

80. After God's miracle, then what?

June 11, 2017

Let's pretend that all of us are here for our beloved brother Charlie's funeral service. You all know that he had a massive heart attack on Tuesday and went to be home with the Lord Jesus.

By now, some of you who are just waking up are wondering, "Who is Charlie? Who died?" Like I said, let's pretend. It is NOT real, OK? It is just my opening sermon illustration. Nobody died from our congregation, yet.

It is an open casket funeral service. While everyone in the chapel is in prayer, I said to the Lord, "We wish that our brother Charlie was back with us. For we miss him very much."

All of sudden, Charlie's arms starts to stretch over his head and he yawns out loud, then he raises himself up half way out of his casket and says to you guys, "What's up?" Everyone of us would have bulging eyes and our chins on the floor.

Can you imagine that scene? I might have to do a few more funeral services because some might have their own heart attacks. Many people pull out their camera phones and start to video record Charlie's resuscitation and upload them into "YouTube." God resuscitated Charlie from his death after 4 days.

The evening 6 o'clock news on every single TV station across America is airing the video from the YouTube over and over. I am sure that there are many interviews with you guys by hundreds of TV and newspaper reporters. Of course, interviews with Charlie himself and his wife, let's not forget the funeral director who performed the embalming process on Charlie Wednesday.

Nobody can deny that something incredible happened here. But after God's miracle, then what? It would divide the people into four groups:

- **The Good Group #1:** Some unbelievers will come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
- **The Bad:** The group of people who hate Jesus Christ will concoct something to protect their interests at all cost.
- **The Don't-Care:** The vast majority of people will just watch as if it is some sort of circus and do nothing about their spiritual life.
- **The Good Group #2:** Born-again believers will have more faith in Jesus Christ.

Let's see how my fancy story goes with the true event that happened almost two thousand years ago.

A. THE GOOD, GROUP #1

John 11:45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

Now the resuscitation of Lazarus was the seventh and final miracle recorded in the Book of John. This miracle is what I call a "miracle of reprimand" because it was done specially in the face of rejection of Israel with the purpose of causing them to see that though they rejected Jesus, He was still who He claimed to be and still able to display that kind of power.

As I mentioned in my opening illustration, God's miracles often divide people according to their deepest mindsets. In other words, their true hearts toward God surface to the top.

I believe that these people had genuine salvation with the belief in Jesus Christ. What do I mean when I said, "Belief in Jesus Christ"? Believing that Jesus is the Son of God; He is God in human flesh; He came into the world and died on a cross as our Atoning Sacrifice; He rose again the third day; He ascended to the Father; He can come into your life, forgive your sins and cleanse your life. That is believing in Christ. Anything other than that is nothing more than acknowledging the name of Jesus like many do.

B. THE BAD

John 11:46-53 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." 49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. 53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

Nobody around Bethany and the surrounding areas ever could deny the miracle of Lazarus' resuscitation. Not even the ones who were the haters of Jesus. In spite of the fact and the truth, they pretty much would insist, "Don't confuse us with the facts and the truth; we decided that He's not the Son of God. He must die because we hate Him." These Jesus haters came with unbelief and went away with unbelief.

The Bible teaches us that anyone who wants to know the will of God, God would reveal His truth to those who are open to Him. But if your mind is closed, you are refusing any chance to know the truth. It is the same as you say, "I hate God; I hate Jesus; I hate Him worse than I ever hated Him."

It was right and necessary that the Jewish council that was known as Sanhedrin meet and discuss what to do with Jesus. But instead of seeking after the truth as they were supposed to, they'd rather seek a reason to murder Jesus to protect their own selfish interest as we noticed in v48. The way they calculated was that if Jesus gathered too many followers, the Roman authorities would consider it as an insurrection and scatter the people of Israel all over the Roman Empire. It meant that these Sanhedrin members could no longer be the social elites in the country, but refugees just like any one of the Jewish people. They hated to lose their political, social, and financial privileges.

The high priest, Caiaphas, was a Sadducee, not a Pharisee. The Pharisees who were super duper fundamentalists hated the Sadducees who were political liberals, vice versa. But these two arch enemies could always work together against their common enemy – Jesus.

