

Easter - Meeting Jesus

Martha and Mary

Foundation

Bible passage : John 11

The remaining units in this module have to do with Easter. The incident in John 11 probably took place 3 or 4 months earlier but is included because it is about resurrection. It was also covered in module 21 so it may be better to focus on the growing faith of Martha and Mary rather than what it shows about Jesus.

John's account almost reads like a drama in five scenes. Scene 1 is in Bethany where Lazarus the brother of Martha and Mary is very ill so they sent word to Jesus.

Scene 2 is some way north by the Jordan. By the time the messenger arrived Lazarus had died and Jesus knew it. But instead of going immediately to comfort the sisters, or raise the dead, he waited 2 days. The result, and presumably the reason for the delay, was that Lazarus' corpse had been decaying in the tomb for four days by the time Jesus arrived (v17). There could be no mistaking what happened.

In scene 3 Martha went and met Jesus outside Bethany where the sisters lived. She shows confidence in Jesus' power to heal but had no expectation that he would raise a man dead for four days. This prompts one of Jesus' best known sayings, which is regularly read at funeral; "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." The fact that Jesus is the resurrection and the life was demonstrated at Easter because death could not hold him (Acts 2.24). Because of His resurrection, through faith

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

The Raising of Lazarus, by Duccio, 1310-11



in Him we can be raised to eternal life, and indeed be born again, a new life which even death cannot destroy.

Presumably Mary had been too upset to go to see Jesus and was possibly annoyed at how long it had taken Him to arrive but in scene 4 she finally went to see him. She too shows her faith in Jesus in what she says but was not expecting what followed.

The movement to scene 5 involves the shortest verse in the Bible "Jesus wept". Given that He was about to raise Lazarus this seems to have been weeping in sympathy with others and is a great encouragement to many going through struggles.

In the final scene Jesus arrives at the graveside and, after a curious prayer without asking anything but apparently said for the benefit of those hearing, He commanded that the grave be opened. He then commanded the dead man to rise, and Lazarus had to obey. Thus He demonstrated the truth of what He had said and proves that He can raise all who trust in Him to new life now and will raise them to eternal life on the last day.



By the raising of Lazarus Jesus showed what he had said, that He has the power to give eternal life to all who trust in Him.