



SLG Gospel of John
Week 6 Day 36-42

Daily Devotion Guide
Life Together Series: Five-Year Plan
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I. Invocation and Adoration:

1. Invocation Prayer

“Holy Spirit of God, who prefers before all temples the upright heart and pure, instruct us in all truth; what is dark, illumine; what is low, raise and support; what is shallow, deepen; that every chapter in our lives may witness to your power and justify the ways of God to men. In the name of Jesus, giver of all grace. Amen.” (John Milton 1608-1674)

2. Adoration through Psalm 140

(We'll use this Psalm, not for today's Bible reading, but for the sake of focusing our thoughts on God.)

Read slowly this passage at least three times and each day gather one thought about this psalm that points to God's character and translate it into a prayer of adoration.

II. Confession

Pause now and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you your sins and ask for forgiveness.

III. Thanksgiving

List, one by one, things for which you should give thanks.

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 11:1-16

This week we shall continue the study of the Gospel of John. Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

This miracle of raising Lazarus is significant in many ways, one of which is the fact that it ushered Jesus into the height of His fame which eventually led to His death.

- (1) We know that God loves the world (3:16), then why would John record that the sisters said, “Lord, the one you love is sick”? How special does this point to the relationship Jesus had with this family? (See 11:5 as well)
- (2) Jesus pointed out that Lazarus’ sickness was for God’s glory: is the sickness of believers always for God’s glory? Why or why not?
- (3) Jesus purposely tarried for two more days before going to Bethany: what might this delay teach us when our prayers appear not to have been answered right away?
- (4) The disciples knew that Lazarus was sick, why then did they object to going back to Judea where Bethany was?
- (5) We have learned from 9:5 when Jesus healed the blind man that it was part of His “work” which He must do while on earth, because He said, “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
 - a. What in essence was Jesus’ answer (in vv. 9-10) to the objection raised by the disciples?
 - b. What does the raising of Lazarus from the dead have to do with His answer?
- (6) Based on what Jesus said in v. 11 & v. 14, what might the disciples understand about what would happen to Lazarus?
- (7) What did Thomas say before they followed Jesus to Judea? Was he responding to Lazarus’ death or to their objection in v.8? Why did he say that?
- (8) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: A Deeper Friendship with the Lord

“Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” (Jn. 11:5)

We all know that God loves the world (Jn. 3:16) and that He plays no favoritism. Yet the Apostle John tells us that, to Jesus, the sisters of Lazarus referred to him as “the one you love” (11:3) and John also affirms that, “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (11:5). This obviously speaks of the special relationship that Jesus had with this family while on earth.

We do not know too much about this family, but from all the passages the four Gospels have recorded concerning them, their parents have never been mentioned. Martha, the oldest sister, seems to be in charge of the household. As a result, it is safe to assume that their parents had passed away and they were orphans.

These Gospel accounts also show us that they have opened their home to Jesus when He was passing through Bethany to the point that they have developed a deep friendship. John purposely points out that Mary, “was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair” (11:2). Although John would record this event in a later chapter, it was obviously an incident well known to the church through the earlier writings of Matthew (26:6-13) and Mark (14:3-9). This incident was significant in that the action of Mary did not only show that she might be one of the few who truly believed in the words of Jesus about His impending death, her pouring of perfume was nothing short of her outpouring of her love to the Lord. In other words, this family had developed a mutual love and friendship with the Lord, to the point that His love for them was special—it speaks of an intimate friendship and knowledge between them!

Yes, we can also develop such an intimate love and friendship with the Lord. I agree with the song writer of a previous generation that, “Even now, the Lord seeks for someone (like Mary) who truly knows His heart”.