Jesus had been a thorn in their eyes. He called them just what they were – white-washed tombs, outside all painted white, but inside full of decomposed stench of

dead men's bodies. He constantly irritated them with the truth for almost three years. He even threw their merchants out of the temple, not just once, but twice, where they made very healthy profits from poor Jewish pilgrims. In their mind, Jesus had to be eliminated no matter what.

It is the same today. When you pray in public, if you use the name of God, people generally don't mind, even the liberals. But if you use the name of Jesus in your prayer, it is a battle cry. All the Jesus haters come out of the woodwork. No matter what kind of excuse they use, the world is against Jesus Christ, especially right here in America where most of our forefathers were devout Christians and this country had been founded in the Christian core-value.

Caiaphas was really the crummiest kind of person you would meet. He was an egotistical, cunning, and rude opportunist, a manipulator, and a godless phony priest who was getting what he wanted by hook or by crook. And Annas who was the previous high priest was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. It was a regular Jewish Mafia – keeping their family business flourishing.

This phony priest, Caiaphas declared that Jesus had to die for the nation as if he was some sort of patriot. He pretty much said that it was a crisis, and they had to take care of this situation right away, otherwise the whole country would be destroyed.

Out of that vile degenerate mouth of Caiaphas came the truth of God in v50-52. How could Caiaphas know what our Lord Jesus would do for the nation Israel as well as the whole world? He didn't. In ironic fact, this rejection of Jesus resulted in the political ruin and ultimate destruction of the nation Israel in A.D. 70.

Psalm 2:1-5 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

No matter what kind of horrible and ungodly situation this country and the world are heading to, our God is still in firm control. He's never lost it, nor will He. No matter how much Islam ISIS terrorists come against Christian missionaries and believers in the Third World; no matter how raunchy the media and entertainment industry have become; No matter how low the decency in America has become, our God is in control.

Does it mean we do nothing and let God handle everything? Yes and no. Yes, we rely on Him for everything, but we do our parts faithfully as He leads us – from praying for one another to supporting one another.

C. THE DON'T-CARE

John 11:54-57 Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. 55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the

feast?" 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

Jesus withdrew Himself and His disciples to Ephraim, about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem and there He remained until the Passover. It was not because He was afraid of the Sanhedrins, rather it was not the time yet.

The multitude was gathering in Jerusalem for the passover feast and they were wondering if Jesus would attend the feast even though He had become the top of "Israel's Most Wanted" by the Sanhedrins.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this teaching, the vast majority of the world population will just watch Jesus and Christianity as if they are some sort of passing entertainment.

To these multitudes today, in their seeker-sensitive churches around the world, they just watch Jesus with no commitment to follow, no genuine faith to exercise, no salvation to hold onto, no deep love for God, no desire to serve, just watch. They have the flavor of a religion for their own style, but no personal relationship with Jesus. They don't know what Jesus said about them.

Matthew 12:30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

As we will learn, the multitude in Jerusalem cried out to Jesus, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Then a few days later, they cried out, "Crucify Him." Then they watched Him as Jesus was hanging on the cross. Are you one of those who watch Jesus without any commitment? I hope not. But if you are, I will show you how to become a true follower of Jesus Christ soon.

D. THE GOOD, GROUP #2

There is no mention of Martha, Mary and Jesus' disciples, but I am sure that their faith had increased many times with the exception of Judas. John chapter 11 reveals a stark contrast between the deity of Jesus Christ and the utter depravity of the human heart like no other chapter in the Bible.

The rich man in hades had argued with father Abraham in Luke 16:30.

Luke 16:30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

Though Lazarus came back from the dead, but the Jewish religious rulers wanted to kill Jesus and Lazarus as well. Miracles certainly reveal the power of God, but of themselves they cannot communicate the grace of God.

The stage had been set for the greatest display of the grace of God, during which man would do his worst and God would give His very best.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Today, if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, affirm your commitment to Him by living for Him.

2) If you don't know Jesus as your Savior and Lord, make it happen today, not tomorrow.

3) If you are standing outside of Christianity as a spectator, remember this. God wants you to be either in or out. There is nothing between - for God or against Him.