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How Did Raising Others to Life Prepare Jesus for Death?

John 11:4: (NASB) *But when Jesus heard this, he said, this sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.*

Today is Palm Sunday, the day that Christians celebrate Jesus and his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This event was a major step in the preparation of his final days leading to his crucifixion. We will look at three other events spread throughout his ministry that also prepared him and sent a clear message as to who he was. The three events are the three times he raised people from the dead. Were these connected? What was the message?

The three accounts: The son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus and Lazarus, a friend of Jesus. We will examine them by the stage of death that Jesus interrupted in each case. The last event, the raising of Lazarus, firmly set in motion the corrupt actions of the Pharisees towards Jesus' death.

We will ask several key "life and death" questions as we go through the three examples:

- WHO died?
- What KIND OF LOSS was suffered as a result of the death?
- How did Jesus go about THE PROCESS of raising them up? (Urgency? Focus? Public witnesses?)
- WHAT CAN WE LEARN about Jesus' power over death?



Although chronologically this was the second person Jesus raised from the dead, we first consider **Jairus' daughter**, because this experience was one where the death had just occurred:

Context: Mark 4 ends with Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He crossed to the east side and healed the demon-possessed man and shortly came back to shore.

Jesus had shown his power over Satan's grip on the earth by subduing the storm and then Satan's grip over the mind of man in his healing the demon possessed man. This demonstration of power over Satan would now continue.

Matthew 9:18-26: (NKJV) Mark 5:21-43: (NKJV) Luke 8:40-56: (NKJV)

Using Mark 5:21-43 as a basis, we combine the three accounts to read the whole story, color-coded as shown:

So it was, when Jesus returned, when (he) had crossed over again by boat to the other side (he was arriving over the Sea of Galilee from Gadara to Capernaum), a great multitude gathered to him; welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him by the sea.

Jesus was at a point in his ministry where he was gathering large crowds. He performed dramatic miracles and word was out that he would be coming back to this area, so people flocked to the shore waiting for his boat to come in.

And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw him, he fell at his feet and begged him earnestly, to come to his house for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age saying, my little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live. (Matthew's abbreviated account reads "even now is dead." Jairus was a well-respected man, a leader in the temple, who probably knew the centurion whose servant had been healed by Jesus not too long before this).

- WHO died? A 12-year-old child.

So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples, and a great multitude followed him and thronged him as he went.

Jairus is in a panic. His only daughter is really sick and dying, needing help NOW. But Jesus has a massive crowd around him, slowing him down. Imagine what Jairus was thinking!

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years; and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she suddenly came behind him in the crowd and touched the hem of his garment. For she said, If only I may touch his clothes, I shall be made well. Immediately the



fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

This woman has faith that Jesus can heal her if she could just touch his garment hem. Jesus heals her, showing his power over Satan's grip on the sinful and frail human condition. But at this point, Jesus stops to find out who had touched him because *virtue went from him*. When he stops, the massive crowd stops. (Tick, tick, tick...) What about the dying child? What about the frantic father? Jesus was seemingly focusing his attention on the "wrong" 12 years! Interestingly, the daughter was 12 years old and the woman had the hemorrhage for 12 years! Surely Jairus is thinking the woman could have waited until the child was healed...?!

While he was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?

- What KIND OF LOSS was suffered as a result of the death? The loss of a child. There is nothing more tragic than the loss of a child. This child was the only daughter of a well-respected citizen and her death could have seemingly been avoided had Jesus just paid attention to the urgency of the moment! Such a loss drains away all hope.

As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well. And he permitted no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James and the father and mother of the girl.

Jesus now seems focused. He controls the crowd and chooses who can now proceed with him.

Then he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw the flute players and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When he came in, he said to them, make room, why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they ridiculed him knowing that she was dead. But when he had put them all outside, he took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with him, and entered where the child was lying.

Jesus walks through the scene of tragedy and essentially tells the household there is no tragedy.