Day 37

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 11:17-32

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

- (1) Jesus’ delay was obviously intentional and although He would eventually raise Lazarus from the dead:
 - a. Can you imagine what Martha and Mary had gone through during those four days of delay?
 - b. Apart from grieving, what might they think of Jesus’ inaction?
 - c. Did Jesus lack compassion? Why or why not?
- (2) V. 21 appears to be a complaint, what about v. 22?
 - a. Did she expect Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead?
 - b. Had Jesus raised anyone from the dead so far? (See Mk. 5:22-43; Lk. 7:11-17)

- c. If she did expect Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead, how and why did she respond to Jesus's promise that "Your brother will rise again"?
 - d. How will you define her faith?
- (3) Was Mary any better? (v. 32)
 - (4) What does Jesus mean by, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
 - (5) What then is the meaning of "he who believes in me will live"?
What, in particular, is the meaning of "will live"?
 - (6) What is meant by "will never die"? (See 3:16)
 - a. Does it necessarily mean, like Lazarus, being resurrected physically in this life?
 - b. Did Lazarus eventually die physically again?
 - (7) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: "I am the Resurrection and the Life"

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die..."
(Jn. 11:25-26)

It is interesting to note that even though Martha seemed to blame Jesus for His delay and said, "Lord...if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (11:21); it did clearly, show that she firmly believed that Jesus had the power to heal whatever sickness Lazarus had, and she was also confident that Jesus would certainly do so, because He loved Lazarus. However, now that Lazarus was dead, she still insisted that God would give Jesus whatever He asked (11:22).

I find this interesting, because

- (1) It appears that she believed that Jesus could bring Lazarus back to life, and that was not that farfetched, because Jesus revived Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:22-43) and raised the son of the widow at Nain (Lk. 7:11-17). I am sure Martha knew about these incidents;
- (2) But she added that "even now God will give you whatever you ask" which implies that she was not too sure if Jesus would choose to do so and ask God to raise Lazarus.

To this, Jesus replied, "Your brother will rise again" which is quite different from saying that He will make him come alive. The wordings were such that Martha immediately associated with the resurrection of the Last Day. I believe Jesus purposely set Martha up to think only of the resurrection of the Last Day, so that He could once-for-all show Martha who He is, and show how much He loved them.

Without denying the truth that Lazarus (and thus all who belong to God) will rise on the Last Day, He powerfully asserts, “I AM the Resurrection and the Life”. As previously mentioned, this “I AM” once again makes it plain who Jesus is. He is the “Yahweh” — God Himself. As a result, He is not only the source of resurrection and life, He is! And such is the mystery that they could only comprehend after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because He has resurrected, all who believe in Him would be so united with Him that they would resurrect in the Last Day, and since He is life itself (1:4), they too will have life, and that is life eternal!

As much as Jesus did demonstrate His love for them by raising Lazarus from the dead, the fact remains: Lazarus would die again physically eventually. So, “the life” can only refer to eternal life, and “to live” also means to live eternally (11:25-26).

This powerful statement serves to reiterate and explain what He said earlier and that was, “My Father and I are one” (10:30).

As much as Martha still did not understand that Jesus would be willing to raise her brother from the dead even in the here and now, she had come to fully believe who Jesus — the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world (11:27).

We too, may not comprehend the way of the Lord all the time; sometimes we may have too little faith in His healing in the here and now; other times we may be too presumptuous to think that He would definitely answer our prayers in some miraculous way. In the final analysis, it is not important; the most important thing is that no matter what, we hold on to our belief that He is the Christ, the Son of God who had come into the world!

Day 38

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 11:33-44

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

- (1) How many times does John mention that Jesus was “moved”?
- (2) Look at the context each time John said Jesus was moved: what caused Him to be moved each time?
- (3) Why did Jesus weep?
- (4) What insight have you gained about the humanness of Jesus?
- (5) What did the Jews learn about Jesus from His weeping?

- (6) Why then did Jesus feel troubled? (V. 33)
- (7) What caused the Jews who were present to be puzzled? (V. 37)
- (8) From Martha's response to the moving of the stone, what does it tell us about Martha's understanding of the words (or promise) of Jesus?
- (9) V. 40 likely refers to the words Jesus said to the messenger back in v. 4:
 - a. Was Jesus a bit too harsh on Martha, the grieving sister?
 - b. What might we learn from this mild rebuke?
- (10) Jesus obviously could have raised Lazarus without mentioning the Father:
 - a. What did Jesus say the reason was for thanking the Father openly?
 - b. In saying that the Father "has heard Him", what was Jesus trying to point out?
- (11) How did Jesus choose to raise Lazarus?
- (12) What might be the significance of His action or method?
- (13) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: Jesus Wept

**“When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.”
(Jn. 11:33)**

Twice the Apostle John describes Jesus as “moved” before He raised Lazarus from the dead. Each time, the context provides us with the reason:

- (1) Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled , “When Jesus saw her (i.e. Mary) weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping” (11:33)
- (2) Jesus, “once more” deeply moved, came to the tomb when the people said, “Could not He...have kept this man from dying?” (11:37-38)

I cannot agree with those who think that Jesus was troubled by the lack of faith of Mary and Martha and the people who had come from Jerusalem to mourn with them. Yes, Jesus did rebuke Martha for her lack of faith when He said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” (11:40). However, this rebuke was so mild.

