✓ The heart began to beat, the blood began to flow and Jesus said: **“unwrap him and let him go! (vs. 44)**
- ❖ So it is with a sinner...no longer wrapped up by sin...free to live a new life in Christ.

**CLOSE:**

- Sometimes trouble allows us to see God up close and personal.
- God is aware of your hurts/tears and He cares.
- Dealing with death is never easy but you can prepare for it by knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.
- The ultimate miracle is when Jesus takes those who are dead in trespasses and sin and gives them new life in Christ.

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