

Reading Schedule for January 22-28, 2018

For several weeks now, we have only been reading three chapters in the Gospel of John per week. But this week we will only read two. A unique and amazing story to the Gospel of John is raising Lazarus from the dead. We need to take three days to absorb the significance of this event. During the event, Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life." There is nothing more significant than that. Plus, we begin the final week of Jesus in chapter 12, as we progress through this amazing book.

January 22 – John 11:1-16: "When he heard this, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.'" (v.4) I've always thought of this as a very significant statement that has meaning beyond this particular event. What will bring God the most glory? It didn't make sense that Joseph was sold into slavery and spent so many years in prison before he became the right hand man to the Pharaoh in Egypt. We read about his story in Genesis 37-50. Joseph said, "What you meant for harm God caused for good." This reminds me of Romans 8:28, where it promises us that the purposes of God are for our good, even if individual circumstances don't seem to be good. Lazarus dying is a bad thing, except in this case. This event would draw many to contemplate the true identity of Jesus, and bring greater attention to his death and ultimate resurrection. What stands out to you as we meet Lazarus and learn of the context of this event?

January 23 – John 11:17-37: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" (v. 25 & 26) These are the words that fill my mind as I have opportunity to preach at a memorial service. Everything is said here that one needs to know for personal salvation. It also gives this incredible hope to the believer that even though we die physically, we still live. Lazarus would demonstrate this truth, which we will read about tomorrow. There is also significance to me that Jesus entered into the grief of those who were mourning. Our Savior is amazingly sympathetic to our weaknesses. We learn about that in Hebrews 4:14-16. How do you respond to these words Jesus shares?

January 24 – John 11:38-57: "Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him." (v.45) This is encouraging because it shows the purpose behind Jesus' miracle. He wanted people to realize that he was the resurrection and the life. It is not certain whether those who believed in him actually trusted him to be their Savior. It seems to me that many of them fell away. At the same time, there are others who became even more stubborn and full of disbelief, and plotted for his murder. They were not open to the miraculous power of God as demonstrated through Jesus. People are still that way today. Do not be surprised when people oppose you and the faith you represent. This is the culmination of Jesus' miracle to raise the dead, as he also raised Jairus' daughter, and the widow's son at Nain. But this one is the most elaborate account, and gives us assurance that Jesus has power over the grave; and is a foreshadow of the fact that he will be raised from the dead. How does this inspire you?

January 25 – John 12:1-11: "Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." (v.3) It seems incredible to me that a woman would use perfume worth a year's wages to bless Jesus. I can hardly wrap my mind around that. It is obvious that Mary was totally convinced of Jesus' identity and his worth. She just did something that she thought would equal his worth. I don't believe she was even aware

of the fact that she was giving a sign that Jesus would soon be buried. Jesus says words that I am sure the disciples had a hard time understanding. Isn't it just like Judas to take away the beauty of this moment and reveal his hard heart to all of us as we read about this story? John gives us insight into the motivation of Judas. We read in John 13:27 that Satan was beginning to have a firm grip on this disciple. His act of betrayal, compelled by the devil, that would lead to the execution of Jesus. How do you respond to Mary's act of faith?

January 26 – John 12:12-19: "They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!'" (v.12) Jesus began his last week on earth by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey under a canopy of palm branches, with a crowd hailing him as king. The crowd had been totally inspired by his miraculous power to raise Lazarus from the dead. Now they were announcing that he was the king of Israel. Many were pointing to him as the Messiah. But many others had a wrong idea about Jesus. They were sure he would be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory. This was a very fickle crowd, because it appears that many of them who were shouting Hosanna on Sunday, would join the crowd with the verdict, "Crucify him!" on Friday. This is a short reading, but the significance of Jesus' triumphal entry points to a very significant prophecy in Zachariah 9:9. Entering on a donkey does not seem significant to us, but it was really a declaration of his true identity as the Lord of Lords. . . the true Son of God. What stands out to you from this event?

January 27 – John 12:20-36: "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. " (v.24) It is an interesting analogy that Jesus uses about the significance of his death. Unless a kernel of wheat is buried in the ground, it will not become a blade of wheat, producing many more seeds. Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for our sin, but also to show his power over death. He is explaining this profound truth to them, which will be the core of the Christian message – the sinless One came to die in our place, so that when we put our faith in him we can receive his life and serve him while we have breath on earth. These are crucial moments in the life of Jesus as his time on earth is winding down quickly. What do you receive from his teaching at this strategic time to the crowds who gathered?

January 28 – John 12:37-50: "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world." (v.47) The purpose of Jesus' first mission on earth was not to judge people but to show them the way to find salvation and eternal life. We live in the day of salvation. The writer of Hebrews tells us not to harden our hearts for today is the day of salvation. This is what Jesus is referring to and what he offers to all people. But one day there will be judgment for all those who rejected Jesus and lived apart from him. Revelation 19:11-16 makes this reality absolutely clear. We read in John 3:36 that whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains on him. At the second coming of Christ God's wrath will be revealed as is announced in the Bible, with the title "The Day of the Lord." But we still have opportunity to invite people into this glorious relationship with Jesus as he came as the Savior of the world. What aspect of these verses grabbed your attention? Why?

Prayers: As we return to the Book of Romans, may the inspiration of this timeless treasure of Christian doctrine inspire us to live wholeheartedly for Christ. Pray for that result.