The two times that He was moved were clearly a result of the weeping of the people, especially that of Mary and Martha, to the point that He wept as well. That fully reveals the humanness of Jesus. No matter how strong a person we might be, we all have experienced the imperceptible emotion of weeping when we see others cry. It is just human to do so. We identify with the sadness of the people, especially those we care. Jesus is the same.

In fact, I believe He was troubled not because of their unbelief, but because for the sake of revealing the glory of God, He had to delay His coming, causing unnecessary grief and struggles to Mary and Martha whom He deeply loved. Imagine what Mary and Martha had gone through during the four days after their brother's death — the grief of the death of their loved one was coupled with their total bewilderment of why Jesus would not come to them right away: doesn't He care? Doesn't He love us? Are we not important to Him after all?

Irrespective of how we might interpret Jesus' emotion at the time, the Jews who were there knew very well as they said, "See how He loved him!" (11:36)

Day 39

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 11:45-57

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

- (1) Based on the way Jesus raised Lazarus, what might those who "put their faith in Him" learn about Jesus?
- (2) Why did the Pharisees see the need to call such an "emergency meeting"? (See note below)
- (3) In as much as the Pharisees appeared to be putting the freedom of worshipping God as a top priority, how did they treat Jesus and why?
- (4) Is there a message for us today?
- (5) What was Caiaphas' conclusion of the matter?
- (6) How did John interpret his "prophecy"?
- (7) What can we learn from John's perspective about God's plan in general?
- (8) What was the result of the words spoken by Caiaphas?
- (9) Why does the Bible tie Caiaphas' prophecy to his role as the "high priest"?
- (10) We are about to enter into the last week of Jesus' life on earth, and the last Passover He observed. Try to describe the atmosphere in Jerusalem — the people, the religious leaders, the disciples and Jesus respectively.
- (11) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

Note: The Pharisees represented a political establishment that tried to gain favor with the local Roman authority in order to secure peace and the ongoing maintenance of their religious freedom. "Our place" in v. 48 is normally interpreted as referring to the temple.

V. Meditative Reflection: An Unfaithful High Priest

“He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation.”(Jn. 11:51)

As we read that God used Caiaphas to prophesy about the death of Jesus and its purpose, we might wonder why God would use such a wicked person to be His mouth-piece.

John explains that he was used by virtue of his position as the high priest, as Lenski adds

“We must not hastily conclude that every high priest was also a prophet, for this was not the case. No; God took the high priest ‘of that year’...the man who held the notable office which of old in the theocratic order of the first covenant was at times used for decisions vital to the people, and make him serve again, now not through the Urim and Thummim, lost long ago, but through an immediate control of his words to utter a truth absolutely vital not only for the Jewish people but also for all men in the world...His wickedness is left wholly intact, his murderous intent and his cunning way of expressing it in order to bring the Sanhedrin to action...*They* want to slay Jesus for their purpose, *God* will let them slay Jesus for His purpose.” (Lenski, John, 829).

This also reminds me of the wicked Balaam whose tongue was controlled by God to speak blessings instead of curses (Num. 23-24), and yet his wickedness was also left wholly intact and eventually enticed Israel to commit adultery in Peor (Num. 31:16).

It is a fitting reminder to those of us who are God’s servants. While God may use us for a time because of our position as His mouthpiece, however, if we remain unfaithful to Him, we will eventual be a detriment to His Kingdom and His ministry.

