

John 11:16-22
January 28, 1988
Rome Georgia
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Several months ago, we watched a special on SALT and how it affected the development of civilization. In fact, the documentary concluded that SALT was the single greatest factor in the growth and development of Manhattan Island into New York city. This week, we were watching a different documentary that had to do with spices. It concluded that New York came into being because of NUTMEG! It seems as though the Dutch were trying to control the world supply of nutmeg. All the nutmeg was grown on a small group of islands in the Pacific. Holland wanted to control them all – even to the point of killing anyone who sold to the British. The last island in the nutmeg chain was under British control. The Dutch made a deal with the Brits and traded the Manhattan Island for the nutmeg Island hence all that is New York today is a direct result of the power of nutmeg. Another special we saw claimed that all that America was and is, was a direct result of ALCOHOL. (*And, we all know that modern Miami would not exist without the lowly imported Hemp and Poppy plants of the world. . . .*)

So it goes, different viewpoints arrived at by different people viewing various data-points of the same events, yet arriving at different points of view.

John W. Brawand, a Wycliffe Bible Translator, tells of a tribe in **South America** whose concept of the **past** and **future** seems to be exactly the opposite of ours. We refer to the past as being behind us and the future as being ahead of us. **TO THIS PARTICULAR TRIBE HOWEVER, THE PAST IS SEEN AS BEING AHEAD OF THEM AND THE FUTURE AS BEING BEHIND THEM.**

At first, this may seem very strange to us, and many will undoubtedly wonder how anyone could possibly be so foolish as to think in this manner. The reasoning of these Indians however, is quite logical: All that they have experienced - their mistakes, failures, lessons learned, etc. - is considered as being in front of them, and is there for their contemplation and betterment. The future is behind them, because it has not yet been experienced." (and is therefore, the unknown that is behind them.) *New Knight's* illustrations p. 238

I like the way the tribe sees things. I had never looked at it that way before and it really is something to think about. Sometimes, seeing things from opposite perspectives enlarges our field of view. **Things are not always what they appear to us to be . . .**

"As for ourselves, we would do well to be counted amongst those who trust our pasts, our futures, and our todays to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (*who is*) the **same yesterday, and today, and forever.** **Heb 13:8** HE was with us in our pasts and He will be with us today and in the future, no matter what we have to face.

In **John 11:16-22**, we see the same event viewed through **two different sets of eyes.** **Thomas 16** and **Martha 21.**

They appear to see two entirely different scenarios - when in actuality - that which is seen by both, is the same thing.

Jn. 11:11-15 then READ **Jn. 11:16-22**

THOMAS THE SKEPTICAL PESSIMIST Thomas - **Aramaic** for twin, **Didymus** is Greek for twin. **11:16**

Joh 11:16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "**Let us also go, that we may die with Him.**"

A short while later, **Jn. 14:5** "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

20:25 **The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.** But he (*Thomas*) said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas seems always to have been concerned with **knowing the unknown. Seeing and believing. He needed all the facts to make a decision.**

MARTHA THE PRAGMATIC OPTIMIST

(Pragmatic = Dealing with facts or actual occurrences; practical. 2. emphasizing the practical outcome of events and historical phenomena.)

Martha - Loud, brash - always ready to speak her mind - even to the Lord Jesus.

There is a similarity in the character of these two players in the Lazarus drama - yet they seem to come to two entirely different conclusions concerning the outcome of being in the company of Jesus.

One says "let us go with him that we may die" **v. 16**

The other says "Lord, if thou had been here, my brother would not have died." **v. 22 & 32**

BOTH WERE CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE LORD. YET, THEY SAW HIS COMPANY AS REPRESENTING TWO THINGS WHICH FOR MOST OF MANKIND SEEM TO REPRESENT TWO OPPOSITE CONDITIONS. THAT OF LIFE - AND THAT OF DEATH.