Then he took the child by the hand, and said to her, Talitha, cumi, which is translated, little girl, I say to you, arise. Then her spirit (breath) returned, and she arose immediately. And he commanded that she be given something to eat.

- How did Jesus go about THE PROCESS of raising them up? No specific urgency or focus at the beginning. No dramatic public witness - only a few in the room.
- WHAT CAN WE LEARN about Jesus' power over death? He is Lord over all and could reverse the curse of death and rule of Satan. This showed Satan his grip on death was terminal!

And they were overcome with great amazement. But he commanded them strictly that no one should know what had happened and the report of this went out into all that land.

Her death represented the first stage of death - "passing through death's door."

Jesus had shown himself to be Lord of the living and the dead by the averting of the horrible tragedy of the loss of a child. This was the simplest of his three examples of the dead being raised. The next event in context according to Matthew was the healing of two blind men based on their faith, perhaps showing that to truly be able to see beyond the blindness of Satan's sin-sick world, we must live by faith.



We next consider the raising of **the son of the widow of Nain**. This chronologically happened before Jairus' daughter, but it represents a second stage of death - burial - the finality of death.

The previous context of Luke 7 was the healing of the Centurion's servant, not by the laying on of hands, but by Jesus' word spoken while absent from the sick man. Jesus' power over Satan was here expanded to include his ability to grant the desire of a Gentile - one outside of favor based on faith.

Luke 7:11-17

- WHO died? The only son of a widow; a young man in the prime of life.



Being the only son of a widow, he would have been her provider.

- What KIND OF LOSS was suffered as a result of the death? The death of an only son would have left the mother destitute.

This was a different tragedy than Jairus' daughter's death. While the young man was not an innocent child, he was the one who would have supported and cared for his widowed mother and his death would have left her destitute.

How did Jesus go about THE PROCESS of raising them up? Jesus raised him in front of an entire funeral procession. He did not instruct them to keep quiet.

Jesus raised him on the spot in front of the entire procession and in front of the large crowd that had followed him from Capernaum as well as his disciples. No words to keep things quiet!

WHAT CAN WE LEARN about Jesus' power over death? Jesus displayed power over Satan's life, "Thou shalt not surely die," and transformed death into a temporary stop as a result of his ransom.

The finality of death as expressed in the rite of burial could not be avoided, for Satan's lie about not dying was exposed with this brutal reality. Jesus displayed power over Satan's lie and transformed death into a temporary stop as a result of his ransom.

The context immediately following this miracle was that of the doubt of John the Baptist. Jesus compassionately answers this doubt with strong assurances of his being the Messiah and then reaffirms John's standing of greatness among prophets. Again we see Jesus displaying power over Satan's grip on the frailty of imperfect man's emotional state.

We so far considered two stages of death: The little girl who had just died and the young man who was on his way to be buried, whose mourners were acknowledging their pain and loss in a formal way.



The raising of **Lazarus** displayed the futility, corruption and ongoing suffering that death brings. The body was already decomposing. This event would prepare Jesus for what was to come in just a few short weeks - his own death.

John 11:1-25:

- Jesus knew this experience would bring glory to his Father.
- Jesus knew this experience would bring his own glory.
- Jesus knew this would be the most astounding miracle yet!
- Jesus knew the raising (not healing) of Lazarus was necessary to seal Jesus' own identity - unmistakable proof of his being the son of God.
- Jesus (finally) arrives, as the mourning of Lazarus' death is widespread.
- Jesus' arrival is seemingly too late.
- Jesus proclaims the fulfillment of his ministry.

- WHO died? Lazarus, a friend of Jesus and devoted provider for Lazarus' two sisters.

During his ministry, this would have been Jesus' second experience of such a close loss - John the Baptist being the first. John's death would have signified his ministry's full *beginning* as the last of the Old Testament prophets died and Lazarus' death would signify the *end* of his ministry.

