



“So the sisters sent a message to Him”
The Significance of Courage
John 11:1-3

Introduction

John 11 is the account of Lazarus who was sick, who died and was raised to life.

John 11 is the only account in the Gospels of Lazarus being raised from the dead.

John 11 is the seventh sign that reveals the Divine power of Jesus.

Jesus declared by His Words and by His Works— Miracles— that He was indeed the Messiah sent from God to save people from sin.

Last week we discovered the Significance of Suffering.

Four Reasons To Sing When We Are suffering.

We can sing when we are suffering because:

God is Glorified through our Suffering

Our Faith Grows Stronger through Suffering

Our Suffering Has Purpose

Suffering Reveals the Presence and Power of God in our life

Today as we continue to examine **John 11** we are going to discover the Significance of Courage.

Scripture

Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.

³ **So the sisters sent a message to Him:** “Lord, the one you love is sick.”
CSB

Quote Of The Day

“Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway.”
— John Wayne

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave person is not the one who does not feel afraid, but the one who conquers that fear.” — Nelson Mandela

In the context of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in **John 11**, we learn about the significance of Courage.

Courage is the quality of being brave or confident in the presence of fear, danger, threat, or obstacles.

What does Courage look like?

It looks like me— **I fought a snake yesterday and won!**

Four Lessons We Learn About Courage

It takes Courage to Ask for Help

It takes Courage to Face Persecution

It takes Courage to Follow Jesus

It takes Courage to Endure Criticism

Four Lessons We Learn About Courage:

1. It takes Courage to Ask for Help v.3

So the sisters sent a message to Him: “Lord, the one you love is sick.”
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Lazarus was sick and not getting better— The word translated “**sick**” comes from the Greek word “**Astheneo**” meaning to suffer from a debilitating illness or disease. To experience pain or weakness, to be helpless and in dire need.

Often we will do everything we can do to fix or overcome our problems and as a result Jesus becomes the last option instead of the first response.

Why Do We Struggle To Ask For Help?

Asking for help is uncomfortable

Asking for help is a sign of weakness

Asking for help reveals our dependency on others

Asking for help comes with the fear of rejection

Luke 11:5-13 Jesus taught His disciples to ASK.

He also said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I don’t have anything to offer him.’⁷ Then he will answer from inside and say, ‘Don’t bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I have gone to bed. I can’t get up to give you anything.’⁸ I tell you, even though he won’t get up and give him anything because he is his friend, **yet because of his friend’s shameless boldness**, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.⁹ “**So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.**¹⁰ **For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who**

knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? CSB

Hebrews 4:14-16 “. . . since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.” CSB

The First Lesson About Courage: It takes Courage to Ask for Help

Four Lessons We Learn About Courage:

2. It takes Courage to Face Persecution vv.5-8

Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after that, he said to the disciples, **“Let’s go to Judea again.”** ⁸ “Rabbi,” the disciples told him, **“just now the Jews tried to stone you, and you’re going there again?”** CSB

Christian persecution is any hostility, experienced from the world, because of one’s identification with Jesus Christ.

Currently followers of Christ all over the world are experiencing severe persecution and restrictions because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

In the article titled “Arrests, Beatings, and Prayers: Inside the Persecution of India’s Christians” the intense persecution of Christians in India are revealed. The article states: "In church after church, the very act of worship has become dangerous despite constitutional protections for freedom of religion."

The end of the article focuses on Pastor Vinod Patil, who refuses to stop witnessing for Jesus but must operate like a secret agent. From the article. He leaves his house quietly and never in a group. He jumps on a small Honda motorbike and putters past little towns and scratchy wheat fields, Bible tucked inside his jacket. He constantly checks his mirrors to make sure he is not tailed.

Hindu extremists have warned Pastor Patil that they will kill him if they catch him preaching. So last year he shut down his Living Hope Pentecostal Church, which he said used to have 400 members, and shifted to small clandestine services, usually at night.

One cold night this past winter, Pastor Patil drove to a secret prayer session in an unmarked farmhouse. He quickly stepped inside. On a dusty carpet that smelled like sheep, two dozen church members waited for him. Most were lower-caste farmers. When a dog barked outside, one woman whipped around and whispered, "What's that?"

Pastor Patil reassured the woman that God was watching over. He cracked open his weathered, Hindi-language Bible and rested his finger on **Luke 21**, a relevant passage for his beleaguered flock. "They will seize you and persecute you," he read, voice trembling. "They will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me."

Pastor Patil says, "You get this energy just thinking about his name." The journalist concluded the article by stating, "They believe deeply in the teachings of Jesus." Citation: [Jeffrey Gettleman and Suhasini Raj, "Arrests, Beatings, and Prayers: Inside the Persecution of India's Christians," The New York Times \(12-22-21\)](#)

The most common types of Christian persecution:

Physical and verbal abuse

Imprisonment

Kidnappings

Bribes

Deportation

Destruction of property

Fines

Torture

Murder

Luke 6:22-23 Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man. ²³“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets. CSB

Romans 8:16-18 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. ¹¹“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. ¹²Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” CSB

Four Steps We Can Take To Be Victorious In Times of Persecution:

Don’t be caught off guard— They persecuted the prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus was persecuted, the disciples and other followers of Christ have been persecuted— followers of Christ in this day are not any different.