On the surface, these would seem to be conditions that are mutually exclusive, HOWEVER, IF WE LOOK AT THEM UNDER THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD, WE SEE THAT THEY **ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE BUT RATHER DUALY OCCLUSIVE**. (that is, they are each capable of absorbing the other without altering its own character)

"LET US GO WITH HIM THAT WE MAY DIE" V. 16

TO WALK WITH JESUS, IS TO LAY ASIDE OUR OWN GOALS, AMBITIONS, FAMILIES YES, AND EVEN OUR OWN LIVES.

The one who is a true "**disciple**" in the **New Testament** sense of the word, is one who is **living his life in accordance with the teachings of another**. He is ever learning, ever trusting . . .

Luk 14:26 **If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, AND HIS OWN LIFE ALSO, he cannot be my disciple.**

Luk 14:27 **And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.**

THE **ABUNDANT LIFE** COMES FROM THE **ABANDONED LIFE**.

I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

John 17:3 **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**

John 10:28 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

HE COMES TO GIVE US LIFE, AND IT IS *HIS LIFE* THAT HE GIVES US - IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THIS LIFE AS GOD INTENDS FOR HIS CHILDREN TO DO, HE MUST BE FREE TO LIVE HIS LIFE IN US!

I . The Reality of Our Death

Galatians 2:20 **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

A. OUR RECOGNITION OF OUR DEATH

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

B. OUR RESPONSE TO OUR DEATH

Romans 6:7 "NOW IF WE BE DEAD WITH CHRIST, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM:"

Romans 14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. **FOR WHETHER WE LIVE, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD; AND WHETHER WE DIE, WE DIE UNTO THE LORD:** whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

THE KEY IS THAT WE MUST **DIE TO SELF, AND LIVE UNTO THE LORD.**

I Cor. 15:31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I DIE DAILY. *NKJV*

NOT NECESSARILY A PHYSICAL DEATH, BUT AN ATTITUDE THAT PERMITS US TO ACCEPT OUR OWN MORTALITY AND HIS ABILITY TO PRESERVE US IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES - WHETHER IT BE LIFE OR DEATH TODAY.

As Paul Observes elsewhere – “whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” *Rm. 14:7*

II. Our Resolve Regarding Life

It should be lived in such a way, so that regardless of the day's agenda, **God will be glorified.**

Phil. 1:20 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also CHRIST SHALL BE MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY, WHETHER IT BE BY LIFE, OR BY DEATH. **for to me TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.**

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: NEVERTHELESS TO ABIDE IN THE FLESH IS MORE NEEDFUL FOR YOU.

SEE ALSO:

II Corinthians 4:10-11 **Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.** For we which live are always delivered unto death for **Jesus' sake**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

SEE ALSO: **ROMANS 8:35-39**

ROMANS 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

This is why Paul could say near the end of his life:

II Tim. 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: "

Though we are to live each day as our last, we should never do so with a sense of moribund dread, but rather, as one who recognizes the truth of **I Thes. 5:9:**

I Thes. 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, **WHETHER WE WAKE OR SLEEP, WE SHOULD LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM.** for to me **TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.**

II Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . **II Corinthians 5:8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Back to **John 11:15** - Thomas was one who **needed to see, in order to increase his belief.**

Joh 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, **to the intent ye may believe;** nevertheless let us go unto him.

Couple Jn. 11:15 with **John 20:29**

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

We did not see, yet . . . ergo, we have been privileged with a blessing that those who walked with Jesus were deprived of..

John 20:31 **But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

Journeying With Jesus - Jn. 11:16

From the perspective of Thomas, Mary, Martha, and us.

Let us go that we may die with Him
Let Him come that we may live.
So spoke His friends near Jerusalem
Of this Man who Died to give.

To death let us go, we shall die as men
Come Dear Friend and breathe life into him.
So they spoke that day, to the man of Bethlahem
As he trod on the road near Jerusalem

Come, let us go, ourselves do we give
for He has both come, and to Calvary been
Come give us death to ourselves that we live.
Come Blessed Lord, our Savior our Friend.

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To walk with Jesus is to be prepared to die with Jesus
To be with Jesus is to live with Jesus