Day 40

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 12:1-8

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

Now Jesus returned to Bethany, the town fairly close to Jerusalem and where Lazarus was raised. It may be helpful if you can read also the same account from Matthew 26:6-13 &

Mark 14:3-9 to deepen your understanding of the incident. All commentators basically agree that the perfume was very expensive, about a year's wages. A woman would definitely cherish such a collection, as Jesus remarked in the other gospels that her story should be told wherever the gospel is preached in memory of her:

- (1) What was her motive in anointing Jesus with such expensive perfume?
- (2) Why did she choose such an occasion?
- (3) If "it was intended to be saved for His burial", why did she pour it out now? What difference did it make to do it now verses doing it later at His burial?
- (4) The other gospels indicate that Judas was not alone in his opinion. Honestly, if this jar is worth say US\$30,000 today, would you not share the same opinion? Why or why not?
- (5) "You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me" :
 - a. Did Jesus think that the poor were not important?
 - b. What then was His meaning?
 - c. How may we apply it to:
 - Our relationship with Him?
 - Our priority in terms of ministry?
- (6) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: Love as Pure as Mary's

"It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial." (Jn. 12:7)

As we reflect on these words of Jesus and the love that Mary of Bethany expressed to Jesus, I invite you to meditate on the lyrics of this song which have helped me during my formative years as a Christian tremendously and continue to purify my love for Christ to these days:

1. Who has a heart like Mary? So pure a love for the Lord —
Forsaking all things earthly, for the sake of loving Him only;
Oft' misunderstood and rebuked, only draws her closer to God.
Today the Lord is still looking for love as pure as Mary's.
2. Lord, give me a heart like Mary's, so pure a love for the Lord —
Saving the best for Jesus alone, as precious as the Nard;
It is enough that He knows her heart, what fragrance fills the air.
Today the Lord is still looking for love as pure as Mary's.

3. Lord, give me a heart like Mary's, so pure a love for the Lord —
Seizing the moment of love, breaking the most precious jar;
Despite men's mocking, "what a waste!" all upon Him poured.

Today the Lord is still looking for love as pure as Mary's.

Day 41

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 12:9-22

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

- (1) Why did the crowd want to see Lazarus also?
- (2) Why did the chief priest want to kill Lazarus also? Did they not believe that Jesus did raise him from the dead?
- (3) Read Zechariah 9:9. Should it not be clear to the disciples what happened was the fulfillment of this O.T. prophecy? Why didn't they?
- (4) Apart from the fact that they were slow in their understanding, can you picture someone riding on a donkey and proclaiming himself as king? Would you believe that he was a king?
- (5) Read Psalm 118:25-26. If you were the disciples, seeing the crowd's enthusiasm and the crowning of Jesus with palm branches (with which the people greeted Simon Maccabee upon his successful insurrection in BC 168), what might you expect would happen next?
- (6) What did the Pharisees expect to happen next?
- (7) John was the only evangelist who tells us about the visit by the Greeks. Why did he bother to add this little insert into the gospel? What might be the message or implication?
- (8) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: The Lowly Messiah

“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zech. 9:9)

There is no doubt that the rabbis understood Zechariah 9:9 refers to their Messiah, but how did they reconcile their idea of their triumphant Messiah of Daniel with this lowly

Messiah riding on a colt? Lightfoot has this insight to share with us from the Talmud, as he expounds on the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem:

“This triumph of Christ completes a double prophecy: 1. This prophecy of Zechariah here mentioned. 2. The taking to themselves the Paschal lamb, for this was the very day on which it was to be taken, according to the command of the law, Exod. Xii. 3; ‘In the tenth day of the month, they shall take to them every man a lamb.’

It scarce appears to the Talmudists, how those words of Daniel concerning the Messias, that ‘he comes with the clouds of heaven,’ are consistent with these words of Zechariah, that ‘he comes sitting upon an ass.’ ‘If (say they) the Israelites be good, then he shall come with the clouds of heaven; but if not good, then riding upon as ass.’ Thou art much mistaken O Jew: for he comes ‘in the clouds of heaven,’ as judge and revenger, because you are evil and very wicked; but sitting up an ass, not because you are, but because he is good...King Sapores said to Samuel, ‘You say your Messias will come upon as ass, I will send him a brave horse.’ He answers him, ‘You have not a horse with a hundred spots as is his ass.’ In the greatest humility of the Messias they dream of grandeur even in his very ass.” (Commentary on the NT from the Talmud and Hebraica, Vol. 2, 270-271)

In other words, the rabbis still could not come to grip with the fact that the power of their Messiah is fully revealed in His lowliness. No wonder they rejected the crucified Christ!