Pray Continually— Pray for Wisdom, Discernment, Strength and Courage.

I Thessalonians 5:15-18 “See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray constantly, ¹⁸give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” CSB

Keep our eyes on the prize—

Hebrews 12:1-2 “. . . since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily

ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ² **keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” CSB

Our faith must overcome our fear—

Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.” CSB

Hebrews 11:6 “Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” CSB

The Second Lesson About Courage: It takes Courage to Face Persecution

Four Lessons We Learn About Courage:

3. It takes Courage to Follow Jesus v.16

Then Thomas (called “Twin”) said to his fellow disciples, **“Let’s go too so that we may die with him.”** CSB

Thomas gets a bad rap for being called “Thomas the doubter.”

Thomas asked the hard questions no one else was willing to ask.

Thomas was the first disciple to speak up and say let’s go with Jesus, If He dies we will die with Him.

What does Courage to follow Jesus look like?

It looks like Daniel Nayeri’s mother

In his gripping memoir, *Everything Sad Is Untrue*, Daniel Nayeri recounts the gripping story about why his mother became a Christian.

She grew up in a devout and prestigious Muslim family. She was a doctor and had wealth and esteem. But eventually she would forsake all of that to follow Jesus. She was forced to flee for her life from Iran, eventually settling in the U.S. as a refugee. When people ask her why, she looks them in the eye with the begging hope that they'll hear her, and she says, "Because it's true."

Why else would she believe it? It's true and it's more valuable than \$7 million in gold coins, and thousands of acres of Persian countryside, and 10 years of education to get a medical degree, and all your family, and a home. And maybe even your life. My mom wouldn't have made the trade otherwise.

If you believe it's true, that there is a God, and he wants you to believe in him, and he sent his Son to die for you—then it has to take over your life. It has to be worth more than everything else, because heaven's waiting on the other side. That or my mother is insane. There's no middle. You can't say it's a quirky thing she thinks, because she went all the way with it. If it's not true, she made a giant mistake. But she doesn't think so.

She had all that wealth, the love of all those people she helped in her clinic. They treated her like a queen. She was a devout Muslim. And she's poor now. People spit on her on buses. She's a refugee in places where people hate refugees. And she'll tell you—it's worth it. Jesus is better. It's true ... Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Citation: Daniel Nayeri, *Everything Sad Is Untrue* (Levine Quierido, 2020), pp. 196-197

Third Lesson About Courage: It takes Courage to Follow Jesus

Four Lessons We Learn About Courage:

4. It takes Courage to Endure Criticism vv.32-39

As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, "**Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!**"³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled.³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked. "Lord," they told him, "come and see."

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ **But some of them said, "Couldn't He who opened the blind man's eyes also have kept this man from dying?"** ³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to

the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹“Remove the stone,” **Jesus said. Martha, the dead man’s sister, told him, “Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days.”** CSB

Criticism— The expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes.

Constructive Criticism is sometimes difficult to hear but it is for our good.

Critical Criticism is difficult to hear because the words are harsh, they sting and are often times untrue.

In January of 2021 a man in Oregon stole a car. Local authorities said the theft took place outside a grocery store. The mother left the car running and unlocked while she went inside to buy a gallon of milk and some meat. The thief happened to walk by, noticed the car was running hopped in the car and drove off. He soon realized a child was in the back seat. The thief pulled back into the parking lot, returning the child to the mother—but not without scolding her.

Police spokesman, Matt Henderson said, “The car thief actually lectured the mother for leaving her child in the car and threatened to call the police on her. Obviously, we're thankful he brought the little one back.” The thief ordered the mom to take the child and then drove off in the car.

Citation: Bre’Anna Grant, “Police say Oregon man who stole a car with a child in the back seat came back and 'lectured' the mom about parenting,” Insider (1-17-21)

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me — That’s a lie. Critical and harsh words hurt!

Jesus endured critical and harsh words because He knew the truth!

John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. ³²You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” CSB

Trust and remain committed to the truth— truth overcomes Critical Criticism every time.

A fifth Lesson About Courage:

5. It takes Courage to share the Good News about Jesus

Luke 9:23-26 Then he said to them all, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will save it. ²⁵ For what does it benefit someone if he gains the whole world, and yet loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and that of the Father and the holy angels. CSB

Courage to share the Good News about Jesus comes from the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:13-14 “But some sneered and said, “They’re drunk on new wine.”
¹⁴Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, “Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words.

Without the Holy Spirit, Paul folded to the pressure of the crowd like a cheap tent from Walmart.

With the power of the Holy Spirit Paul preached with authority and three thousand people committed their lives to follow Christ.

Philippians 4:13 “I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.” CSB

Four Steps to Help Us Develop Courage:

Step One: A Clearly Defined Purpose gives us Courage vv.41-42

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you heard me. ⁴²I know that you always hear me, but

because of the crowd standing here **I said this, so that they may believe you sent me.**” CSB

Step Two: Faith gives us Courage v. 40

Jesus said to her, **“Didn’t I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”** CSB

Step Three: Prayer gives us Courage vv.41-42a

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, **“Father, I thank you that you heard me. ⁴²I know that you always hear me . . . ”** CSB

Step Four: Focusing on Positive Solutions gives us Courage vv.43-44

After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come out!”** ⁴⁴The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. **Jesus said to them, “Unwrap him and let him go.”** CSB