Jesus defied the death of Lazarus so that Jesus would be hunted and brought to his death in order to put an end to death!

- What KIND OF LOSS was suffered as a result of the death? A close personal loss for Jesus at the end of his ministry.

John 11:28-35: Why was it important that Jesus felt this great loss of his friend? He felt the pain and the tragedy of this loss. Jesus was moved by faith to NOT go early to heal Lazarus. He was moved by loss and the magnitude of his mission to remove the cruelty of sin and death. He was moved by the glory of his Father and the glory of the plan. He was moved by his love for his friend. Hebrews 4:15: Jesus felt what we feel!



John 11:37-44: Imagine the focus and prayer Jesus would have experienced! Imagine the bewildered attention of Mary, Martha and the mourners as they watched what he would do next.

How did Jesus go about THE PROCESS of raising them up? In faith, he delayed his arrival. He then raised Lazarus in front of a small group of mourners.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN about Jesus' power over death? Life is restored through the power of God and by the hand of Jesus.

How is this accomplished?

First, there was prayer. In the case of Lazarus, it was spoken for a witness but it was undoubtedly uttered silently in the previous two accounts. Throughout Jesus' ministry, we see a thread of prayer that never goes away.

Second, there was his voice. The words in all three accounts were commands, though it would have been almost a whisper with Jairus' daughter, a firm voice with the widow's son and a loud command with Lazarus.

Third, there were witnesses. There were five people with Jairus' daughter (essentially just the parents - those most traumatized), a funeral procession and Jesus' followers with the widow's son (a public event of burial) and the many mourners with Lazarus (those who lingered to mourn).

Fourth - the most powerful words spoken by Jesus were not *Little girl, I say to you, arise!* *Young man, I say to you, arise!* or *Lazarus come forth!* The most powerful words were, *Loose him and let him go!* This was the power of Jesus over Satan showing that not only could death be undone (in all three cases), but also freedom from sin and death in Christ would be achieved! He really is the Lord of all!

John 11:47-48,53: Jesus knew that the raising of Lazarus, the restoring of a life would mean the forfeiting of his own. He set this up for that very purpose, for the forfeiting of his life would come to mean the restoring of the life of every man, woman and child who ever lived.

How did Jesus respond to the threat of the priests and Pharisees? John 11:54: He got far enough away from the plotting but close enough to walk right back into the line of fire when appropriate. God's timing would have to be perfect for every prophecy to come true as promised. Jesus knew he was the Passover Lamb. That Palm Sunday procession took place on the 10th of the Jewish month of Nisan, exactly the day the Jews were to take the lamb into their home back in Exodus.

John 11:55-57: Various Bible commentaries calculate several hundred thousands of people would have been in Jerusalem at this time for Passover. Everyone was talking about Jesus! *Why?* He had performed a miracle of such magnitude in the raising of Lazarus in such an open and viewable manner that it would bring out men's true colors, for by this miracle they would either line up to praise God or line up to destroy the messenger! John 12:1-8: Jesus was at the home of Lazarus the day before entering Jerusalem when anointed by Mary to prepare for his death. No one told her to do this, yet it was the most appropriate thing to do. Jesus was deeply touched by this act. The lesson for us is we should do what we can when we can.

John 12:9-11: Not only did they want to get rid of Jesus, but by definition they had to get rid of Lazarus since he was living proof of Jesus' power and the prophecies of the future resurrection. Jesus entered Jerusalem and the hearts of the people on the 10th of Nisan. Just a few days later would be the torment and torture of crucifixion.

The three raisings we discussed teach us that Jesus showed himself to be Lord over all stages of death. He was able to feel the pain and suffering of humanity. He took these experiences and showed us that those of us who are hurt by death - in whatever stage and circumstance - can be blessed by life. He died for all of us so we could all experience, *Lazarus, come forth!* *Loose him and let him go!*

***So, how did raising others to life prepare Jesus for death?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***