Day 42

IV. Scriptural Reflection: John 12:23-33

Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day.

- (1) What was Jesus referring to with the dying of a kernel of wheat?
- (2) What will the death of this kernel of wheat produce?
- (3) Why did Jesus tie the visit of the Greeks (representing the “nations” beyond Israel) to “His hour” — the death of this kernel of wheat? (perhaps Acts 1:8 might shed light on this issue)

- (4) Now Jesus applies His death to us as well:
 - a. Why will loving of our life mean losing it?
 - b. Why will hating our life in this world allow us to keep it for eternal life?
- (5) With these words, how does Jesus reveal the essence of following Him?
- (6) Why was Jesus' heart troubled? And how did He deal with His troubled heart?
- (7) Why did the Father choose to respond to His Son's prayer at this point, and so openly?
- (8) Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine." How could it not be for His benefit?
- (9) Jesus is talking about His death on the cross:
 - a. What would it do to Satan?
 - b. How then is it a time of "judgment"?
 - c. What will be the consequence of His death on the cross?
- (10) What is the main message to you today and how may you apply it to your life?

V. Meditative Reflection: What a Savior!

**“Now my heart is troubled and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”
(Jn. 12:27)**

Prompted by the visit of the Greeks, the Lord Jesus saw His hour of death drawing near, to the point He seemed to be speaking to Himself in v. 27, ““Now my heart is troubled and what shall I say? “ With these few words, we gain insight into the struggle of the Son of God. Allow me to share with you Lenski's thoughts in this respect:

“In the request of the Greeks Jesus sees His own death standing before Him. While He calls it a glorification of the Son of man, in particular as regards the glorious fruit that will result, nevertheless, this impending death stirs the soul of Jesus to its very depth. ‘Now my soul has been troubled. And what shall I say? Father, deliver me out of this hour? But no - for this reason I came into this hour’. Jesus is not addressing the disciples and the bystanders. This is a monolog, uttered before a higher presence; yet uttered audibly for those at hand to hear. They are granted a glimpse into what transpires in the soul of Jesus. (It) reveals what Jesus feels in His human soul as the death shadow begins actually to envelop Him. The perfect tense is intensive...for the agitation that is now upon Jesus reaches back, although its present intensity leads Him now to reveal it.

Not by any means coldly, indifferently, or without feeling is Jesus going into His death. He was perfectly aware of all that His death entailed. His was not to be a death like that of the Christian for whom the terrors of death have been removed by the cancellation of sin and guilt; nor like the death of the unbeliever who is blind or realizes only in part what awaits him. Jesus was to die with all the world's sin and guilt upon Him. The curse and damnation of that guilt was to strike Him and to crush out His life. All the dreadfulness of this impending death was fully revealed to Him; He saw all that was awaiting Him.

Moreover, He was going into His death voluntarily. No power compelled Him save His own will, which was one with that of His Father. He was free even now to withdraw from that death. But since the hour has come, the act of sacrifice is about to begin, the frightfulness, the utter horror, the inconceivable dreadfulness of death came over the soul of Jesus. All that was human in Him recoiled from the rending ordeal, just as our body, to use a weak comparison, shrinks from some painful contact and quivers when it begins yet submits and endures, no matter what the pain, held to the agony by the power of the will. The sinless, holy Jesus, God's only-begotten Son, was to stoop beneath the damning guilt of the world and by His own death as a man to expiate that guilt. Thus was His soul shaken in this hour." (Lenski, John, 868-9)

What a Savior we have in Jesus Christ!

VI. A Time for Silence

You have meditated much with your intellectual faculty today. Now have a moment of silence (the length is up to you, 5 or even 30 minutes), and ask God quietly, “Lord, is there any important message from you today that I might have missed? Show me, your servant is listening?”

VII. Supplication

Use the following chart to cover people and ministries that you want to remember before the Lord, apart from praying for yourself:

	Your family	Other people	Church Ministries	Other Ministries	City & World	Others
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

VIII. Benediction

“May the words of The Lord be your joy and your heart’s delight, as you eat them. Amen.”
(Jer. 15:16, adapted)